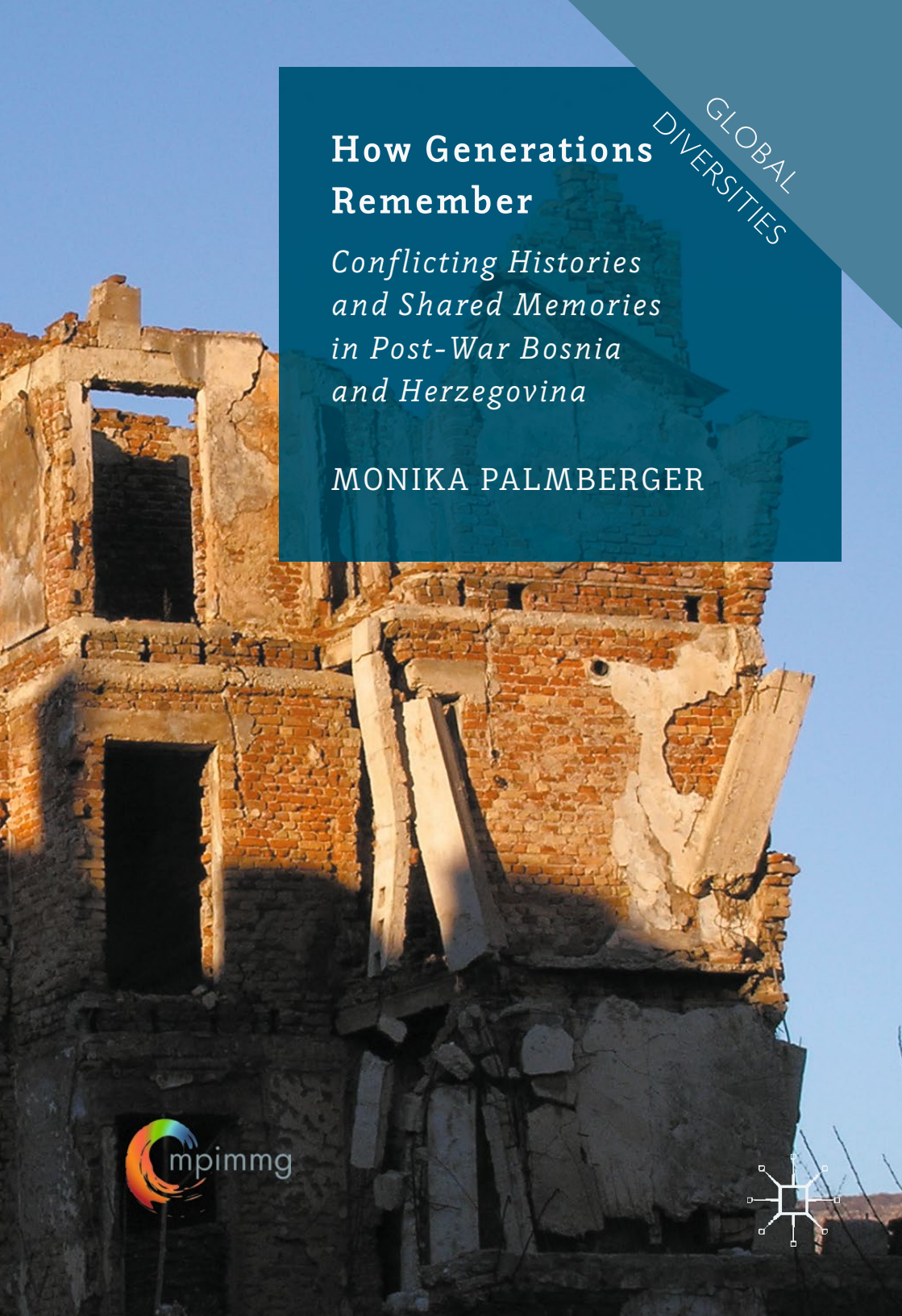
GLOBAL DIVERSITIES
How Generations Remember
Conflicting Histories and Shared Memories in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina
MONIKA PALMBERGER
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Global Diversities

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Monika Palmberger

How Generations Remember

Conflicting Histories and Shared Memories in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina

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This book is dedicated to my sons, Noel, Elias and Aaron,
whose curiosity I truly admire

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Contents

List of Abbreviations

ABiH	Armija Bosne i Hercegovine (Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina)
ARC	American Refugee Committee
BiH	Bosna i Hercegovina (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
EU	European Union
HDZ	Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (Croat Democratic Union)
HOS	Hrvatske obrambene snage (Croat Defence Force)
HVIDR-a	Hrvatski vojni invalidi domovinskog rata (Croat War Invalids of the Homeland War)
HVO	Hrvatsko vijeće obrane (Croat Defence Council)
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
JNA	Jugoslovenska narodna armija (Yugoslav People's Army)
LCY	League of Communists of Yugoslavia
NDH	Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (Independent State of Croatia)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SBIH	Stranka za BiH (Party for BiH)
SDA	Stranka demokratska akcije (Party of Democratic Action)
SDP	Socijaldemokratska partija (Social Democratic Party)
SDS	Srpska demokratska stranka (Serb Democratic Party)

SUBNOR	Savez udruženja boraca Narodno-oslobodilačkog rata (The Federation of Associations of Veterans of the National Liberation War)
TO	Territorial Defence
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VRS	Vojska Republike Srpske (Army of the Serb Republic)
ZAVNOBiH	Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobodjenja Bosne i Hercegovine (National Antifascist Council of National Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina)

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Introduction: Researching Memory and Generation

Danica, Aida and Darko spent (most of) their lives in the city of Mostar. However, they grew up in three different countries: while Danica (born 1926) spent her childhood in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929), Aida (born 1969) grew up in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, or SFRY. Darko (born 1989) spent only the first three years of his life in SFRY before he and his family had to flee. When he returned to Mostar at the end of the war, it was to a country called Bosnia and Herzegovina (Figs. 1.1 and 1.2). The lives of Danica, Aida and Darko were all significantly affected by the war that was fought in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosna i Hercegovina, BiH) between 1992 and 1995, yet they attribute different meanings to that war.

I met Danica, a graceful and cheerful woman of 80 years, at *Otvoreno srce* (Open Heart), a day-centre for elderly people—a place open to all nationalities[1] and one of my main research sites. Danica likes to sing

[1] Throughout this book, I refer to 'nation' or 'national identity' instead of 'ethnicity' or 'ethnic identity'. In BiH people employ the terms *narod/nacija* (people/nation) to describe group identities (Bringa 1995). Moreover, the term 'ethnic' has often been used in a selective and hierarchical way and has been ascribed only to some groups and not to others (Baumann 1996).

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traditional *Sevdalinka*[2] and delve into her memories of past times, which centre mostly on Mostar's former beauty and the deceased Yugoslav statesman Josip Broz Tito, who she will never stop admiring. Danica does not accept national identities as primordial. Regardless of her Catholic background, she never introduced herself as a Croat to me, as is common in post-war Mostar.[3] Her best friend, also a regular visitor to *Otvoreno srce*, is a Muslim. They both first and foremost identify themselves as city dwellers and not in national terms, as Croat or Bosniak, respectively.[4] In Danica's narrative, World War II (WWII) is of more significance than the 1992–1995 war. When she talks about the latter, she draws on interpretative templates based on her early experience of WWII. Thereby she integrates the 1992–1995 war into a wider narrative of suffering and the fight against fascism. Moreover, her experience of post-WWII reconstruction and economic progress, and the renewed peaceful coexistence of Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs give her hope that times will also get better after the recent war.

The 1992–1995 war was the first war Aida experienced. In contrast to Danica, Aida grew up under relative political and economic stability, and to the day it eventually broke out, a war in her home country was impossible to imagine for her. For Aida, the war in the 1990s constitutes a significant rupture and is connected with the loss of home and future prospects—life is sharply divided into a time 'before' and 'after' the war and the break-up of Yugoslavia. Aida was just about to pursue her career and to establish her own household when war broke out. She had to flee her hometown of Mostar. Now, two decades after the war ended, she still lives with her parents, a fact she connects to the uncertainties the war brought her and her family. She shares with Danica warm memories of Tito (partly transmitted to her by her much-loved grandmother). But she does not share Danica's optimistic outlook that social relations in Mostar will normalise. Aida and I met on a regular basis over a period of three years, mostly in a café or for a walk, but always on the Bosniak-dominated east side of Mostar. Only once could I convince Aida to cross

[2] *Sevdalinka* is a traditional folk music from BiH with very emotional melodies.

[3] In this book Bosnian Croats are referred to as Croats, as is common practice in Mostar, regardless of whether they are in possession of the Croat passport or not.

[4] 'Bosniak' is today the official term for a Bosnian Muslim (Donia 2000).

sides with me to visit Mostar's only proper park. It was the first time since the war that Aida had been to this park, as she no longer feels at home on the Croat-dominated west side, regardless of the fact that she was born and grew up there.

In contrast to Aida, Darko, who was a child when the war in Mostar started, narrates his life as relatively unaffected by the experience of war and its aftermath by distancing his personal experience from that of the wider society. His life narrative is not divided by the war as is Aida's. Darko is a student at *Stara gimnazija*, Mostar's prestigious secondary school, where Bosniak and Croat students are now taught separate curricula albeit under the same roof. While he is critical of the students' separation, he still has, at least to a certain degree, incorporated the division of Mostar's citizens into separate nationalities (with separate histories) as 'natural'. Whenever I spent time with Darko, wandering around town, meeting for coffee or a movie, he preferred to steer clear of topics concerning war and post-war issues. This was also the case when I asked him for a memory-guided tour through Mostar with a group of visiting foreign students. The places and stories Darko chose to share were strikingly detached from the war's legacy.

Danica, Aida and Darko each belong to one of the three generations identified in this book: Danica to the 'First Yugoslavs', Aida to the 'Last Yugoslavs' and Darko to the 'Post-Yugoslavs'.[5] They position themselves differently in relation to the significant political, societal and economic changes BiH has faced in the recent past. In this book I introduce the concept of 'generational positioning', which incorporates age as well as stage of life (past and present). I show the way in which generational positioning is significant in how individuals in present-day Mostar narrate their lives, rethink the past and (re-)envision the future, and at the same time (re-)position themselves in post-war and post-socialist society.

Mostar is a city where the rapid political shifts BiH experienced in the 20th century have revealed themselves most prominently, and it is a suitable place to explore questions related to generation and memory. Mostar has seen severe political and societal transformations over the last century, which culminated in the fall of socialist Yugoslavia and in a brutal

[5] I named the three generations 'First Yugoslavs', 'Last Yugoslavs' and 'Post-Yugoslavs', because their personal experience of different phases of Yugoslavia or the lack of it is decisive in the way Mostarians position themselves in the past.

Map 1.1 Map showing the borders of former Yugoslavia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Map by Alexei Matveev. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors

war that divided the once multinational city into a Bosniak-dominated east side and a Croat-dominated west side. Accordingly, experiences of different (often opposing) nationality and memory politics, as well as of different forms of coexistence vary greatly along generational lines. What makes the Mostar case so special is that there has been very limited interaction between Bosniaks and Croats since the 1992–1995 war, and generational commonalities still prevail in the way Mostarians[6] position themselves vis-à-vis the fractures and turning points of local history. By conducting long-term fieldwork on both sides—in Bosniak-dominated East Mostar as well as in Croat-dominated West Mostar—and by concentrating on the ways in which individuals give meaning to their personal and their community's past, I reveal generational commonalities that transcend the national border, always so dominant in present-day Mostar.

[6] When referring to 'Mostarians' in this book, I mean all people presently living in Mostar, including those who were born in other places.

Map 1.2 Map of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina showing the Serb Republic (*Republika Srpska*) and the Bosniak-dominated Bosniak–Croat Federation. Map by Alexei Matveev. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors

This book explores how Mostar's different generations place themselves vis-à-vis competing authoritative narratives of the local past. It analyses how experiences and exposure to different political-historical periods/events and memory politics affect people's historical understanding. I do not suggest that individuals are unaffected by existing canonical national historiographies when orienting themselves anew in society and that they do not take part in reaffirming them. Instead, I argue that we should not assume individuals naïvely take on new dominant public discourses and simply overwrite their previous experiences. Although political changes may come about abruptly and radically, it would be inaccurate to assume that a society fully adapts to all of these changes, and even more inaccurate to imagine that such societal changes take place at the same speed at which political elites change.

Following Holland and Lave (2001), I view the notion of generation as closely interlinked with memory and history: 'Because history is made in person, registered in intimate identities as well as in institutions, there is every reason to expect that age cuts across people's experiences and creates intergenerational differences' (Holland and Lave 2001: 17). Norman Ryder (1965), another scholar who has vividly engaged in the discussion on generations, has pointed out that traumatic events, such as wars and economic crises, are likely to leave an imprint on the lives of individuals regardless of their stage in life. This is also confirmed in this book. Still, there are significant generational differences in the ways Mostarians make sense of and position themselves towards the past in the present.

This said, the results of my study do not suggest that nationality has become secondary in the lives of Mostarians or that they feel more attached to people of the same generation than to those of the same nation. This is because the three generations identified in the study do not each constitute a community in the sense of being a group based on social interaction. By exploring generational differences in positioning oneself towards the past, I do not by any means attempt to downplay differences between Bosniaks and Croats concerning the respective nationalised historiographies. Nor do I deny other social locations. Besides generational and national identity, other identities, as for example those based on gender, socio-economic or rural/urban background, also play a role when Mostarians position themselves vis-à-vis the local past (see Altinary and Pető 2015; Helms 2010; Henig 2012; Jansen 2005; Kolind 2008; Leydesdorff et al. 1996; Paletschek and Schraut 2008). Although not at the centre of my analysis, whenever possible these social locations are considered.

Generations: Between Personal and Collective Memories

In recent decades there has been a strong increase in studies of memory in the social sciences (Berliner 2005). Even if this development has brought a great wealth of insightful studies, one binary set of distinctions

has remained: the division between personal and collective memory (see Bloch 2007). The division of personal and collective memory often coincides with the division of firsthand and secondhand experiences. Pickering and Keightley make a plea for a closer investigation of 'the way that we take up and synthesise firsthand and secondhand experience in developing self-narratives, how collective "frames" of memory are adopted and applied in everyday remembering processes, and how we make sense of and operationalise institutionalised and objectivised memory' (Pickering and Keightley 2013: 119). By focusing on personal memories as well as transmitted memories and on the specific generational discursive tactics and interpretative templates, this book hopes to contribute towards this aim and to bridge the division between personal and collective memory, even if it can never be eliminated fully. Individuals' narratives are never solely personal memories but are always related to a wider social framework and to the prevailing official histories (Fabian 2007; Halbwachs 1980, 1992).[7] By examining the role of generational positioning, it is precisely the intersection of the individual and the wider social arena that takes centre stage.

In the case of my particular study, I suggest that it is more accurate to speak of a Bosniak or Croat 'dominant public discourse' rather than of Bosniak or Croat 'collective memory' as such. I do so to emphasise that there is a difference between public/official history and what we may call vernacular/popular history, or between those who are professionally involved in creating national history and those who are not. Moreover, by speaking of discourse, we are reminded that the subject of discussion is historically embedded and is thus dynamic, while the notion of collective memory is rather tangible and static.

The title of this book, *How Generations Remember*, is an allusion to the title of Paul Connerton's seminal book, *How Societies Remember* (1989). In his book, Connerton opens up a timely discussion going beyond the textual and discursive understanding of remembering by concentrating on embodied/habitual memory and ritual aspects of

[7] This central insight serves as the broadest common ground for social scientists working on memory today. Nevertheless, their foci may vary greatly between individualist and collectivist understandings of social (collective) memory (see Olick 1999; Olick and Robbins 1998).

memory. In terms of the study of generations he thus mainly discusses generations as transmitters or receivers of group memory. Although Connerton's pioneering contribution to the study of memory is unquestioned, by focusing on how memory is passed down through the generations he primarily answers the question of how group memory is conveyed and sustained. This emphasis on transmission and persistence leaves open the question of where to locate the individual, the agent, the force and possibility for reflexivity and change (Argenti and Schramm 2010; Shaw 2010). My study, in concentrating on the role of generational positioning, reveals that past experiences inform present stances, but also shows that it is the actor in the present that gives meaning to the past. This is also true for narratives of the past that are passed on from older to younger generations, and are then scrutinised and contextualised by the latter. It is suggested that people's sense of continuity can deal with the inconsistencies that arise with this transfer between generations. It is this field of tension between collective and personal, and between persistence and change that is central in the discussion of generational positioning in this book.

Generations can be seen as 'mediators' between individual and collective memory. Several scholars have proven the significance of family narratives for the process of transmission of memories through generations (see, e.g., Erll 2011a; Feuchtwang 2005; Halbwachs 1925; Hirsch 2008; Welzer et al. 2005). In recent discussions of families as small-scale mnemonic communities, the concept of transmission is critically reflected and sometimes replaced by other concepts, such as 're-narration' (Welzer 2010). Welzer argues that 'narrations of memory are never transmitted, but rather constitute an occasion for an endless line of re-narrations that are constantly reformatted according to generational needs and frames of interpretation' (Welzer 2010: 16). This indicates that generations borrow, cross-reference and negotiate personal and shared pasts in finding their narrative, as suggested by Rothberg's multidirectional understanding of memory (Rothberg 2009: 3). This process of 'bringing into relation different inherited pasts, and use them in orienting ourselves to the future' (Pickering and Keightley 2013: 121) is still

widely unexplored and the analysis presented in this book hopes to contribute to its elucidation.

Following Mannheim's seminal essay *The Problems of Generations* (1997 [1928]), most studies linking generation with memory have concentrated principally on the different historico-political periods that individuals of different generations have lived through (see, e.g., Borneman 1992; Bude 2005; Corning 2010; Fietze 2009; Rosenthal and Gather 1986; Schuman and Corning 2012; Schuman and Scott 1989; Yurchak 2005). Some of these studies also consider the stage of life individuals were in when they witnessed a certain event. Adolescence and young adulthood here carry particular weight, and experiences during that early period are seen as formative, as in Mannheim's work. This research does not, however, suggest that such interpretations and norms remain unchanged throughout a lifetime, but only that they continue to be important reference points.

The concept of 'generational positioning' that I introduce in this book gives further importance to the stage of life in the sense of a particular 'life situation' individuals are in at the time when they reflect on the past (and not only at the time of the original experience). For example, we can expect differences in experiences of war between those who live through it as children and those who do so as adults or parents. Still, it is the actor in the present that gives meaning to the past. Thus the narrators' present life situation is likely to affect their retrospective narrations of past events. Consequently, the experience of certain events alone, such as the war, does not signify a generation, rather the interpretative act of making sense of it, whereby individuals position themselves by following certain discursive tactics does. Generational identity is constructed by sharing memories but also by collectively silencing them. Generations assign their identity and at the same time differentiate themselves from other generations.

Due to their divergent life situations, the First Yugoslavs, Last Yugoslavs and Post-Yugoslavs face distinct everyday realities and challenges, and thus are differently affected by the recent societal and economic changes; this influences the way they probe the past. Generational positioning is closely interlinked with the meaning-making and mnemonic processes that are likely to change with the different life situa-

tions people face (Reulecke 2010: 121).[8] Giving meaning to past events is a situational process and not a single act. It is likely that the meaning people give to important events and periods in their biography changes during the course of life. Here it is important to state, as Gardner has, that 'the life course is of course not culturally neutral, nor is it unaffected by particular geographical locations, for these involve very real material conditions and power relations' (Gardner 2002: 221). In this book, the power relations concerning the transmission of memories (or the failure of the same) between generations in particular are carved out.

The generations I refer to evolved from my interlocutors' narratives. These generations are understood as sharing a historical experience that generates a 'community of perception' (Olick 1999: 339). A shared past is crucial for a generation's constitution. Equally important are 'certain interpretative principles' and 'discursive practices' (Nugin 2010: 355–356). The narrator takes a central role; individuals are not passive consumers of experiences, but rather play an active role in generating meaning from their experiences.

Even if in most cases the generations outlined here correlate with the age of my interlocutors, we need to keep in mind that the boundaries drawn between the generations are not clear-cut and age alone is not always decisive. Consequently the generations should not be considered as homogeneous cohorts, but rather as trends based on generational identification. The notion of 'generation' used in this book should thus be understood as a heuristic device (see Borneman 1992). Regardless of shared 'discursive tactics' identified, I did not encounter one 'standard' narrative representative for each generation,

[8] There is widespread interest today in the concept of generation within the social sciences and beyond. Yet it is understood in many different ways, not only between but also within disciplines. Existing research spans studies on kinship and family (see, e.g., Bertaux and Thompson 1993; Lisón Tolosana 1966; Parkin and Stone 2004), to ageing and the intergenerational contract (see, e.g., Lüscher and Liegle 2003) and life-course research related to political attitudes and educational and career paths (see, e.g., Mayer 2009). In the last few decades, generation has become a central concept in research on migration, connected to studies on exiles (see, e.g., Ballinger 2003; Berg 2009) as well as second-generation migrants (see, e.g., Vertovec and Rogers 1998; Wessendorf 2007). Moreover, generation has also been a topic in life-course and biography research connected with political ruptures (see, e.g., Borneman 1992; Diewald et al. 2006; Rosenthal and Bogner 2009) as well as in studies concerned with intergenerational aspects of memory (see, e.g., Argenti and Schramm 2010; Bloch 1998; Hirsch 2008; Welzer 2007).

and even narratives told to me by the same person sometimes varied significantly depending on the situation in which they were told.

Lastly, the generations here are not political generations who share a politico-ideological outlook (see Bude 1997). The First, Last and Post-Yugoslavs are not necessarily connected through their political outlooks; what they share are certain discursive tactics in the ways they (re-)positioned themselves after the war. In this sense each generation may be seen as a group of people who share a certain processing of experiences, as suggested by Lüscher (2005) in the phrase 'gemeinsame Verarbeitung von Erfahrungen' (a shared way in coming to terms with the past) (Lüscher 2005: 55). This is especially interesting if one considers that the contact between the Bosniak and Croat members of the generations is extremely limited. For the Post-Yugoslavs this has been true for most of their lives, yet this is the group that most often refers to itself as one generation, thereby differentiating themselves from the older population. As I show in Chap. 6, they do so not only by means of sharing memories but also by silencing them.

A Narrative Approach to Remembering

In this study, I concentrate on what Assmann and Czaplicka (1995) refer to as 'communicative memory'. This is the memory that is still preserved among living generations, and this time span is most important for individuals' perception of their lives. The aspect of time is crucial here because communicative memory is limited to a time span of around 80–100 years (during which eyewitnesses to the events remain alive) (see Assmann and Czaplicka 1995). Central political periods (rather than specific events)—and the meanings they assume in the life narratives of individuals of different generations—are central in my analysis. The three historico-political periods primarily explored in this book thus are the period of socialist Yugoslavia (including the constituting period of WWII), the war in the 1990s and the post-war period. These are tightly interconnected and often narrated in relation to each other, both in public history representations as well as in personal accounts.

The entry point I have chosen for this research are narratives of different forms (and in different settings) that allow me to make visible the actors and their strategies/tactics for dealing with the past. Memories are thus understood as interpretations of the past that always include intellectual work (Wood 1991). Narratives are simultaneously born out of experiences and structure experience (Ochs and Capps 1996). In contrast to the cognitive approach to memory, in which memory is only attributed to the individual mind, the narrative approach taken here treats memory as a social practice because it is communicative (Fabian 2007).

Whenever the notion of memory is used in this book, it should be understood as a narrative that is selective and situational in character, and a product of past experiences, present needs and future aspirations. Although at first glance memory might seem to be chiefly connected to the past, it is also closely linked to the present and the future (Haukanes and Trnka 2013). We remember in order to give meaning to the present and thus gain power over the future (see Assmann 2007; Schwartz 1982). Thus we are confronted with different temporal moments including the inherited and experienced past, the present moment of narration as well as the imagined future (Pickering and Keightley 2013: 125; see also French 2012). Consequently, narratives of experienced events refer both to current life and to past experience but are also linked to what the future holds for individuals as well as for societies (Kerby 1991; Koselleck 2004; Natzmer 2002; Palmberger and Tošić 2016; Polkinghorne 1998).

As Trouillot (1995) has rightly stated, 'human beings participate in history both as actors and narrators' (Trouillot 1995: 2). This means that individuals are narrators of history and also actors, and thus are not entirely free to choose since their narratives of the past are based to a certain degree on personal experiences and on wider public narratives they have been exposed to. This becomes apparent in the discussion of generations I present below. Despite all the choices individuals can draw on when narrating the past, they are also influenced by experiences in the past and by socio-historical structures (Rosenthal 2006: 1). Memories are thus selective constructions incorporating experience (Kansteiner 2002).

Processes of remembering not only enable us to make sense of our pasts, but they also help in identity constructions.

> Memory serves as both a phenomenological ground of identity (as when we know implicitly who we are and the circumstances that have made us so) and the means for explicit identity construction (as when we search our memories in order to understand ourselves or when we offer particular stories about ourselves in order to make a certain kind of impression). (Antze and Lambek 1996a: xvi)[9]

To be precise, it is not only a matter of the way the past is narrated, but also of the way the narrators position themselves in the past (Antze and Lambek 1996b). The way that meaning is attributed to past experiences is likely to change during one's lifetime due to changes in historico-political contexts, new autobiographical experiences and the fact that one is moving forwards in the life cycle (Rosenthal 2006). The dimension of temporal transformation and new interpretations of the past in new presents has generally been little explored and calls for closer investigation, not least through the focus on generation (Feindt et al. 2014).

Different Temporal Moments in the Process of Remembering

As the preceding paragraphs have illuminated, the work presented here builds on the premise that memory (or better 'remembering') is an active process. Remembering is understood as a narrative act of generating meaning located in the present and directed towards the future. Remembering is 'not only welcoming, receiving an image of the past, it is also searching for it, "doing" something' (Ricoeur 2006: 56; see also Hodgkin and Radstone 2006; Passerini 2007; Schwartz 1982; Tonkin 1992).

Remembering and its counterpart, forgetting/silencing, therefore have little to do with a mere retrospection on the past (Fabian 2007; Rasmussen 2002), but also relate to the way one's present and future are conceptualised (Ochs and Capps 2001: 255; see also Erll 2011b; Lowenthal 1985; Tannock 1995). Memory thus acts as an orienting force and 'there are times when a very specific vision of the future frames the utilization of the past' (Irwin-Zarecka 1994: 101). As I show at different points in this

[9] On this matter see also Cole and Knowles 2001; Friedman 1992; Jureit 2009.

book, nostalgia for Yugoslavia manifested within the three generations' narratives and as such is a representation of the past that at times serves as a vision for the future.

Nostalgic feelings for the socialist past have been identified in many post-socialist contexts, and nostalgic icons have been identified as 'mnemonic bridges' between the present and the past that offer continuity in times of wide-reaching societal changes (Ange and Berliner 2015; Bach 2002; Bartmanski 2011; Boym 2001; Brunnbauer and Troebst 2007; Creed 2006; Heady and Gambold Miller 2006; Velikonja 2009; Yurchak 2005). As recent work on post-socialism has shown, it would be wrong to assume 'a clear break from the past' and from experiences of socialism eradicated from people's memories (Kay et al. 2012; see also Greenberg 2014; Pine 2013; Ringel 2013). Assuming that regime changes coupled with war are likely to intensify feelings of loss and insecurity, and trigger a yearning for the past, it is not surprising that a longing for the pre-war times, for Yugoslavia, prevails in BiH. People in BiH have experienced not only a drastic change in the political system governing their country, but also the war that accompanied it.

This book builds on the past–present–future interrelations inherent to nostalgia (Davis 1977). Rather than viewing nostalgia for Yugoslavia as oriented towards the past alone, I argue that it can also be seen as criticism of the present post-war and post-socialist realities, and may be reflected in visions of a better future (see Boyer 2006). It is suggested that a longing for Yugoslavia has the potential to 'paralyse' individuals, who realise that what was lost can never be regained, and this puts them into a constant state of 'waiting'. At the same time this longing is an expression of criticism of the present situation and in this way can become a source for future aspirations. As I reveal in this book, nostalgia shows itself in different forms along generational demarcations.

Between Memory Politics and Individual Meaning-Making

In his critical article on memory studies, Confino (1997) argues that the discussions of memory in recent decades have reduced memory to

the political. In a similar vein, Kidron (2009) expresses concern about the vast scholarly interest in the political instrumentalisation of the past while neglecting the more silent everyday mnemonic practices that constitute the 'living presence of the past' (Kidron 2009: 8). I would argue that this is particularly true for the case of Yugoslavia, noticeably in the concentration of literature on nationalism and memory politics. The frequent succession of political regimes in the region of former Yugoslavia and their continuing efforts to rewrite local history have inclined social scientists to approach the region as a 'laboratory' for studying memory politics, whereby the ethno-national groups serve as the focus of analysis. The majority of research on Yugoslavia and her successor states concerning itself with memories and representations of the past thus has focused on partisan collective memory among the different ethno-national groups. This research has explored how the new political elites, after crucial political changes, rewrite the past in order to legitimise their rule and to make the past fit nationally oriented goals (see e.g., Basic-Hrvatin 1996; Bet-El 2002; Denich 1994; Hayden 1994; Moll 2013; Verdery 1999). These studies are of great value. Nevertheless, the focus on collective memory is often maintained at the expense of the individual agent. It bears the risk of obscuring the view on diversity, such as other identities existing alongside only national ones.[10]

Recent work on public representations of the Yugoslav past has added to the already existing literature new angles of analysis going beyond the national fractions. Helms (2013), for example, in her work skilfully analyses the way Bosnian national narratives greatly rely on gender logics. While female victims of sexual violence and rape are faced with silence and have received little support, they, as a collective, have become symbols and proof of the nations' innocence (Helms 2013). Such gendered discourses of victimhood are followed, primarily, to prove the nation's moral purity and are instrumentalised to attract international aid projects. Another example of recent work on political/national memory in the post-Yugoslav successor states is that of Gordy's work, which in a dif-

[10] This shift away from the traditional focus on ethnicity in research and analysis has also been initiated by leading scholars in other social science research fields, such as in the field of migration studies (see Glick Schiller et al. 2006; Vertovec 2007, 2014).

ferentiated way and based on rich ethnography investigates memory and responsibility in present-day Serbia (Gordy 2013).

Compared to the attention that public, national discourses have received, however, little research has been conducted on local-level responses, on the way 'ordinary' people deal with disruptions and war, and how they reflect upon their lives and consider the significant political ruptures that have taken place during their lifetimes. Most importantly, what has been widely left unexplored is the interplay between personal memories and memory politics, a gap this book aims to fill. Together with other recently conducted research in the Yugoslav successor states (e.g., Brown 2003; Höpken 2007; Jansen 2002; Kolind 2008; Schäuble 2014; Sorabji 2006; Volcic 2007), this book hopes to provide a necessary corrective to this distorted picture, not by ignoring the dominant national public discourses (drawing on so-called 'collective memories'), but by considering them as powerful foils against whose backdrop people's narratives are constructed. Thereby, the difference between the nature of the 'stratagems' found in the dominant public discourse (Bosniak and Croat) and in people's personal narratives is investigated.

Discursive Tactics versus Discursive Strategies

In order to tease out the particularities of my interlocutors' narratives and the discursive tactics they employ (Chaps. 4–6), I first introduce the key themes found in the dominant Bosniak and Croat public discourses (Chaps. 2 and 3). Mainly using material gathered in the history departments of the Bosniak- and Croat-dominated universities in Mostar, but also at commemoration ceremonies, I analyse how history has been rewritten since the end of socialist Yugoslavia. In this process I point out specific discursive strategies employed in the historical narratives of the university lectures and those officiating at the ceremonies. My research reveals that there is a difference between the nature of the 'stratagems' found in the official (Bosniak and Croat) national narratives and in people's personal narratives. By way of clarification, I use 'discursive strategies' to refer to what is employed by those professionally involved in the process of (re) writing history (the political elites and their intermediaries; e.g., historians,

teachers, journalists) and 'discursive tactics' to refer to what is employed by those who are not.

Since individuals are not only exposed to changing political contexts but are also confronted with their personal past experiences, my interlocutors' reconstructions of the past have to remain more flexible and situational than those of 'memory makers' (Kansteiner 2002) who are professionally involved in writing official national history. While the latter presents a goal-oriented narrative, the former can be better described as target-seeking. This usage relates but does not fully correspond to Michel de Certeau's distinction between strategy and tactic.[11] For de Certeau, the former is linked to institutions and structures of power: 'I call a strategy the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated' (de Certeau 1984: 35–36). Discursive strategies employed by those who claim to represent the nation are used to narrate independent coherent national histories, to legitimise and objectify them.

In contrast to discursive strategies, discursive tactics are found in the narratives of 'common' citizens who are not professionally involved in rewriting the past but who nonetheless are faced with having to rethink it and to reposition themselves with reference to it after great societal changes have taken place in their country. A tactic, in de Certeau's sense, is utilised by individuals to create space for themselves in a field of power. A tactic is influenced, but not determined, by rules and structures (de Certeau 1980). In positioning themselves in relation to the past, Mostarians are confronted with the political ruptures in their society's history. Discursive tactics present in their narratives are utilised to deal with these ruptures.[12]

In my work, discursive tactics are first and foremost verbal expressions by actors in the field that position an actor in relation to the local past, primarily to the period of Tito's Yugoslavia (including WWII), the war in the 1990s and the post-war period. While a central discursive tactic employed by the First Yugoslavs is the connecting of experiences of dif-

[11] The idea of making use of this distinction came from a stimulating conversation with my colleague and friend, Kristine Krause.

[12] Even if individuals may strive towards a meaningful life narrative, I nevertheless recognise that it is also the researcher's aim to reveal a meaningful story (Bourdieu 1998: 76).

ferent historico-political periods, that of the Last Yugoslavs is the oscillation between different discourses, even opposing ones; and the discursive tactics of the Post-Yugoslavs are characterised by distancing and dissociating their personal histories from the experiences of the wider nation.

Although the concept of discursive tactic used in this study relates to de Certeau's concept of tactic, it is understood in a somewhat different way. Tactic as de Certeau describes it is more closely linked to resistance than the way tactic is used here. Relating tactics closely to resistance would suggest that the narratives of my interlocutors represent 'counter-memories' or 'alternative histories', and that we can draw a clear line between 'official' and 'popular' representations of the past, between history and memory. This is not the case, as I will outline in the following paragraphs.

The Fine Line Between Memory and History

I suggest being critical of drawing a clear line between memory and history and instead emphasise their interrelationship. Connerton claims that 'the practice of historical reconstruction can in important ways receive a guiding impetus from, and can in turn give significant shape to, the memories of social groups (Connerton 1989: 14). Hutton argues in a more radical way that historiography cannot be seen as a process freed from memory, but rather as an official version of memory which enjoys the sanction of academic authority (Hutton 1993; see also Assmann 1999; Crane 1997; Hall 1998). This does not mean that memory and history are synonymous, but rather that 'memory is history located in relatively subjective space; history is memory located in relatively objectified space. History is memory inscribed, codified, authorized; memory is history embodied, imagined, enacted, enlivened' (Lambek 2003: 212). Lambek's portrayal of memory and history is useful as a working definition here, since it shows both the interconnectedness of memory and history, as well as their different qualities. Despite their differences, the connection between history and memory is reinforced by the fact that they are both mnemonic processes (see Burke 1989) and that they influence each other to a certain degree.

On the individual level, too, history is not always clearly separable from autobiographical memories. 'Unlike law and policy texts, personal recollections rarely attempt to divide history into discrete categories of political and domestic life, into a set of objective circumstances and subjective responses' (Borneman 1992: 38). As shown in this book, individuals make sense of the past by referring to autobiographical memories as well as to secondhand pasts (e.g., narratives of older family members) and institutionalised/official histories, which are intermingled in their narratives. The creation of a 'generational consciousness' is 'creatively produced not by making a complete break with inherited pasts, but through the dialectical relationships between continuity and rupture, intimate knowing and irreducible difference that occur vertically through time in genealogical relationships' (Pickering and Keightley 2013: 126).

On the national level, representations of the past are struggles over whose memories will be preserved and institutionalised and whose will be repressed or forgotten (Natzmer 2002; see also Purdeková 2008; Vidaković 1989). Memories first have to be included in a widely shared and publicly expressed narrative before they can have political effect (Ashplant et al. 2009). Because different groups in any society have unequal access to power, the starting positions for making one's own perception of the past representative in the public domain are unequal.[13] The state holds a privileged position in terms of historiography whereby the discourse of the state is presented as knowledge (history) while that of its citizens is presented as opinion (memory) (Borneman 1992: 40). This does not mean, however, that official historiographies are not contested, as Tilly (1994) reminds us when he says:

> At least two processes within the politics of memory can be identified: On a large scale we see the whole political process of mutual influence among shared memories, definitions of the future, and collective action. At an increased magnification, we see the contestation that surrounds every effort to create, define, or impose a common memory. […] (Tilly 1994: 253)

[13] In order to uphold a dominant discourse that supports existing power structures, ruling politicians take advantage of commemorations and (war) memorials as well as of the reburials of the dead (see Bougarel 2007; Campbell et al. 2000; Sant Cassia 2005; Verdery 1999).

Counter-versions may emerge at the same time as a dominant narrative is told or after years of silence (see Foucault 1977; Gal 2002; Ochs and Capps 1996; Saikia 2004). Within an authoritarian state, such narratives are likely to remain in the private sphere or outside of state control (e.g., in the memories of dissidents). In this context it is tempting to view the dominant discourse as oppressive and negative, and the discourses that contest it as positive and closer to 'truth'. However, rather than asking about the truth of the official or counter-narratives, the more relevant and significant question, also for this book, is about the relationship between them (see Fentress and Wickham 1992). They are necessarily interrelated, since any counter-narrative always relates to the dominant discourse (see Schramm 2011). Moreover, as will become clear in Chaps. 2 and 3, which deal with the memory politics and historiography of the Yugoslav period and in the present, the status of narratives is not fixed: a counter-narrative can become the dominant narrative manifested in historiography and vice versa. Nevertheless, even if we no longer treat history and memory as antithetical concepts, it does not mean that no distinction between the two should be made. Instead, I suggest that the question of interconnectedness should be explored within the specific ethnographic context.

By opting to speak of narratives of the past, I seek to avoid drawing too clear a distinction between memory and history. It is not useful to draw a strict line between memory and history, neither analytically nor ethnographically. With regard to the latter, Birth argues:

> To ethnographically explore the fluid, interdependent relation between history and memory discards an inflexible bifurcation of the past into 'history' versus 'memory.' This dichotomy plays a role in both the purported objectivity of history and subjectivity of remembering. In this contrast, history becomes contextual, and 'memory,' whether it is collective or individual, becomes a dimension of intersubjective significance. (Birth 2006: 177)

In this book I treat both memory and history firstly as narratives and only later elucidate their different qualities, particularly when drawing on the distinction between discursive strategies and tactics. The arbitrary distinction between memory and history becomes clear when we look at concrete ethnographic examples, such as the way history is taught at

the two universities in Mostar. Here we are dealing with more than one version of history: it is history in the making but at two different ends.

Situating Mostar's Memories

Many of the people I talked to were quick to assure me that I had come to the right place when I told them I had come to Mostar to research memories of the local past. Independently of one another, many of them said that in Mostar 'we have too much memory'. This statement refers to the history of the territory (and its inhabitants) that is today the country of BiH, a territory that was contested fiercely throughout history and claimed by various rulers (domestic and foreign) until it became one of the six republics of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia in 1945.[14] It was again violently fought over in the years following 1992, when it became the battleground for contesting national claims in the course of Yugoslavia's disintegration. Certainly, the statement 'we have too much memory' is also connected to the widespread perception of the Balkans as a region prone to violence (Todorova 1997). This perception is also found in local history textbooks in which the outbreak of the 1992–1995 war is commonly presented as inevitable due to ancient hostilities among the peoples of Yugoslavia (Torsti 2003).

It seems that such a deterministic perspective on the past could only have evolved in retrospect. The majority of my interlocutors narrated the outbreak of the war as having been abrupt and unexpected. According to those among them old enough to remember pre-war Mostar, the war has disfigured the city almost beyond recognition. In this they refer not only to the severely damaged cityscape and the fully destroyed parts of Mostar (including the Old Town and the famous Ottoman Bridge), but mainly to Mostar's social core: the social relations between the city's inhabitants often framed using the local term *komšiluk* (neighbourliness) (see Bringa 1995; Henig 2012; Sorabji 2008; see Chap. 3 this volume). Pre-war Mostar, people on many occasions assured me, best exemplified what

[14] In 1946 it was renamed the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and in 1963 the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina supposedly stood for: peaceful coexistence among individuals of different national backgrounds. Accordingly, statistics showed Mostar to be the city with the highest number of cross-national marriages in all of Yugoslavia (Botev and Wagner 1993). The destruction of Mostar's Old Ottoman Bridge in 1993 became a symbol of the destruction of this multinational coexistence in BiH, for locals and non-locals alike (Bjelakovic and Strazzari 1999).

The Bosniak and Croat dominant national narratives deviate starkly when it comes to the interpretation of the 1992–1995 war. Although Bosniaks and Croats agree that the Serb-dominated Yugoslav National Army (YNA) presented the primary threat to Mostar, they disagree about the reasons for the war that broke out among them after they had successfully pushed back the YNA. While in the Bosniak national discourse the Bosniak–Croat war is narrated as a matter of Bosniaks liberating Mostar from Croat fascists (like the Partisans' liberation of Mostar from the Nazis at the end of WWII), in the Croat national discourse the Bosniaks are portrayed as traitors who turned against their former protectors in order to Islamise Mostar.

With the Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the war, BiH became a state with two entities—the Bosniak–Croat Federation with its 10 cantons and the Serb Republic—with a strong presence of international actors (Bieber 2005). The city of Mostar is the capital of one of the only two mixed cantons and traditionally has been the centre of the Herzegovinian Croats (as Sarajevo is the centre for BiH's Bosniaks and Banja Luka for BiH's Serbs). For tourists, Mostar, a city in the southern region of BiH, initially impresses with its beauty and Mediterranean charm. Only after gaining deeper insights into the lives of people do the scars left by the war and the way they still dominate life in Mostar today become visible.

One day during the first months of my fieldwork, I ran into a woman in her 40s who had got lost in Mostar, a city that used to be her home. She had had to flee it during the war and only returned for the first time in 2005. Upon her return she became lost in Cernica, the part of the city where I lived with my family, and she had to ask her way around as she could no longer recognise the streets. This incident again made me aware of how the city had changed. The once-colourful Mostar is now full of ruins and damaged facades. The trees growing out of the ruins

give a sense of the time that has passed since the war ended. The ruins and bullet holes in the buildings, visible throughout the entire city, are much worse on the east side than on the west side because of the Croats' advantage in heavy artillery. The situation is worst around the former frontline, the *Bulevar* (Bulevard), close to where the returnee lost her bearings.[15] This anecdote represents an extreme case. It is likely that the woman experienced a lot of stress when returning to her former home for the first time after more than 10 years. But the experience of no longer recognising Mostar or parts of it as one's former home—literally or metonymically—was described to me by many Mostarians.

The composition of Mostar's population has changed drastically as a consequence of the war. The once multinational city—35 % Muslim (Bosniak), 34 % Croat, 19 % Serb and 12 % Other (including those who identified themselves as Yugoslav)—has been split in half between Croats and Bosniaks, who make up the vast majority of the population. Of the approximately 20,000 Serbs, only about 1000 remained in the divided city during the war, and only a minority of those who fled returned thereafter (Bose 2002). Today, Mostar is often cited as the 'worst case' of partition resulting from the war (Bjelakovic and Strazzari 1999).

The war left Mostar as a city divided between a Bosniak east side and a Croat west side. Even after Mostar's inhabitants were again able to move about the city freely, the two sides remained separated in all aspects of life: politically, economically, culturally and also in terms of health care, education and the media (see Bose 2002; ICG 2000; Price 2002; Torsti 2003; Vetters 2007; Wimmen 2004). The lives of most Bosniaks and Croats are still separated. If they do not actively seek to interact with one another, then Bosniaks and Croats actually share little time with their national counterparts. Bosniak and Croat children attend different schools, teenagers go to different universities, adults have separate workplaces, and leisure time is predominantly spent on 'one's own' side of the city. Only a small number of people still maintain friendships with pre-war friends of a different nationality and even for them the nature of their relationships has often changed. Many Mostarians who still maintain old cross-national friendships no longer visit each other at home like they used to do before

[15] Fortunately, the *Bulevar*, which still is 'perceived' as the border between Bosniaks and Croats, saw much reconstruction during the three years of my stay in BiH.

the war, but only meet in public places such as cafés. This change symbolises a shift in the degree of intimacy in these old friendships.

Although no exact numbers exist, my fieldwork observations suggest that only a minority of Mostarians feel at home on both sides of the city. The majority only crosses the line between east and west if there is particular reason for it. For example, young Bosniaks prefer to go shopping in West Mostar because shopping malls are bigger and fancier. Sometimes such shopping expeditions are combined with having a coffee in one of the chic cafés close by. On the other hand, a modern beauty salon opened during my stay in East Mostar, and it attracted Mostar's Croats. Such 'crossings', however, do not mean that people feel at home on the side where they are in the minority (even though some of them grew up there).

For example, a Bosniak woman of around 30 years of age told me that she feels watched in cafés on the west side. She always tries to use Croat instead of Bosnian words and fears accidentally using a *turcizam*.[16] Later, when re-crossing the *Bulevar* to arrive on the Bosniak side, she feels relieved for only then can she relax again. A Bosniak man of similar age told me that he did not feel safe on the west side. This feeling of insecurity had intensified since he went out one night with his friends in West Mostar and lost his mobile phone in a club. The waitress found it, searched for his name and when she called it out in order to identify him a couple of men came up to him and asked him aggressively what he, as a Bosniak, thought he was doing in that club.[17]

Both Bosniaks and Croats expressed a sense of insecurity when on the other side and when identified by people there. On the other hand, I also met people from both sides who did not (or no longer) feel insecure when crossing sides. This was particularly true for those who regularly spent

[16] *Turcizam* means a word of Arabic origin incorporated into what used to be referred to as Serbo-Croatian and nowadays is used mainly by Bosniaks or the older population.

[17] Names in BiH in many cases provide information on a person's national background and are almost always 'screened' for this information. But not every name can be easily categorised, which might confuse the interlocutor, for example, when the first and last names suggest two different nationalities or when a name is common to more than one nation. Individuals with such names may take advantage of this since they can pass for more than one nationality and so may gain more access to resources, such as education or employment. But not being clearly identifiable as a member of one nation can also cause suspicion and serious problems, as was the case especially during the war for mixed couples and their children.

time on the other side, for example those who worked or studied there (Palmberger 2013b). In contrast, those who rarely crossed sides expressed deeper mistrust. In the media and literature one often hears of hatred between Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs in post-war BiH. I encountered such feelings only among a small number of people. For most, what remains between Bosniaks and Croats is a combination of mistrust, a feeling of uneasiness and a desire for conformity rather than outright hatred.

To some degree I also internalised the city's division, always being aware of which side I was on when walking through Mostar. Only when I was showing visiting friends around the city did I realise, from their innocent questions about the side we were on, that there were indeed no clear signs marking the exact border between Bosniak and Croat Mostar. Nevertheless, some markers providing hints of the 'nationality' of the two parts of the city exist. Since religion is the main marker of national identity in BiH, religious symbols are the most straightforward territorial markers. Many mosques and churches have been built in recent times, and they attempt not only to outnumber one another but perhaps also to compete in size. This is not only the case in Mostar but also in its surrounding small villages. This does not necessarily mean, however, that everyone welcomes the massive investment in churches and mosques. Quite to the contrary; many expressed great displeasure at what they regarded as a waste of money, money they thought would have been better invested in public amenities such as schools and hospitals. This was also the case for Armen, an octogenarian, who is introduced in more detail in Chap. 4. While driving from Mostar to Sarajevo with Armen, we passed numerous small villages. As I had just arrived in BiH, I did not know about the national division of the villages and so asked Armen if he could tell me about them; he gave what I believe was the best response by saying: 'Here every cow is either Bosniak or Croat, even the mice have Bosniak or Croat identities!'. With this statement he not only made clear what he thought of fanatical nationalism but also expressed his disapproval of my question. During our journey, I saw him shake his head repeatedly, in disbelief at the investments that had been made in the construction of churches and mosques.

Probably the most striking religious territorial marker in Mostar and a good example of the 'symbolic arming' that also goes on here is a huge

cross on the summit of Mount Hum, which overlooks the city. The cross is so big that it sticks out of the landscape and is one of the first signs visitors driving into the city see. The installation of this cross greatly provoked the Bosniak population, especially considering the fact that it was from Hum that the HVO (Hrvatsko vijeće obrane, Croat Defence Council) artillery shelled East Mostar. After several years, however, the cross has become, if not accepted, then at least a popular subject for jokes among the Bosniak population. For example, they joke that the cross, if not good for anything else, at least provides much-needed shade during hot summer days.

On another mountain, on the east side of the city, there is a huge sign laid out in white stones stating in capital letters, 'BiH volimo te' (BiH we love you). Peculiarly, before the war it read 'Tito volimo te' (Tito we love you) but had to be revised after Tito's death and Yugoslavia's break-up. For everyone who is informed about the situation in BiH, it is clear that such a statement could only be found on the Bosniak-dominated side. Most supporters of the new BiH state can be found among Bosniaks, while Croats generally show more patriotic sentiments for Croatia than for BiH. Many Croats in Mostar, as in the whole of Herzegovina, orient themselves towards the capital of Croatia rather than Sarajevo, the capital of BiH. On public holidays, in West Mostar the flag of BiH is only displayed on official governmental buildings and on the buildings of international organisations, while on the east side the BiH flag can be seen on many buildings, even on small shops.

This orientation towards Croatia is also displayed in the newly renamed streets in West Mostar. While on the Bosniak-dominated east side, street names for the most part remained as they were before 1992, street names on the Croat-dominated west side underwent extensive renaming. Today, street names, newly erected memorials and religious symbols mark the public space of West Mostar as part of the Croat nation (Palmberger 2013c).[18]

[18] The claim that Mostar is the city of BiH's Croats leads, in its extreme interpretation, to a denial of Bosniak (and Serb) existence or to a denial of the Bosniak-dominated part of the city. The claim that Mostar is an exclusively Croat city goes so far that the Bosniak east side of the city is simply ignored, for example in books on or maps of Mostar (see, e.g., Augustinović 1999). Interestingly, a study of Mostar's tourist guides conducted by Torsti revealed that Bosniak tourist guides continue to present the entire city similarly to before the war, while Croat guides concentrate only on West Mostar and leave the Ottoman heritage, such as the Old Town, unmentioned (Torsti 2004: 151). When we assume that 'recognising others' means also 'remembering them' (Fabian 2006: 145) then silencing the Bosniak presence is a denial of its existence through the act of wilful forgetting.

The new street names emphasise a shared history with the motherland of Croatia by recalling Croat historic personalities and important Croat cities. The former include names of members of the Catholic Church and politically influential persons from the medieval Croat Kingdom as well as the NDH state (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, Independent State of Croatia, see Chap. 2). The new street names invoke the national meta-narrative by recalling the past glory of the medieval Croat Kingdom as well as the long period of victimisation on the way to national liberation. The victimisation of the Croat people by the communists is thereby given special attention.

The propagated Croat identity stands in sharp contrast to the Yugoslav identity and the socialist past. To maintain it, any reminders of the Yugoslav past had to be erased from everyday life. This also concerns street names whereby the socialist past was erased by 'Croatianising' them. For example, the street once called *Omladinska* (Street of the Youth) was renamed *Hrvatske mladeži* (Croat Youth). A similar example is the cultural centre formally called *Dom kulture* (House of Culture; Fig. 1.1). Today, big letters on the front of the building proclaim its new name: *Hrvatski dom herceg Stjepan Kosača* (Croat House—Duke Stjepan Kosač).

In West Mostar, moreover, streets recalling the socialist period and those named after people known for their role in Serb or Bosniak national history were replaced by the names of Croat rulers, such as kings and dukes, or religious leaders, such as cardinals and bishops (Fig. 1.2). They were also renamed in memory of recent national heroes and victims, or after Croat cities in order to emphasise their affiliation with Croatia. For example, a street previously named *ulica Jakova Baruha Španca*, after a Spanish communist revolutionary, is today called *ulica Žrtava komunizma* (Victims of Communism Street). This policy of exclusion is supported by publicly remembering (within commemorations and through memorials) only the victims belonging to one's own nation. In Mostar, new memorials and commemorations are dedicated to victims of either Bosniaks or Croats. Any ceremony commemorating atrocities committed during the war in the 1990s in Mostar is sure to draw plenty of media attention. Even if the number of direct participants is small, the evening news and local newspapers ensure that a good part of the population does not 'forget'. However, even in those places where the dominant discourses are so obviously prescribed, we cannot simply assume that these memorials and

Fig. 1.1 *Hrvatski Dom* at *Rondo*. Photo by the author

street names tell us much about the historical consciousness of the people who encounter them every day (Palmberger 2017). Instead, they first and foremost express the voices of those who claim to speak for the nation.

In the introduction to the volume *The Art of Forgetting* one of the editors suggests: 'We cannot take it for granted that artefacts act as the agents of collective memory, nor can they be relied upon to prolong it' (Forty 1999: 7). Memorials and commemoration sites need people to note and read them, which means first of all people have to take notice of them. In

Fig. 1.2 *Ulica fra Didaka Buntića* is a new street name, named after a Catholic priest born in 1871. The old street name (in the sign below) was dedicated to Matija Gubec, a Croat farmer who was a leader of a farmers' uprising in the sixteenth century. During WWII his name was associated with the socialist Yugoslav Partisans and a Croat and a Slovene Partisan brigade were named after Gubec. Photo by the author

the case of the renamed streets in Croat-dominated West Mostar, people have not (yet) switched to using the new names, but rather refer to the streets by their old names. I also noticed a discrepancy between the prescribed meaning (by the ruling elites) and the people's interpretations and 'reading' of war memorials; the latter often significantly differed from the former (see Kansteiner 2002).

Another 'identity marker', though not visible in the cityscape, is language. But the languages on the Bosniak-dominated east side and the Croat-dominated west side of Mostar are only minimally distinguishable and one often has to listen carefully to conversations in order to grasp 'typical' Croat or 'typical' Bosniak words. Still, language is an important identity marker, particularly for Croats. Most Croats in Mostar refer to their language as Croatian (in contrast to Bosnian, Serbian or Serbo-Croatian). The distinctive Croat language also serves as a central argument for a separate education system. The Croat-dominated university in Mostar is referred to as the only

Croat university in BiH, since it is the only university in BiH where students are taught in Croatian (see Chap. 3). Bosniaks speak of their language as 'Bosnian', while Croats often refer to it as 'Bosniak' (*bošnjački*), claiming that no shared Bosnian language exists. But many Croats also do not believe that the Bosniaks possess their own language. As we will learn in the next chapter, the language issue plays a central role in the division of Mostar's education system. The division of education along national lines institutionalises the division of Mostar into a Bosniak east and a Croat west side.

As shown above, a physical border no longer exists, but the Bulevar (the main street before the war and frontline during the war) persists as an 'imagined' border dividing the people of Mostar, as the majority of them have little if any contact with those on the 'other side' in their everyday life (Hromadžić 2015; Palmberger 2013b). While Mostar's 'border' is not a physical, it is a border created by economic, political and cultural forces and manifested in everyday social practices (Aure 2011: 173).[19] 'Interpreted along these lines, a border is not so much an object or a material artefact as a belief, an imagination that creates and shapes a world, a social reality' (Houtum et al. 2005: 3). Houtum et al. with the notion of 'b/ordering' remind us that practices of border making are also practices of order making. Moreover, a border is likely to have two meanings. It may be interpreted as an obstacle to be overcome for some, while for others it may be associated with protection and safety. In Mostar's post-war setting, it is important to acknowledge the manifold experiences and interpretations of this b/order. While for part of the population a border between Bosniak- and Croat-dominated Mostar is welcomed as a protection of national 'rights', for others such a border is an obstacle to regaining a normal life (*normalan život*) (see Greenberg 2011; Jansen 2015; Palmberger 2013a, b; Spasić 2012; see also Chap. 2 this volume).

For me, as a foreigner living in BiH for three years, the 'border' between the Bosniak and Croat parts of the city as well as the war were ever present. Simply in walking through Mostar, I was reminded every day of the war by

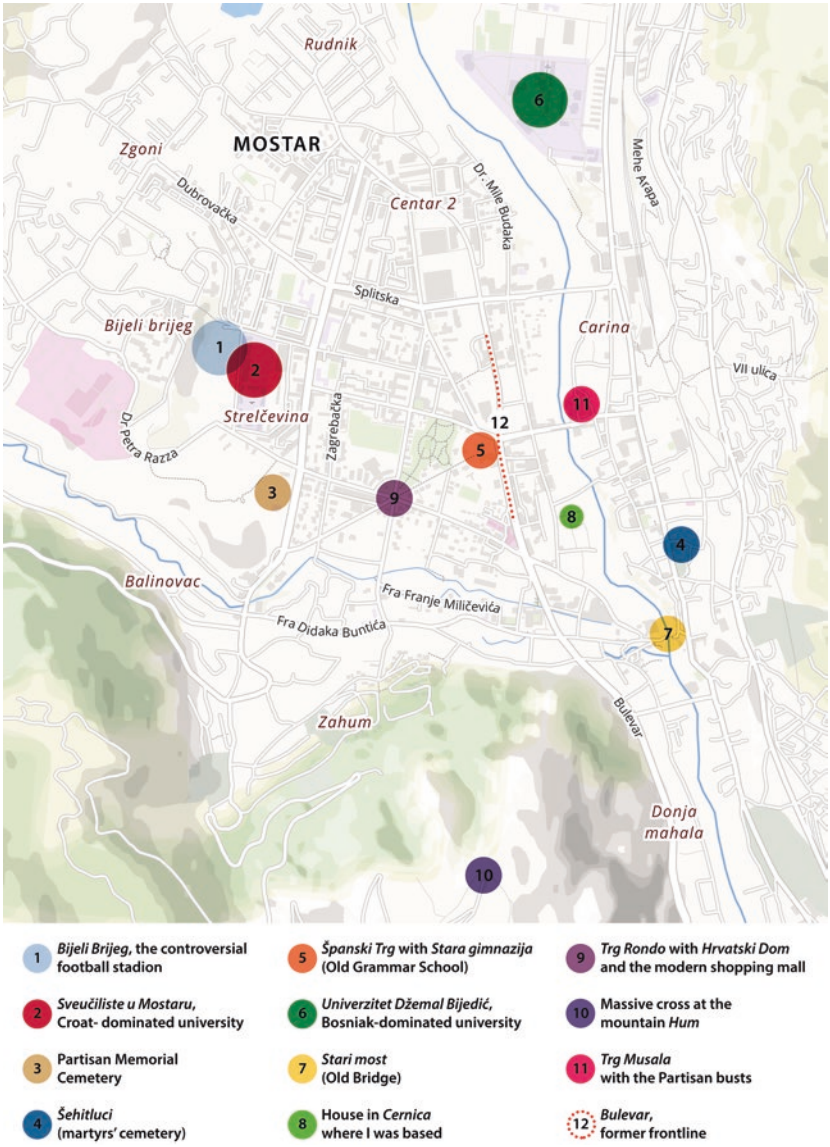
[19] B/ordering practices in Mostar can also be found in everyday bureaucratic procedures, as Vetters (2009) vividly describes for the case of residence registration in Mostar.

the high number of ruins. This included my immediate surroundings. Just at the doorstep to the house containing our first flat, a dud grenade was stuck in the ground, another stark reminder of the recent war. As I learned from the Croat landlords of our second flat, the building had a turbulent history. Built in the 1980s, the house was severely damaged during the war. Still, many people (presumably Bosniaks) from the neighbourhood sought shelter there during the war since it had a well-protected cellar. But the house had also served as a lockup for prisoners of war and as a temporary school where a small group of children were taught.

Another daily reminder of the legacy of the war was the fact that everyone I got to know seemed to be interested in which side I was loyal to. Even spontaneous conversations on the street, at gallery openings, in the playground and so on all tended to end with people directly or indirectly questioning me about which side of the city I lived on. In addition, religious holidays—which I had always experienced as a private rather than a political matter—for the first time in my life seemed politically charged. I realised this, for example, when I bought a Christmas tree, which, of course, had to be purchased on the Catholic west side, and then carried to our flat, which was located in immediate proxmity to the border, but already on the east side. The Christmas tree in my hand felt like a political statement. I felt similarly exposed when reading what were considered to be newspapers of the 'others' in public, or when using an expression that is today regarded as one of the other side's. For example, when ordering coffee on the east side it is common to say *kafa* for coffee, while on the west side it is *kava*; in the bakery people are now expected to use *hljeb* for bread on the east side, while on the west side one expects to hear *kruh*. Although most people I met pretended to ignore such subtleties, especially due to my status as a foreigner, I was also corrected several times (particularly by Croats) when I was too slow to switch from one side's terminology to the other.

Notes on Methods

The research on which this book is grounded was conducted in Mostar between October 2005 and August 2008, with additional return visits in



Map 1.3 Map of Mostar showing the former frontline and some 'field sites'. Map by Alexei Matveev. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors

2010 and in 2014.[20] Despite the fact that its population numbers around 111,000,[21] Mostar has a town-like character (Map 1.3). Cernica—the part of Mostar where I lived together with my family, and one of the oldest residential areas—was especially known for its village-like character and the prevalence of gossip. Although I did not choose the location for this reason—but rather because it was centrally located and directly on the border between East and West Mostar—I certainly benefited from the neighbourhood's character. It did not take long before many of Cernica's residents knew me, including neighbours but also shopkeepers and bar and café owners. The flip side of this, however, was that as in any small neighbourhood people I had never spoken to knew a fair bit about me and my family. Our flat in Cernica soon became an 'open house'. From the beginning the childminder of our twin sons came every working day and my language teacher came on a regular basis, as did our childminder's friends and family members as well as friends we made during our stay.

The long period of my fieldwork of three years enabled me to establish long-term relationships with many of my interlocutors. Moreover, I had the privilege to join commemoration ceremonies over a period of three years. In the second year I moved to Sarajevo with my family, but kept the apartment in Mostar and was able to spend sufficient time there. Although after the first year in Mostar I had established stable relationships and friendships, something rather unexpected took place when I moved to Sarajevo. These relationships did not weaken. On the contrary, they became stronger. My friends in Mostar showed interest in staying in touch with me and I received regular phone calls, text messages and emails. Each time we met again back in Mostar (or in Sarajevo) our relationships became more intimate since we could already reflect on a 'shared past' (Fabian 2007: 133).

During my fieldwork I utilised a mixture of qualitative methods, including participant observation, semi-structured narrative interviews, informal conversations and memory-guided city tours. The most common denominator running through my diverse research methods is 'listening to narratives'. Narratives were told to me in informal/private

[20] During my visit in 2014 I witnessed some of the protests that were staged in parallel to citizen plenums, demanding social justice in BiH. Although I conducted interviews with the protestors in Mostar, these findings could not be included in this book.

[21] In 2007, the Federalni Zavod za Statistiku estimated the population of Mostar to be 111,198.

and formal/public settings, for example, at universities or at commemorations as well as during interviews and informal conversations, sometimes during a city stroll or while looking at photos and other artefacts. Public events such as book presentations and discussion rounds plus media representations are also included in the analysis. The focus is thus on oral (and to a lesser extent written) narratives.

I took 'listening' as a research method very seriously, and during the first months of my fieldwork I did not conduct formal interviews but decided to first see what material came from my interlocutors. Only at a later stage (if at all) did I ask about the 'missing parts' in their narratives. This was a highly sensitive endeavour in which I always had to keep in mind not to push too hard when my interlocutors signalled that they were reluctant to elaborate on a certain topic.

These initial unstructured conversations with a loose agenda helped me to identify silences, the periods or events my interlocutors opted to leave out in their narratives. Though most authors agree that memory cannot be studied without its counterpart forgetting, few studies explicitly deal with forgetting, gaps and silences. Dealing with gaps and silences confronts the researcher with methodological difficulties. It is not only hard to interpret silences but even harder to locate them. Passerini quite rightly asks: 'How can we find traces of forgetting and silence since they are not themselves observable? We know that certain silences are observable only when they are broken or interrupted, but we want nonetheless to find them' (Passerini 2003: 239; see also Connerton 2008; Fabian 2007). It is true that the ability of researchers to identify and interpret silences is restricted, but long-term fieldwork is a way of meeting this methodological challenge since relationships of trust often are achieved only after months or even years.

Although I tried to avoid leading conversations along a clearly defined agenda, my interlocutors sometimes pursued such an agenda themselves. In such cases, their narratives were ready-made and presumably had been told several times before. I gained the impression that during their narration they were not so much remembering the event they were telling me about, but rather the last occasion they had told the story (see Bloch 1998). In such encounters my interlocutors clearly had an interest in sharing the 'truth about the past' and these discourses were hard to ignore. But narrative abilities are not equally distributed, so it was particularly important

for me to listen carefully to those who were less articulate and often also less involved in political life (see Bourdieu 1999). This was in accordance with my aim of eliciting the views of ordinary people rather than just the opinion-formers in the community. Throughout my field research, I acted on the assumption that my interlocutors' narratives would show which events were crucial in their lives and how they position themselves in relation to them (see Misztal 2003). Therefore, I first collected the narratives and only during the process of analysis did I identify the three generations and their particular differences (see Palmberger and Gingrich 2013).

One approach that proved invaluable for engaging interlocutors in a rather unstructured reflection on personal and local history was to ask them for memory-guided city tours. I left it to the person guiding me through the city to decide which places to visit. Often, the city tour was a stroll around Mostar where my 'guides' showed me places that they regarded as important. The sites were chosen either because of their national heritage value (e.g., the Old Bazaar, mosques or churches) or else because they possessed autobiographical meaning for my guides (e.g., schools, residential houses or other places with which they share a special history). Sometimes the sites shown to me were presented as important because of both, that is, valuable or meaningful for their national and personal autobiographical past, such as the Old Bridge.

Every tour through Mostar I was taken on was different in character, not only because of the different tour guides but also because of the different contexts within which the tours took place. Sometimes I explicitly asked Mostarians to show me around 'their city', and it was only they and I who strolled around Mostar. At other times when I had foreign visitors I used the opportunity to ask a local friend to show us around Mostar. Depending on whether we were only a small group of friends or a big group of foreign students, the tours had a more informal or formal character. Rather than using memory-guided city tours as a standardised method, I saw them as opportunities to hear Mostarians reflect on the history of their city and of their lives closely interwoven with it. The act of comparing post-war Mostar with pre-war Mostar was inherent in every tour I was given, with the exception of the tours given by my youngest interlocutors (see Chap. 6). The sites visited often reflected Mostar's and my guides' histories, ruptured due to the war. Sites were often destroyed, rebuilt or replaced, or at least their

meaning had changed during the course of the far-reaching changes experienced by Mostar's society.

Two criteria were particularly important to me when choosing my methods and field sites (Map 1.3). Firstly, I aimed to find sites that would give me access to people of different ages, genders and national backgrounds. Since the great majority of Mostar's inhabitants declare themselves to be either Bosniaks or Croats, almost all of my interlocutors belonged to one of these two groups; therefore I decided to focus first and foremost on them. However, some of my interlocutors did have Serb backgrounds, came from mixed marriages or declared themselves to be Yugoslavs. Secondly, I searched for field sites that would allow me to explore public memory discourses as well as individual narratives of the past.

During my entire field stay, but predominantly in my first year of fieldwork, I attended numerous commemoration events, reburials, anniversaries, demonstrations, relevant round tables and book presentations. Commemorations were attributed either to the victims and heroes of WWII or of the war in the 1990s and—to a lesser extent—to prominent local artists. Since the annual calendar in Mostar is full of such commemorations, which are open to the public, these were good entry points for my research. At these events I learned more about public memory discourses and had the opportunity to talk to both the participants and the event organisers. Even if I also paid attention to ritual aspects of these ceremonies, they were not central to the focus of this research. Rather than simply assuming that commemorations are the prime means for maintaining and transferring collective identity, I investigate these events in order to outline the wider social context in which they are embedded (see Vertovec and Rogers 1995).

All the people presented in this book are real, although I have changed names, places and other personal details where necessary in order to grant anonymity. Most of the interviews were conducted in the local language, and the interview citations presented in this book are English translations. If an interview was conducted in English, I indicate in a footnote that the citation is the original. All interviews (and other cited recordings) are in my possession. In this book, I can only present a small number of narratives that were shared with me; this is also the case for the commemorations I attended. Furthermore, it should also be said that none of the individuals discussed represents their generation or their nation as such; however, their individual narratives provide an opening through which we can explore the

central themes of the book. In the choice of individual narratives to present in this book I aimed to give voice to individuals of Bosniak as well as Croat national backgrounds as well as to those who do not identify as either/or.

Structure of the Book

This book is organised around five chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 2 provides a historical contextualisation of the field by providing the most important benchmarking data about the periods of which people I talked to have personal memories. Moreover, different 'memory politics' they have been exposed to during their lifetimes (from WWII to the present day) are discussed. In Chap. 3, the historical contextualisation is followed by ethnographic data, based primarily on material gathered at the two universities in Mostar. By presenting this ethnographic data I reveal key representations found in the dominant Bosniak as well as Croat public history discourses. I pay particular attention to the historians' discursive strategies in order to nationalise, legitimise and objectify the respective historiographies.

In Chaps. 4–6, the centrepiece of the book, each of the three generations identified is discussed. Not only are the particular features of each generation carved out but also each chapter tackles some theoretical issues, which are subsequently discussed. The analysis of the three generations starts in Chap. 4 with the First Yugoslavs. The First Yugoslavs, the oldest generation identified, form the generation that still has personal memories of WWII. Some experienced the war as children, some as young adults. The experience of WWII in this early stage of life was crucial and serves as an interpretative template for their later experiences, in particular for the war in the 1990s. Not only WWII but also the founding years of Yugoslavia were formative for this generation—a generation that to a great degree to this day remains loyal to Tito. The First Yugoslavs are, moreover, in a stage of life that allows them to delve most freely into the past and cherish memories shared with others of the same generation.

Although the recent war has certainly been experienced as a disruption in the lives of the First Yugoslavs, it is not the central reference point but rather is incorporated into a wider narrative, often a narrative of suffering. However, the recent war was not only linked to WWII in this narrative of suffering but WWII was also taken as an interpretative template to explain

the war in the 1990s. Thus, linking recent experiences to those early in their lives is a central discursive tactic employed in the narratives of the oldest generation. In the second part of the chapter, the discussion moves from an individual/personal to a more collective/public level. Based on observations at a Partisan commemoration ceremony, I analyse how members of the First Yugoslav generation engage in keeping the memory of the Partisan fight alive even while it loses its once supra-ethnic character. The chapter ends with a discussion of WWII as an interpretative template and its uses in personal meaning making by the First Yugoslav generation as well as a political tool to strengthen the dominant Bosniak national discourse.

While the First Yugoslavs find themselves in a life situation which to a certain degree allows them to retreat into the past, the Last Yugoslavs, discussed in Chap. 5, are, so to say, in mid-life and the war in the 1990s for many of this generation changed their expected life course dramatically. The youngest of them were in their late teens when the war broke out, while the oldest had already established their own households. The Last Yugoslavs have no personal memories of WWII and few, if any, memories of the first years of Tito's Yugoslavia. Social security and economic well-being are central to their experience of Yugoslavia. As shown in the book, the lives of the Last Yugoslavs were shaken most by the rupture of the war in the 1990s and the end of socialist Yugoslavia.

Due to the life situations they find themselves in, the particular challenge for the Last Yugoslavs is to re-orient themselves in the new post-war socio-political context. The need to (re-)orient themselves after the war is most urgent and immediate for the Last Yugoslavs as they find themselves in the middle of their lives (including their working and family lives). The war not only took away their homes but also their future prospects. The discursive tactics of the Last Yugoslavs are characterised by oscillation between different discourses—old and new—and this generation struggles to narrate their lives and the history of their society in a meaningful and coherent way. Many of the Last Yugoslavs have incorporated key elements of the dominant public discourses into their narratives but at the same time maintain nostalgia for Yugoslav times. The main strands of discussion in Chap. 5 centre on the notion of nostalgia, the experience of loss of home and the subsequent difficulties in telling a coherent narrative.

In Chap. 6, I turn my attention to the youngest generation, the Post-Yugoslavs, who experienced the war in the 1990s as children. They have

either very few or no personal memories of Yugoslavia, and their memories are primarily located in the context of their families. The older generations perceive the Post-Yugoslavs as a generation that is spoilt by nationalist propaganda and one lacking the experience of pre-war Mostar (particularly the experience of good neighbourliness among the different national groups). Meanwhile, the Post-Yugoslavs present their relatively young age as a 'shield' that has protected them from bad experiences. Due to their young age at the time of the war, the Post-Yugoslavs claim a neutral position for themselves. They argue that they are less affected by the negative feelings caused by war, such as hate and distrust towards the 'other'. Thereby their discursive tactics are characterised by dissociating their lives from the wider societal (national) experiences concerning the war.

A vital discussion in Chap. 6 centres on the counterpart of remembering: silencing. The Post-Yugoslav generation's discursive tactics serve to silence the effect of the war on their lives. As such, the Post-Yugoslavs do not subordinate their lives to the wider narratives of victimisation and suffering of their respective nations so prominent in the dominant public discourses and in narratives of the two older generations. It is suggested that they do so for at least two reasons. Firstly, it is a way to distance their lives from those of their parents and older family members, not least to maintain hope for their city to which their future is closely connected. Secondly, their silence can also be interpreted as a sign that this generation has not yet formed its own narrative of the recent past.

Although the Post-Yugoslavs do not indulge fully in the dominant public discourses when it comes to their lives, they have to a large degree accepted the national division as primordial, as is presently promoted within the school curriculum. The chapter includes a discussion about the way the Post-Yugoslavs give meaning to the experiences of the older generations and analyses processes of transmission of (collective) memory.

In the Conclusion, the central arguments of the book are summarised and conclusions are drawn from the analysis of the material presented and set in relation to relevant research in other regional and socio-historic contexts. Moreover, I point to areas of future research that could be explored in order to further develop theories on memory and generation, including the concept of 'generational positioning' developed in this book.

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2

Fragments of Communicative Memory: World War II, Tito and the 1992–95 War

Depending on their age, Mostarians have been exposed to different nationality politics, often in conflict with one another. We should not, however, imagine nationality politics as a top-down process whereby citizens are pictured as empty containers who passively accept these politics wholesale. This view has often directed the analysis of transient regimes, as Keith Brown points out:

> Yet in a region of transient regimes, what is emphasised about the inhabitants is their supposed willingness to adopt another national affiliation quickly. In parallel fashion, the new state is presumed to be ready and able to accept them as *tabulae rasae* and to inscribe national identity on them anew. […] What one might term 'experienced' history drops out of sight as the rhythm of every aspect of life is taken to be determined by the continuities or disjunctures in 'top-down' history. (Brown 2003: 129)

This book counters such representations by demonstrating that individuals are shaped by the experiences of the different historico-political periods through which they lived. These experiences may show continuities and discontinuities and may agree or conflict with each other, but they have an impact on people's perceptions of their society and their past.

M. Palmberger, *How Generations Remember*,
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In discussing the historical periods that can still be encountered in communicative memory (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995), this chapter shows how politically turbulent recent Yugoslav history has been. It provides insights into the historico-political periods Mostarians (depending on their ages, of course) have lived through and, more importantly, it discusses changing memory and identity politics individuals of different generations were exposed to as well as different forms of neighbourliness (*komšiluk*).

World War II in the Territory of Present-Day Bosnia and Herzegovina

Fighting within the territory of Yugoslavia during WWII—from the Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia in 1941 to their defeat in 1945—was extremely complex, especially when accounting for the various forces and oscillating alliances:

> The history of the Second World War in Yugoslavia is the story of many wars piled one on top of another. First, of course, there was the initial war conducted by Germany and Italy against Yugoslavia itself. […] There was also the war of the Axis occupiers against Yugoslav resistance. […] And then there were at least two civil wars. One was a war conducted by Croatian extremists [Ustasha] against the Serb population of Croatia and Bosnia, a war of aggression on one side and sometimes indiscriminate retaliation on the other. And finally there was a war between the two main resistance organizations in which the Serbs from those areas enlisted: the Četniks and the Communist Partisans. (Malcolm 2002: 174)

The three key players—Chetniks (*Četnici*), Ustashe (*Ustaše*) and the Partisans (*Partizani*)—cannot be clearly distinguished along national lines, even if Serbs were predominant among the Chetniks and Croats predominant among the Ustashe. People of other nationalities joined them, though in far smaller numbers.

Germany defeated the Kingdom of Yugoslavia within 11 days,[1] a campaign that exemplified the concept of *blitzkrieg*. Even before

[1] For a detailed discussion about the interwar period, see Lampe 1996.

Yugoslavia surrendered, the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, NDH)—a quasi-puppet state—had been established with the support of Germany and Italy in April 1941.[2] The centre of the NDH, led by Ante Pavelić, was in Zagreb but the NDH also incorporated the whole of BiH, whereby Mostar came under Italian rule. Most Croats accepted the new regime and many saw it as liberation from Serb hegemony. Ante Pavelić became the declared *Fuehrer* of NDH and his Ustasha organisation started to 'cleanse' the territory of any non-Croats, mainly Serbs and Jews, since Muslims were perceived as quasi-Croats. The NDH's population included 51 % Croats; among the remaining half 30 % were Serbs and 12 % Muslims. In the territory of BiH, by contrast, the population was predominantly Serb and Muslim. But here, too, the NDH directed its aggressive activities against the Serb rather than the Muslim population. The Croat claim that the Muslims were of Croat and Catholic or Bougumil origin was countered by the Serb claim that the Muslim population was in fact Serb. These claims were significant because incorporating Bosniaks into the Serb or Croat nation had been practised since the mid-19th century by both Croats and Serbs in order to claim the territory of BiH, a practice that was to continue into the post-WWII period.

NDH terror against Serbs began soon after the German occupation. In June 1941 a mass arrest of Serbs occurred in Mostar; hundreds were shot and their bodies thrown into the Neretva River. 'Anti-semitism was of only secondary concern to Ustaša ideologists. The main aim was to "solve" the problem of the large Serb minority (1.9 million out of a total of 6.3 million) in the territory of the NDH' (Malcolm 2002: 176). The Ustasha set Croats apart from the Slav population by proclaiming themselves as 'pure Aryans' of Gothic or Persian descent. Most Serb men able to fight joined either the Chetnik led by Draža Mihajlović or the Partisan

[2] The Ustasha movement was almost unknown to the population before the war and in the beginning found little support among the majority of Croats but received strong support from the local Catholic Church. When the NDH merged into BiH, it attempted 'to eliminate from its territory the communists (of all ethnic backgrounds), Serbs who refused to convert into "Orthodox Croats", the Jews, and the Gypsies (Roma)' (Perica 2002: 24; see also Carmichael 2002). Muslims were not seen as a separate nation but were called 'Muslim Croats' (see Perica 2002: 22). On the church's support for the NDH, see Jäger 2001. Cohen and Riesman (1996) provide insight into the generally unknown collaboration of Serbs in the destruction of the Jews.

movement led by Josip Broz Tito to fight the Ustasha. The Chetnik reaction against the Ustasha was particularly brutal in Herzegovina, where they killed Croat and Muslim villagers whose acquiescence in NDH rule they regarded as collaboration. There were also Serb fascist tendencies towards a 'homogeneous Serbia' including Bosnia and Herzegovina and other parts of Yugoslavia and directed primarily against Jews, but also Croats and Muslims (Velikonja 2003: 165).[3]

Although the majority of Muslims were opposed or at least indifferent to the Pavelić regime, some of the Muslim population supported it, particularly those who had been strongly pro-Croat during the interwar period (Tomasevich 2001: 491). A sizable number of Muslims joined Ustasha militia units and helped perpetrate atrocities against the Serb population. Gradually, however, more and more Muslims openly opposed the Ustasha regime and spoke out against the persecution of innocent Serb clergy and civilians. There were also those who joined the Partisans, thereby revolting against the Ustasha. This was also the case in Mostar (see Tomasevich 2001; Wilson 1979). The communist Partisans fought both against the Chetniks, who aimed for a rebirth of a Serb-dominated Yugoslav monarchy, and against the Ustashe, who were allies of Germany (see Pavkovic 1997; Schmider 2002; Schöpflin 1993).

At the beginning of WWII, the Partisans, who were fighting for a socialist Yugoslavia, fought independently and only later aligned with the Allies. At the first session of the National Antifascist Council of National Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ZAVNOBiH—Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobodjenja Bosne i Hercegovine) on 25 November 1943 in Jajce, the wartime Partisan parliament voted for a new Yugoslavia. It envisioned this new Yugoslavia as a federation of six republics and two provinces. The future BiH was defined as one of the six republics of the three equal nations: Muslims, Croats and Serbs (Bougarel 1996: 92).

The Konjic Battalion (renamed Mostar Battalion in June 1942) was formed in September 1941. Although Muslims were in the majority, it was a multinational unit and included Croats, Serbs, Montenegrins, Jews and others (see Hoare 2005). When Nenad Vasić took over the role of

[3] Out of the around 14,000 Jews living in BiH, about 12,000 were killed during WWII (Malcolm 2002: 176).

command in January 1942, the Mostar Battalion turned to the extreme left and Vasić proceeded to terrorise his own Partisans:

> In practice, the 'revolutionary' terror of the Mostar Battalion tended to resemble the terror practised by its 'reactionary' enemies, the Chetniks and Ustashas. Thus, in the words of a contemporary Partisan report, the battalion 'had from the start an unjust attitude towards Croats. During the seizure of Croat villages unjust liquidations were enacted and a whole series of other errors committed. Captured Croats were subject to torture and later executed. All those steps had as a result the exodus of the Croat population from the territory held by the Partisans'. (Hoare 2005: 230)

When Vasić was finally removed as commander at the end of September 1942, the Mostar Battalion was incorporated into the 10th Hercegovinian Brigade. Hoare concludes that '(d)espite of the traumas experienced by the Partisans of the Mostar Battalion, they proved to be the most reliable in northern Hercegovina as those from urban backgrounds were immune to Chetnik agitation' (Hoare 2005: 233). The urban origin of Mostar's Partisans is still visible in their commemorations that take place to this day (see Chap. 4).

During WWII, losses were experienced on all sides, but among Muslims they were particularly high (Tomasevich 2001). Muslims fought—and were killed—on all sides. Altogether around 75,000 Bosnian Muslims died in the war. This represented 8.1 % of their total population and was the highest loss suffered by any people in Yugoslavia except for the Jews and Gypsies (see Malcolm 2002; Schöpflin 1993). It is also important to note that generally more Yugoslavs were killed by other Yugoslavs than by the occupying forces (Allcock 2000: 270), surely a difficult legacy for the second Yugoslavia. Mostar, however, not only saw conflict and atrocities during WWII; it was also an important centre of resistance (Bose 2002).

The Second Yugoslavia and Memory Politics Under Tito

After the fascist occupiers had been defeated (which, as far as Mostar is concerned, was on 14 February 1945), the second Yugoslavia under Tito was established. The newly established BiH constituted a republic with

its Austro-Hungarian borders reinstated.[4] This was not appreciated by all former war parties, least of all by Croat and Serb extremists, who longed for a Great Croatia and Great Serbia, respectively, incorporating the territory of BiH. They both rested their claims on history and, as noted above, each argued that the Muslim population was originally Croat or Serb (see Banac 1993; Cohen 1995).

The Partisans who assumed power after WWII were best positioned to present themselves as the winners of the war since they claimed to have expelled the foreign occupiers and to also have defeated their internal enemies (Schöpflin 1993: 179). To Tito, however, it seemed too difficult (and too dangerous due to the risk of renewed tensions) to address the period other than by speaking of the Yugoslavs as fighting collectively against the Nazis (see Palmberger 2006).

Josip Broz Tito became the central figure of the second Yugoslavia and established a cult around himself that would persist for some years, even after his death. Tito was portrayed as a 'creator and saviour', a 'peacemaker' and a 'defender of truth' (Perica 2002: 103). Central to the Tito cult was the annual Titova štafeta (Tito's Relay), later called Štafeta mladosti (Youth Relay), which took place annually on 25 May. It was a race through Yugoslavia for Tito's birthday and was taken to be a symbol of brotherhood and unity and of a shared Yugoslav dream. Titova štafeta outlived Tito and continued to take place until 1987. One could even say that it has outlived Tito to the present day, at least in the memories of many people.

Many of my oldest informants narrated the post-WWII period as a time of new beginnings rather than of persisting tensions between the former warring parties. Perhaps these memories are linked to my interlocutors' young age at the time; many were teenagers and remember the economic hardship of that time rather than the national tensions. But after WWII Mostar was not a divided city in the way it is today, and from this perspective the tensions may in retrospect seem negligible. Presumably it was also Tito's strong grip on the politics of memory that prevented persisting tensions from becoming a subject of discussion.

[4] Already in 1580 the province of Bosnia was created under Ottoman rule. It included entire present BiH and some neighbouring parts of Croatia, Dalmatia, Slavonica and Serbia (see Malcolm 2002).

Tito's patriotic education was not based on a melting-pot metaphor but, quite the contrary, stressed the distinctiveness of the different nations (in the meaning of narod) living in the territory of Yugoslavia. However, brotherhood and unity was the concept chosen to prevent more conflict, which would hinder Yugoslavia from prospering (see Perica 2002). This ideology was also promoted by artists, for example, by the popular rock band Bijelo Dugme from Sarajevo who in one of their popular songs sang 'There is a secret link, a secret link for all of us'. Bijelo Dugme, together with a number of other rock bands from that time, still triggers strong sentimental emotions among many of the Last Yugoslavs who associate these bands and their music with their youth and the spirit of Yugoslavia (see Chap. 5).

Tito's self-created myth fell on fertile soil not only in Yugoslavia, but also outside of it. He was often credited with bringing peace and reconciliation to the region. Thus Tito's admirers closed their eyes to his aspirations for power and the war crimes committed under his orders at the end of WWII. Between 1945 and 1946, up to 250,000 people vanished through Tito's detention camps, death marches and mass shootings. One event still remembered today (mainly by Croats) is the tragedy of Bleiburg (Radonic 2010). When the Partisans met the British troops in this Austrian town in April 1945, the British handed over more than 18,000 captured members of various anti-Partisan forces (Slovene home guards, Ustasha soldiers as well as Serb and Muslim Chetniks) who had sought refuge in Allied-controlled Austria. Most of them were massacred when they reached Yugoslavia (Malcolm 2002: 193; see also Pavlowitch 1992). These war crimes were one of the best-kept secrets and what happened in the years of 1945 and 1946 became taboo. The same was true for the internal wars fought during WWII:

> As Communist rule entailed ideological control over the representation of the past, those horrifying events that would disrupt interethnic cooperation were not to be mentioned, except in collective categories, all 'victims of fascism' on one side, and all 'foreign occupiers and domestic traitors' on the other side. (Denich 1994: 370)

The Yugoslav people were portrayed as brave communist Partisan fighters who defeated the evil fascists. This image of the heroic Yugoslavs was

excessively repeated in school books and in movies (e.g., in *The Battle of Neretva*) (see Jäger 2001). All this was an act of memory politics that attempted to stop any further antagonism between the national groups, and aimed (at least in the initial years of Tito's rule) to create a single identity in a unified state through a single memory. Brotherhood and unity was the ideology upon which the Titoist state claimed to be founded. It was the leitmotif to encourage people to live peacefully together after the atrocities of WWII.

Tito's period of rule can be divided into two parts: a repressive regime and a relatively liberal regime. Depending on their age, my interlocutors experienced Yugoslavia in very different ways. Only the First Yugoslavs lived through the entire period of Tito's Yugoslavia and thus experienced Tito as a strict dictator and as a 'generous state father' who brought economic prosperity and peace to the region. It might be assumed that those who experienced Tito's first period of rule show a more ambivalent attitude towards the former statesman, but this is not necessarily the case. Among the First Yugoslavs are also those who show the greatest, most undivided loyalty to Tito (discussed in Chap. 4).

Within the repressive phase fall the above-mentioned atrocities in Bleiburg in 1945, as well as the detention camps, the most infamous of them being Goli Otok. It was a phase of strong centralism from Belgrade. After breaking with Stalin in 1948, all those who were rightly or wrongly accused of being Stalin supporters faced jail or detention camps. These atrocities committed during Tito's period of rule (together with other atrocities committed during WWII) only became a subject of public discussion after Tito's death. However, the atrocities were primarily discussed from a nationalist vantage point, with the aim of supporting the claim for the victimisation of one's group—Serb, Croat or Bosniak—rather than as a criticism of socialism under Tito in more general terms (see Allcock 2000; Bet-El 2002; Denich 1994; Gilbert 2006; Hayden 1994; Price 2002).

The post-WWII period was also a time of economic reconstruction with rapid industrialisation. This was tackled by financial aid from the United Nations, and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia organised youth brigades who participated in the radne akcije (working projects). Moreover, in 1946 the Yugoslav government turned over agricultural

land to those who tilled it in order to reward the peasants who were the backbone of support for the Partisan liberation. Not surprisingly this reform was greatly opposed by the former land owners (Donia and Fine 1994: 165–166).[5]

The first period of Yugoslavia ends in the mid-1960s with an economic reform (in 1965) and the fall of the head of the police apparatus, Aleksandar Ranković (in 1966) (Lovrenović 1999: 170). In BiH this change went hand in hand with a transfer of leading positions from the old Serb elite to the young generation consisting also of Muslims and Croats. Gradually, more and more power was given to the six republics. The idea of self-management, first introduced during the 1950s, was one aspect of this power transfer. 'Self-management was a theoretically inspired response to Marx's complaint that workers in a capitalist society are alienated from the means of production' (Donia and Fine 1994: 171). Self-management was intended to grant more power to workers at the factories and enterprises and to reduce the power of state central planners. The former was realised by gradually establishing workers' councils, but the latter did not follow (Donia and Fine 1994: 171; see also Dyker 1990). The one-party state also remained during the second phase, with Tito as the president-for-life of Yugoslavia.[6] In the second phase, however, Yugoslavia distinguished itself from Soviet-style communism due to its relative freedom of movement and opinion (see Allcock 2000). Furthermore, Tito's initial attempts to marginalise religion were no longer dominant in the second phase of his rule (see Velikonja 2003; Wilson 1979).

Tito is still remembered fondly by many Mostarians through the generations as shown in this book. Although so-called Tito-nostalgia can be found in all Yugoslav successor states, BiH had an extraordinarily strong relationship with Tito: 'In no republic was Tito's stature greater than in Bosnia, home of the Partisan movement and of his most disciplined

[5] For a long time the Muslims were in possession of the great majority of land, certainly under the Ottoman Empire, but this continued even into the Habsburg Empire era. 'As late as 1910, more than thirty years after the end of the Ottoman presence in Bosnia, 91.1 per cent of the landed proprietors having *kmetovi* (tenant farmers with feudal obligations) were Muslims, while 95.4 per cent of the kmetovi were Orthodox or Catholic' (Bougarel 1996: 88).

[6] In the early 1970s an amendment to the constitution was made to ensure that Tito would be president for life. Moreover, Tito was so determined not to lose power that he refused to select or support anyone from among those close to him to become his successor.

and Orthodox Party organization' (Donia and Fine 1994: 191). Those who might be called Yugo-nostalgists primarily remember Tito's second period of rule (Palmberger 2008). Their discourses emphasise how distinct Yugoslavia was from all the other socialist countries. It is true that Yugoslavs had much more freedom (e.g., of opinion, travel and religion). However, it was somewhat disconcerting that my interlocutors did not see any parallels with other socialist experiences.

During my fieldwork I realised that there still are great gaps of knowledge in regard to the crimes Tito committed, especially among young and middle-aged Bosniaks. There are few people who reflect on Tito's period of rule in a somewhat balanced way, taking note of the achievements of the former statesman as well as of the atrocities that were committed in his name. This phenomenon can be traced to the general lack of critical political and civic engagement with the socialist period compared to that which has taken place in other post-socialist countries, for example, in East Germany. Instead of a critical debate, nationalist propaganda prevailed in the immediate Yugoslav post-socialist years. To this day such a critical engagement has not yet been initiated since the crimes committed during the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s overshadow the crimes committed during socialist Yugoslavia (Gilbert 2006; Hosić 2014).

Although life in Yugoslavia cannot be compared to life in the Soviet Union, there was nevertheless a noticeable lack of democratic rights:

> This was also connected to the fact that 'the people', in the sense of demos or plebs and as political subjects, have lost political influence and meaning in the Yugoslav constitutional system, while the nations and nationalities have become the main political subjects. (Stanovčić 1988: 26)

Its nations enjoyed more equality of rights in Yugoslavia than in any other socialist country, but there was a tremendous lack of universal democratic rights of individuals, uncoupled from the nation (Tepavac 2000: 76–77). This was one result of Tito's 'nationality politics' that gave more and more power to the republics. Cohen calls this new outlook of the 1960s 'pluralist socialism', a period when Tito realised that he could and should no longer treat intergroup conflicts as taboo (Cohen 1995: 29).

During his rule, Tito had to juggle promoting brotherhood and unity and a shared Yugoslav identity[7] (which he actively did only in the beginning) with giving in to national claims for more rights and autonomy in order to prevent revolution and secession. In the early 1960s leaders claimed more power at the level of the republics and increasingly rejected the concept of Yugoslav nationality. In the constitution of 1974, Tito finally awarded the republics more autonomy and power. With the constitutional changes in the 1970s, Yugoslavia moved from a centralised federal system to a confederal system (Cohen 1995). During the last decades of socialist Yugoslavia, people were also increasingly encouraged to identify themselves with a particular nation. For official purposes, such as census, citizens were discouraged from declaring their nationality as Yugoslav, but were pressured to choose one of the offered national categories. Parents in mixed marriages were advised to choose one of their nationalities rather than the category 'Yugoslav' when registering their children's births (see Denich 1993).

In order to counter the dominant nations (first and foremost the Serb and Croat), Tito promoted the national identity of smaller groups, including the Muslims. Before looking more closely at the rise of nationalism, let us first turn towards the question of the extent to which a supranational Yugoslav identity was accepted.

National Identities and Nationality Politics

In retrospect it is difficult to assess to what degree the citizens of Yugoslavia identified themselves as Yugoslavs. One source we can turn to in this matter is census data. When analysing such data, however, we should bear in mind that they only give a limited picture as identity issues in reality are complex, and multiple identities are likely to coexist. It may be safe to assume that the identity chosen in a census is often the one that is most politically useful. Furthermore, in order to interpret the choices made, we have to take into consideration the options given by the census. In the case of the Bosniak nation this is particularly important

[7] For a historical discussion of the idea of Yugoslavism, see Crampton (1997), Djokić (2003) and Djordjevic (1992).

as Bosniaks were not able to choose their own nationality in any census before 1971.[8]

At the beginning of the second Yugoslavia, Muslims chose the category 'Muslim undetermined' (read: religious Muslim of undetermined nationality) in the census of 1948 or 'Yugoslav undetermined' in the census of 1953 when the former option was no longer available.[9] The census of 1961 gave Bosniaks the option to declare themselves as 'Ethnic Muslim'. Finally, in the census of 1971, they could identify as Bosnian Muslim by nationality (see Donia and Fine 1994; Lovrenović 1999). This late recognition of the Bosniak nation is remembered by Bosniaks—even by Tito-nostalgists—as one of Tito's greatest mistakes.

Starting from the assumption that group identities are situational and context-based, it is clear that census data, however precisely they are conducted, are never able to show the complexity of everyday identification. For example, a Herzegovinian woman with a Bosniak background may have stressed her Herzegovinian identity when travelling in Bosnia, her Bosnian (-Herzegovinian) identity when travelling in other republics of Yugoslavia, and her Yugoslav identity when travelling outside of Yugoslavia. If asked at home about her identity she may have referred to herself as Muslim. When not asked directly she may have presented herself as a Muslim, a Herzegovinian, a Bosnian (-Herzegovinian) and a Yugoslav in more or less the same terms, because these identities did not exclude one another.

National identity among many Croat Herzegovinians was more pronounced than among Bosniaks. While Croats in Bosnia have felt a stronger connection to BiH than to Croatia, in Herzegovina—owing to its geographical proximity to Croatia—Croats had stronger ties with Croatia. I have met Croats as well as Bosniaks who identify themselves as Herzegovinians; but I also noticed that for the former this was more than just a regional identity. In other words, the regional identity is not in addition to that of being a citizen of BiH, but rather stands in opposition to it. In the cases of most of the several Croats I have met who stressed

[8] In February 1968 the Central Committee of the League of Communists of BiH decided to grant the Bosnian Muslims a nationality status recognised by the federal constitution (see Perica 2002: 75).

[9] In the early post-WWII censuses some Muslims also chose the census categories 'Serb' or 'Croat'.

this, the emphasis on their Herzegovinian identity felt like a political statement declaring that if the Croats of Herzegovina could not be part of Croatia they could at least distinguish themselves from Bosniak-dominated Bosnia (and perhaps in the future win a separate Croat entity). I experienced this position most strongly among Herzegovinian-Croat academics who, when I said Bosna (Bosnia) instead of Bosna i Hercegovina (Bosnia and Herzegovina) for the sake of brevity, told me I always had to include Herzegovina because I would otherwise be making a political statement (see Žepić 2006).

In regard to questions of identification it was interesting to learn not only about my interlocutors' present identity but also about their pre-war identifications. Most told me that they have always identified themselves as 'Bosniak' or 'Croat'. Apart from a few exceptions, only those who still declare themselves as Yugoslavs told me about their former Yugoslav identification.

The percentage of cross-national marriages is often taken as proof that Yugoslavia overcame national cleavages. However, these numbers are interpreted very differently by different scholars of the region. Nikolai Botev and Richard Wagner (1993), for example, try to deconstruct the popular notion that national intermarriages increased during the post-WWII socialist period. Their analysis is based on data from 1964 to 1988. It shows that mixed marriages were not as common as often assumed and constituted only 12 % of marriages in Yugoslavia. 'The major finding from examining the resultant homogamy parameters is that endogamous, rather than exogamous, marriages remain the norm in Yugoslavia' (Botev and Wagner 1993: n.p.). However, in urban areas in BiH, such as Mostar, mixed marriages were much more common and constituted around 30 % of all marriages. The difference between rural and urban places is most likely linked to a process of increasing individualism in the latter: 'Interethnic marriages are justified in terms of individualism, and the idea of individual uniqueness contradicts ideologies of ethnic loyalty and tight ethnic incorporation' (Eriksen 1998: 130). This important factor helps explain why in cities, such as Mostar and Sarajevo, cross-national marriages were more common than in rural BiH.

Moreover, we have to ask ourselves what the number of mixed marriages tells us. Is a low rate of such marriages necessarily a sign of a distance

between the ethnic/national groups? Tone Bringa analyses the generally relatively low intermarriage rate in a somewhat more positive way. Although she agrees that (especially in rural areas) marriage within one's national group was a way to maintain group distinction, she does not conclude that this means an absence of tolerance or a rejection of the other group (Bringa 1993, see also Lockwood 1975).[10] Mostar has had an exceptional position in Yugoslavia, which is also reflected in its incredibly high cross-national marriage rate. This does not mean, however, that cross-national marriages were the norm and that they were not contested (e.g., by older family members). But, in contrast to the present situation, they were socially more accepted during the post-WWII socialist period, at least in urban areas and were taken as proof that Tito's ideology of Brotherhood and Unity bore fruit.

Returning to Tito's nationality politics, it is significant that as early as the 1960s the LCY (League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Savez komunista Jugoslavije) stopped actively promoting the idea of Yugoslavism (Donia and Fine 1994: 177–178). This change in policy could also be seen in the media. Even though there were initial efforts to build a federation-wide media crossing the borders of the respective republics—for example, the Yugoslavia-wide broadcast of the evening news Dnevnik each day in another republic—the majority of media outlets soon focused reporting and broadcasting on their own republic, resulting in the absence of a federation-wide media scene (Milošević 2000: 109). This phenomenon could also be observed in the case of radio programmes/stations and the print media (Allcock 2000: 293). Education, which together with the media is a central tool for creating a shared identity, was also organised on the level of republics. Since the republics were in control of the curriculum, the teaching of separate histories began even before the break-up of Yugoslavia, albeit in a diluted way (see Sekulic et al. 1994).

It can be concluded that initial hopes for a Yugoslav identity did not materialise, not even in BiH. The resistance to forming a Yugoslav identity may be better understood in light of BiH's history, where all institutions

[10] This argument can be substantiated by the fact that in a peaceful and stable country like Switzerland, interethnic marriages are also not common. We should also consider that villages in BiH were often dominated by Bosniaks or Croats or Serbs.

below the state were strongly tied to national affiliation, thereby preventing the development of a sense of citizenship (Allcock 2000: 277). The Bosnian political order structured along communitarianism has a long history. It can also be observed in the development of political parties that ostensibly represent the people of BiH but have actually been dominated by national factions since 1910 (Bougarel 1996: 87).

Questions Around Coexistence (*suživot*) and Neighbourliness (*komšiluk*)

Ottoman society, with its millet system, was constituted around religious groups who enjoyed semi-autonomy and who were ruled by their own religious leaders (Babuna 2004: 288). But even if 'communitarian' identities had structured political life in BiH since the Ottoman Empire (Banac 1993), what can we say about coexistence in everyday life? The quality of coexistence is much harder to measure than political agendas. Tone Bringa, who conducted research in a Bosnian village in the years before the recent war broke out, provides us with important observations that may help to explain the discrepancy. Bringa recognised that in social interactions, personality rather than nationality mattered (Bringa 1995: 151). This does not mean that nationality did not matter in the social structure of the village, but that in face-to-face contact it was the personality of the interlocutor that counted in the end. According to this interpretation, communitarism is a strong component of local politics, but is not necessarily reflected in everyday encounters among people of different national backgrounds. Hence, there is a discrepancy between practices in everyday life and those on the political level. I believe it is crucial to be aware of this tension between politics and everyday life in order to understand the complexity of national coexistence in BiH, pre- and post-war (although in the latter there is far less room for cross-national interaction).

A central discourse about people's coexistence (suživot) is the concept of komšiluk (neighbourliness). If people speak about komšiluk when narrating the past, they are usually referring to the good pre-war neighbourliness. Even if Sorabji (2008) rightly reminds us that the concept of komšiluk cannot be reduced to cross-ethno-national relations, in discourses

about the past it is usually referred to in this meaning. Komšiluk is then a way to express what was and what no longer is, and to emphasise today's corrupt relations between Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs. Pre-war komšiluk is narrated as the art of being neighbourly regardless of national affiliation (although Roma are usually excluded in this discourse), meaning neighbours who help each other out (for example, during illness) but who also celebrate festivities together and share daily practices, such as drinking coffee with one another (see Helms 2010; Stefansson 2010).

In post-war times, discourses on komšiluk often also centre on the urban–rural division (see Jansen 2005, see Chaps. 4 and 5). Aspects of komšiluk feature in narratives about the Yugoslav period among all three generations identified but are most prominent among the First Yugoslavs, whose narratives often centre on the decay of good neighbourliness and family life, as well as on the decay of urbanity in Mostar connected to the war (as a result of population change). But it is also a theme present in the narratives of the Post-Yugoslavs as well as the Last Yugoslavs. The latter are likely to follow a nostalgic discourse on komšiluk, even if they otherwise often draw strongly on a nationalist discourse.

Before more fully exploring how the past is narrated from the present position, it is important to attend to the exclusive nationalism that came to the forefront in the 1980s. In the following section, I briefly outline the national mobilisation of Croats and Bosniaks and discuss the role of clerics in this process. I first focus on the Croat national mobilisation before turning to that of the Bosniaks.

National Mobilisation and Instrumentalisation of the Past

The first great expression of a Croat national mass movement took place between 1967 and 1972 during the so-called 'Croatian Spring'. The movement's central demands were for more civil rights for Croat citizens and more decentralisation of the economy. Among Croats the belief was strong that Croatia would only reach Western Europe's level of prosperity without the rest of Yugoslavia. In the spring of 1971 the protests and strikes reached their peak and Croatia was on the verge of revolution.

Tito threatened military intervention and jailed a large number of the movement's leaders and activists. In the subsequent period, the Roman Catholic Church took over the 'national agenda'. It started by reintroducing the cult of the Virgin Mary as the major national and religious symbol of Catholic Croatia: '[D]uring the Great Novena (1975–1984) the Croat episcopate carried out ethnic mobilization and religious awakening of Catholic Croats under the symbolic guidance of the Virgin Mary, referred to as the "Queen of the Croats"' (Perica 2002: 109). In 1981, six children from the village of Medjugorje (Western Herzegovina) stated that they had encountered a Croatian-speaking Madonna. Only seven years after the miracle had taken place, around 10 million people from all over the world had gone on pilgrimage to Medjugorje (see Bax 1995; Perica 2002; Sells 1996).

Perica (2002: 110) argues that the apparitions of the Virgin Mary at Medjugorje have to be understood in the context of the struggle of the Catholic Church with communism, the anti-communist backlash after Tito's death, and the deep economic crisis as well as the growing ethnopolitical tensions. The cult of the Virgin Mary and the mass pilgrimage to Medjugorje worsened the already tense relationship between the Catholic clergy and the Orthodox as well as Muslim representatives in BiH. The last two groups viewed the Medjugorje movement as a fall-back into Ustashism, not least because Medjugorje was the headquarters of the Ustasha during WWII (see Bax 1995).[11]

Unlike their Christian counterparts, the Muslim clerics did not establish themselves as the guardians of national identity to the same extent. 'In contrast to Serbian and Croatian Christian clergy, Muslim clerics (hodžas, imams) and ulema did not systematically worship medieval native rulers, native saints, shrines, territory, and ethnic myths' (Perica 2002: 74). The top Muslim leaders were all Partisan veterans, and the loyalty of the ulema to the LCY was strong. But at the end of the 1980s nationalist goals found support among some anti-communist Muslim clerics who sympathised with Alija Izetbegović's religious nationalism. Increasing anti-Muslim sentiments made it easy for Izetbegović to present himself as the only defender of the Bosnian Muslim nation.

[11] To show their disapproval, but also to find another way to reach their nationalist goal, the Serbian Church started a year-long commemoration of the victims of WWII (see Perica 2002).

Izetbegović had already been on the political scene in 1970 when he wrote the Islamic Declaration: A Program for the Islamization of Muslims and Muslim Peoples. In this declaration, he envisaged the Muslims of the world uniting to launch a religious and social revolution. Although not explicitly referring to Yugoslavia or BiH, the text was critiqued by Izetbegović's opponents who thought they could identify, embedded in the text, the claim that the Muslims, once they reached a majority, should establish an Islamic State. In 1983, the communists in power in Sarajevo took action by starting a massive propaganda campaign and arresting many of Izetbegović's sympathizers. Izetbegović himself was sentenced to 14 years in prison (of which he served five years) because of his declaration (Meier and Ramet 1999; see also Hoppe 1998; Velikonja 2003). When the communists lost their influence, Izetbegović founded the leading Bosniak nationalist party SDA (Stranka demokratska akcije, Party of Democratic Action) in 1990 (see Babuna 1996; Perica 2002).

So, throughout the 1980s and in the beginning of the 1990s, Muslim identity (but also the identity of Croats and Serbs) was intensely discussed. A theory of common descent and a consistent Bosniak history was promoted. At the same time, however, Bosnian intellectuals revived the historical category Bošnjak (Bosniak) to include all three categories. This idea never succeeded. 'Since Serb and Croat national identification had won the day in Bosnia, Bošnjak had lost its meaning as an inclusive term for Bosnians of all three confessions' (Bringa 1995: 35). Bošnjak then became a synonym for Bosnian Muslim, in contrast to Croat and Serb. The reinventing of the term Bošnjak can also be seen as an attempt by Bosnian Muslims to establish a more obvious historical link to the state and territory of BiH. At the same time the term Bosanac (Bosnian) as a regional identity for many people lost its meaning (Bringa 1995).

When national discourses became increasingly antagonistic, leaders of both the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Serbs loudly proclaimed that the Muslim population actually belonged to them (but they had merely converted to Islam, an argument already taken up earlier in history) and that they were only an 'invented people' (Bringa 1995; see also Ivanov 1996). When tensions intensified in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the

Bosniaks were in an exceptional position since, unlike their Croat and Serb compatriots, their regional and national identities were more or less identical, given the fact that they did not have a 'mother country' (see Calic 1995a: 158). For this reason, Bringa (1995: 30) argues that the Bosniak identity was conceptualised differently than that of the Croats and the Serbs. Bringa states that the Bosniaks' collective identity was based on a shared environment, cultural practices and common experiences. In contrast, the collective identities of Croats and Serbs focused on shared blood and a myth of common origins.

In conclusion, we can say that a good number of clerics in BiH did act as carriers of the 'national idea', although the extent to which they became involved certainly differs and also changed over time. When nationalist politicians were not able to operate freely during Tito's rule and in many cases even were jailed, the churches (and to some degree also the mosques) took over and presented themselves as the only institutions capable of defending national interests. In the end, representatives from all three main religions in BiH fuelled tensions and mistrust.

The political involvement of religious representatives continued after the war, particularly before elections. In the 2006 pre-election period, for example, the Catholic Cardinal Puljić openly sided with the leading Croat nationalist party HDZ (Hrvatske demokratska zajednica, Croat Democratic Union). He made a plea to the Croat people to make their voices heard and to give support to those who were the only ones selflessly defending the interests of the Croat people, alluding to the HDZ (Slobodna Bosna, 8 September 2006). In a similar way, the religious head of BiH's Muslims, Reisu-l-ulema Mustafa ef Cerić made a plea to the Bosniak population to vote for the Bosniak nationalist party, which claimed to end the 'apartheid' in Mostar: 'We can see the establishment of Muslim ghettos in Mostar. Schools are divided and Bosniak children have to attend lectures in the evening hours. Unfortunately, we face apartheid in Mostar' (Danas, 13 July 2006). This speech by Cerić triggered a radicalisation of nationalist discourses on both sides and culminated in several violent acts that reinforced mistrust in Mostar. These incidents and the atmosphere of mistrust helped nationalist parties (of both sides) to gain votes.

War in Mostar and Its Aftermath

It is a widely shared view that the break-up of Yugoslavia was launched 'from above' by an inductive nationalism rather than by a spontaneous process 'from below'. 'Its function was in all areas more or less two-fold: first to provide legitimacy to the old and new elites in their battle to maintain or obtain power, and second to replace old collectivism (communism) with a new form of collectivism (national homogenization)' (Pantic 2002: 78; see also Gagnon 2004; Gingrich 2002).

The fact that around 10,000 citizens participated in a peace march organised by the SDP (Socijaldemokratska partija, Social Democratic Party) in Mostar on 6 March 1992 shows that there was, at least initially, strong opposition to violence. As history showed, the conflict escalated the day after the peace march.[12] For most of my interlocutors the war came to Mostar unexpectedly. At the time war broke out in Slovenia and Croatia, most people in BiH felt sure that their country would not be affected. Even when the war finally did break out in BiH, many of my interlocutors still believed that Mostar would show resistance because it used to be the city known for its peaceful coexistence. This belief had serious consequences because families did not flee in time and children were not sent to safer places before the openly violent conflict soared.[13]

The following sections, focusing on Mostar's war and the aftermath, show that the war was the most 'efficient' means to achieve clear national cleavages; warmongers created (rather than drew on) clear-cut national identities in Mostar as elsewhere in BiH.

[12] At this point it has to be pointed out that there were also 'positive stories' of neighbours helping each other out during the war, also across nations. One honourable project conducted by the Research and Documentation Centre (RDC) in Sarajevo is to collect these 'positive stories' by conducting oral history interviews with witnesses. I would like to thank the RDC staff for the time they granted me at their centre and for providing me with two 'positive stories', among other material, from Herzegovina, even if these interviews are not directly used in this book.

[13] For detailed analyses of the outbreak of the war in BiH, see Allcock (2000), Calic (1995b), Cohen (1995), Gagnon (2004), Meier and Ramet (1999), Melčić (2007), Ramet (2002), Ramet and Adamovich (1995).

The Course of the War in Mostar

In contrast to analyses of the war that have attempted to explain the war fought on the territory of BiH between 1992 and 1995 as a single war, Bjelakovic and Strazzari (1999: 73) suggest we speak of a collection of local wars.[14] When we look at post-war BiH from this perspective, it is not surprising to find a very diverse picture across different parts of the country. Owing to particular war experiences (including demographic changes of various kinds) different places in the country faced different post-war contexts.

When people in Mostar talk about the war, they most often speak about two wars. They refer to the war when Bosniaks and Croats fought as allies against the mainly Serb-dominated JNA (Jugoslovenska narodna armija, Yugoslav People's Army) as the 'first war' and to the war that then broke out between the former allies as the 'second war'. In the beginning of the war, the main military formations were the JNA and three types of Croat units: the HVO (Hrvatsko vijeće obrane, Croat Defence Council), the HOS (Hrvatske obrambene snage, Croat Defence Force) and the regular troops of the Croat Army. After numerous small-scale military conflicts, the first war started at the beginning of April 1992 between the Serb-dominated JNA and SDS (Srpska demokratska stranka, Serb Democratic Party) troops on the one hand, and various Croat troops (HVO and HOS forces, including many Bosniaks among the latter)[15] supported by poorly armed units of the Territorial Defence (TO, loyal to the Sarajevo government) on the other hand. Because of the latter grouping's military marginality, the JNA, HVO, HOS and SDS forces remained the main actors.

When the war started, all healthy men aged 18–60 were banned from leaving the city. Despite this ban and the fact that Mostar was besieged (to the west and south by Croat-dominated troops and to the north

[14] The following overview of the course of the war in Mostar relies greatly on the article 'The Sack of Mostar, 1992–1994: The Politico-Military Connection' by Bjelakovic and Strazzari (1999), which provides a more detailed and balanced picture than most other literature on the Mostar war I am aware of (often written by former soldiers of one of the military forces involved). However, the description of the war events provided here makes no claim to be complete. More research on the course of the war is still needed.

[15] Many Bosniak conscripts and volunteers joined the HOS owing to the lack of any Bosniak military alternative.

and east by Serb-dominated troops) people continued to leave the city (Bjelakovic and Strazzari 1999: 82). Owing to the lack of a unified command system for the different Croat-dominated forces and the TO, the JNA achieved control over most of the city. However, in May 1992 the HVO assumed full military power and the JNA began to withdraw from BiH, but left 80 % of its personnel and nearly all its military equipment to the new VRS (Vojska Republike Srpske, Army of the Serb Republic). During the months of withdrawal, most of the Serb population fled the town and settled in eastern Herzegovina in places such as Bileća, Trebinje, Gacko and Nevesinje, or fled to Serbia and Montenegro. Even though the VRS had withdrawn, it maintained control over the surrounding hills where it stationed its artillery (see Bjelakovic and Strazzari 1999; Yarwood 1999).

As soon as the former enemy left the city, a power struggle began among the former allies (Bosniaks and Croats). With the sudden retreat of the Serb troops, rumours persisted that Serbs and Croats had agreed on a secret deal to divide BiH between them at the Geneva talks. Even before war between the former allies had begun, there were signs that HDZ BiH was already preparing for secession:

> On 3 July 1992 the Croat Community of Herceg-Bosna (HZ Herceg-Bosna) was proclaimed. Already in this founding document Mostar was listed as the capital of the community. With this the town, the population of which was only to some one third Croat, attained a paramount importance in the thinking of Bosnian Croat separatists. They claimed that both Serbs and Bosniacs had their own towns. Mostar was to be theirs. (Gosztonyi 2003: 132)

In August 1992, Bosniak soldiers in the HOS units were disarmed and expelled or brought to detention camps. In this mutual climate of distrust and with the refusal of the HVO to enter into a joint command with the TO, the Bosniak-dominated Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ABiH, Armija Bosne i Hercegovine) was formed.

The Croats claimed their right to a Croat (West) Mostar by arguing that it was the only Croat city in BiH (Sarajevo being Bosniak and Banja Luka, Serb) and that if they lost it the Croat nation would not

be viable (see Yarwood 1999: 5). In order to mobilise Croats, an anti-Muslim propaganda campaign was launched with the active participation of Mostar's Croat TV station 'HTV'. The Bosniaks were presented as betrayers, as in this statement by Mate Boban, president of Herceg-Bosna and leader of the HVO:

> It is simply incomprehensible and difficult to understand that those who have survived thanks to the Croatian people and the Croatian units […] those who have gained their strength their breath of life, thanks to Croats—have now turned against the Croats. (Mate Boban cited in Cohen 1995: 252)

Both this and similar statements fell on fertile soil after the military success of the ABiH against the HVO during the autumn of 1993, when thousands of civilian Croats in central Bosnia were killed or forced to flee (Cohen 1995: 279).

According to Bjelakovic and Strazzari (1999) there are two factors that contributed to the ultimate military confrontation between Croat and Bosniak forces in May 1993. Firstly, the HVO changed its character from a military organisation to an administrative-political unit, which became the backbone of the proclaimed Herceg-Bosna. Mostar was the most important city in BiH for the Croat goal to establish a mini Croat state—Herceg-Bosna—within BiH, with future aspirations to annex it to Croatia proper. The second factor contributing to the escalation of the conflict was the prospect that BiH would eventually be divided along national lines following the Vance-Owen plan which proposed the dividing of the country into several provinces (Bjelakovic and Strazzari 1999: 85; see also Cohen 1995).

Until May 1993 the relationship between the Bosniak-dominated ABiH and the Croat-dominated HVO remained tense but relatively calm, even if at that time the two armies had started fighting regularly in Central Bosnia. But on 2 May 1993, the HVO imposed a blockade and snipers shot at people trying to cross from the Croat-dominated west part of the city to the Bosniak-dominated east part. Seven days later the HVO launched a full-scale attack on ABiH-held territories. The ABiH was seemingly not prepared for defence. Witnesses reported that the majority of attackers were Croats from Croatia. This was seemingly confirmed

when the attackers became lost in the little streets of Old Town during the course of an attack they had themselves launched. But as Gosztonyi (2003) points out, and as I experienced during my stay in Mostar, there is also a Croat version of the outbreak of the Bosniak–Croat war. In this Croat version the ABiH launched a night offensive, which was only then answered by a Croat counter-offensive.

Even though the HVO became stuck in the city centre, it managed to completely encircle the Bosniak-held part of Mostar. The HVO used tactics similar to those of the VRS in Sarajevo (Gosztonyi 2003: 133), including the intensive use of sniper fire. Besieged, East Mostar was under bombardment by heavy artillery and inhabitants faced a lack of supplies of food, electricity, medicine and so on. Relief convoys did not get through to East Mostar, which in the preceding seven weeks had been cut off from any international presence and humanitarian aid. Thereafter the population of Mostar was supplied with food by relief convoys and by US aircraft, which dropped food over the besieged territory. This experience and the food that was provided still remains a central wartime memory for those who remained in Mostar during the war.

The siege also meant that the ABiH in Mostar was disconnected from other ABiH units in the country and from arms supplies. This resulted in the bizarre (but not uncommon) situation of Serbs in the surrounding hills selling their firearms to the ABiH. On the frontline—the Bulevar, which was perceived as no-man's-land—Bosniak and Croat soldiers were separated only by a few metres. Across such a short distance, the fighters—some of them former schoolmates, neighbours or friends—were sometimes even able to recognise one another when firing from the other side. Throughout the 10 months of the Bosniak–Croat war, the frontline remained quite stable (see Bose 2002). The situation around the Bulevar is only one example of the immediacy of the war fought in BiH (see Sorabji 1995).

The Bosniak side had less heavy artillery and as a consequence was surrounded and suffered the highest number of casualties in Mostar. However, the ABiH launched several offensives against HVO positions. From Jablanica and Konjic it succeeded in pushing back the HVO in a southern and south-western direction. At the same time, operations were launched from Mostar by the ABiH Fourth Corps (Gosztonyi 2003: 139). Finally, Mate Boban was dismissed when his war against the Bosniak

population was no longer supported by the Croat leadership. He had to resign in February 1994. Shortly afterwards a ceasefire agreement was reached between the warring parties. This was achieved within sight of the Washington Agreement signed on 3 March 1994:

> When the firing ended ten months later with the Washington Agreement (March 1994) establishing the Muslim-Croat Federation in BiH, Mostar was unrecognizable. The frontline had cut through the town centre, with Croat and Bosniac positions usually no more than twenty to thirty feet apart, often on two sides of the same street. (Bose 2002: 104)

Although peace had (officially) been achieved, the war had left a visible mark on the city and its people (CMMSM 2004).

A City Left Divided

With the Dayton Peace Agreement, signed on 14 December 1995, the 43-month-long war in BiH officially ended. From that day on, BiH became a shared state of the three constituent peoples—Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs—with Sarajevo as the remaining capital. But the country was split into two entities (and the special district of Brčko): the Serb Republic and the Federation of BiH with its 10 cantons. The Washington Agreement that established the Federation of BiH (which comprises 51 % of BiH's territory as opposed to the Serb Republic constituting 49 %) foresaw Mostar as a united Bosniak–Croat city and as the capital of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (Canton 7). Together with the Central Bosnia Canton (Canton 6), both cantons were the only mixed Bosniak–Croat cantons. BiH became a decentralised state consisting of a complicated bureaucracy and an economically untenable government with multiple layers of decision-making. The situation was further complicated by the far-reaching powers of the so-called 'international community'[16] (see Chandler 2000; Dzihic 2010). The Dayton Peace Agreement put into place an international peacekeeping force to ensure security in the country and an international authority, the Office of the High Representative (OHR), to implement the civilian

[16] I use the term 'international community' in the manner that it is commonly used to refer to the various (military and civilian) international organisations active in BiH.

dimension of the peace agreement. As will be discussed below, the OHR was a key player in post-war developments in Mostar.

During the war all 10 bridges in Mostar were destroyed by either the Serb or Croat forces, and only temporary structures were built for people to cross to the other riverbank. In the immediate post-war period, citizens of both the eastern and the western parts were not allowed to cross freely between sides, and there was only one crossing point, which provided restricted access for women and children only. During this time, the eastern part still suffered from food, water and electricity shortages, and there were no jobs for people as most of the factories had been destroyed. Overall, the expulsion of non-Croats from West Mostar also continued (see ICG 2000). Until 1997, people were still being wounded and killed by grenades and expelled from their homes although the war was officially over. One such violent episode often remembered among Bosniaks is the fatal incident that took place on 10 February 2007 during Bajram festivities. A group of Bosniaks who visited a cemetery in West Mostar were attacked by the West Mostar police. One person (the husband of a woman I met at *Otvoreno srce*) died and several others were wounded.

The situation meant minority return remained a critical issue in Mostar for years after the war had ended. Annex Seven of the Dayton Peace Agreement, 'Agreement of Refugees and Displaced Persons', ensures the right of all refugees and displaced persons to return freely to their homes of origin. Nonetheless, Mostar's authorities delayed the processing of claims by minority members to return to their pre-war residences. In West Mostar, the Veterans Association HVIDR-a (Hrvatski vojni invalidi domovinskog rata, Croat War Invalids of the Homeland War) tightly controlled the housing stock and minority return did not fit with their aim of keeping West Mostar an exclusively Croat city. Likewise East Mostar was a hostile place for Croats in the immediate post-war years.

Between 1992 and 1995 around 2.2 million persons were forcibly displaced from their homes in the territory of today's BiH. Of these 2.2 million, around 1.2 million fled the country while around 1 million remained in BiH (see Kappel et al. 2006).[17] Before the war, Mostar had

[17] 'It is estimated that about 440,000 refugees have returned from abroad, 720,000 have settled in their host countries, and about 100,000 are still in need of durable solutions. Of the one million IDPs about 700,000 have either returned to their pre-war homes or settled at other places in the country, while some 300,000 people are estimated as still being internally displaced' (Kappel et al. 2006: 9).

a population of 126,628 with 34.8 % Muslims, 33.8 % Croats and 19 % Serbs (Koschnick and Schneider 1995: 12). Presently, Mostar has around 111,000 inhabitants split almost equally between Bosniaks and Croats. Most of the Serb population (around 20,000) fled before the war between HVO and ABiH escalated, leaving only a small number of around 2000 Serbs who remained (or returned) to Mostar. Among those who left Mostar was a large part of the intelligentsia as well as middle-class professionals.

In 1998 and the years thereafter, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the American Refugee Committee (ARC) promoted a so-called 'driven return process'. In those years, potential returnees were offered financial incentives to return. These funds are now exhausted and there is only some 'spontaneous return' to Mostar.[18] Even those who returned to Mostar did not necessarily return to their pre-war homes. Instead, many flats were exchanged (or sold), especially between Croats and Bosniaks. Generally, elderly people of all three nationalities were more likely to move back to their old homes even if they were faced with the situation of being in the minority.

My elderly interlocutors felt strongly attached to their (pre-war) homes and preferred to return to them over moving to another part of the city. Although they expressed grief over missing their old neighbourhood (komšiluk), they still preferred to return to (or remain in) their former flats or houses (see Chap. 4). Their children, however, preferred to exchange or sell their old homes in order to live on the side where they were in the majority. For some Mostarians, it was simply no longer conceivable to live in West Mostar because of the violence they had experienced there. This was the case for a Bosniak family I got to know during my stay, whose male family members had spent from several months to more than a year in different Croat detention camps. After this experience, they had to sell their houses since they no longer felt free to return.

Only a small number of the pre-war Serb population returned to Mostar. Most stayed outside the city to the north and south of it, not least because it was economically easier for them than in Mostar itself.

[18] I obtained the information on refugees and the return process during interviews with staff from the UNHCR Mostar field office.

Unlike Bosniak and Croat politicians who encouraged co-nationals to return to Mostar in order to maintain or attain majority status, Serb politicians who claimed that Mostar was—like the Federation in general—a hostile place for Serbs discouraged Serbs from returning. Moreover, they argued that children would not be able to keep their Serb identity, for example, because of the Bosniak–Croat-dominated education system in Mostar. Even if returnees today no longer face security issues, and military or police patrols in returnee areas are no longer necessary, they may still face discrimination, for example, through insulting statements in the media or from ignorant teachers in school. They may also feel unwelcome when confronted with insulting graffiti (Fig. 2.1) or, in the case of West Mostar, by the renamed streets and public places (Palmberger 2013).

Fig. 2.1 Graffito next to the Catholic cathedral stating: '*Ante Gotovina heroj*' ('Ante Gotovina is a hero'). This graffito appeared at several places in West Mostar in December 2005 when Gotovina, a Croat general, was arrested by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Photo by the author

The Process of Unifying Mostar

For the first 10 years after the war ended, the HDZ was a strong opponent of a reunified Mostar. As discussed earlier, Mostar was seen as the only Croat city in BiH. Ideological as well as personal and economic interests factored into this stance. The absence of the state and the proliferation of illicit activities helped to serve personal economic interests (see ICG 2000: 2; see also Bjelakovic and Strazzari 1999: 92).

Unlike Croat politicians, Bosniak politicians initially supported the idea of Mostar's reunification. However, according to a report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) (ICG 2000) this was only so long as the Bosniak population in Mostar formed the numerical majority. In this respect, they shared the interests of the international community for whom the reunification of Mostar presented the only post-war solution and was seen as crucial for future development in BiH (see ICG 2000).

In the first six years after the war, the international community invested hundreds of millions of Euros in reuniting the city. The European Union (EU) alone spent approximately 200 million Euros (see ICG 2000). But the investment did not produce the results the international community had hoped for. Analysing the international post-war engagement in Mostar, Bieber (2005) reaches the following conclusion:

> Ironically, the international presence reinforced the division between Bosniac and Croat parts of town. […] Rather than challenging the ethnic division of the city, the rigid power-sharing system—instituted by the international administrators—both accepted and perpetuated the post-war status quo. (Bieber 2005: 424)

The ICG came to a similar conclusion in its report when it accused the international community of having directly contributed financial aid to ethnically controlled municipalities rather than to the central administration (see ICG 2000).

Reflecting the Dayton Peace Agreement's purpose as a cease-fire agreement, the new municipal boundaries were drawn on the basis of the distribution of forces, not on economic, social or historical criteria. The city itself was divided into six municipalities, three Bosniak and three

Croat, with a small central zone to be administered by the joint city government. However, the EU reduced the size of the central zone following riots and attacks against Hans Koschnik, the first EU administrator, by supporters of the HDZ. This concession in the face of violent resistance undermined international efforts in Mostar for years to come (Bieber 2005: 422).

As early as June 1996, the first post-war election for the municipal and city government took place. Unsurprisingly, the votes were split among the two major parties: HDZ and the Citizen's List (a coalition party including the SDA), with the former winning 45 % of the votes and the latter 48 % (see Tomić and Herceg 1999). The two parties led opposing election campaigns. The Citizen's List advocated the unification of the city, while the HDZ was in favour of leaving the city divided to ensure West Mostar remained the Croat capital of BiH (see ICG 2000).

With the Interim Statute imposed in 1996, the EU administration sought to install power-sharing mechanisms so that no community could gain an outright majority. Without the cooperation of local politicians, however, this power-sharing system was doomed to fail:

> The leading Bosniac and Croat parties (the SDA and HDZ respectively) sought to get round the ethnic quota system by placing Serb (or other) candidates on their party electoral lists and thereby managed to 'capture' from non-dominant communities, resulting in vacant seats. (Bieber 2005: 423)

The city government, with a mayor and deputy mayor (in a rotating system, one of them Bosniak, one Croat), was performing poorly. Instead of jointly governing the city, the mayor and his deputy governed only their 'own' side of Mostar and city institutions ran in parallel. Another central problem was the veto right of the Bosniak and Croat nations, which could be used when 'fundamental interests' were endangered. Since national fundamental interests could be widely interpreted, the veto right was extensively misused to block decisions (Bieber 2005: 423).

In this political climate, the city was left separated in all aspects of life: politically, economically (e.g., parallel tax systems), culturally and also in terms of healthcare, education, the media and jurisdiction (see Bose 2002; ICG 2000). In Mostar everything was (and to some extent still is) duplicated. The city had two mobile phone providers, two post

offices, two electrical distribution companies, two public pension funds, two hospitals including two ambulance services, two bus companies and two main bus stations, two water and sewage companies, two companies for city cleaning and, of course, two football clubs (see ICG 2000, 2003).

The city's unification proved to be harder than expected and reflected badly on the international community, which by 2004 (after almost 10 years) had achieved little progress on the matter. So a new and permanent statute was sought that would finally require that Serbs and 'others' enjoy an equal status in Mostar's government and administration. Because the Interim Statute was aligned for the two main actors, Bosniaks and Croats, it no longer met the constitutional amendments on the entity level in 2002. For these reasons, from 2003 onwards Mostar received renewed attention from the international community and became Paddy Ashdown's (High Representative between 2002 and 2006) priority. According to a report by the ICG (ICG 2009), at this time a notable shift took place in the attitudes and agendas of the main political actors in Mostar, the HDZ[19] and SDA. The two parties seemed to have swapped their positions. Surprisingly, the HDZ expressed enthusiasm for unifying the city, while SDA became reserved and defended the status quo. Since this change in strategy, the Bosniak and Croat parties' struggles have run contrary to those of their party representatives operating at the state level.

Although there was confusion about this turnaround, the reason for it, as given by the ICG (2009), is simple: the demographic composition had changed whereby Bosniaks had lost their majority status in Mostar. Therefore the SDA now feared subordination by Croats, while the HDZ were eager to unify Mostar once they had overtaken the formerly dominant national group, the Bosniaks.[20]

After months of unsuccessful negotiations, the new city statute was finally imposed by the High Representative Paddy Ashdown in 2004. Although power-sharing rules were no longer as rigid, the new statute guaranteed national equality. The unification seemed to signal a final breakthrough towards normalisation. Even if a unified administration had not quite been realised, it could still be seen as a first step towards the city's reunification.

[19] In 2006 the HDZ split into the 'HDZ' and the new 'HDZ 1990'.

[20] The new population figures from the national division in Mostar were a rough estimate from the list of registered voters made public by the BiH Electoral Commission. The ICG estimated the division to be around 58 % Croats, 40 % Bosniaks and 1.5 % Serbs (ICG 2003: 7).

Through this move, more spaces of mutual interaction were created—for example, more civil servants of different backgrounds sharing a workplace.

Mostar's citizens are generally tired of the endless quarrels among local politicians. Most long for what they call a *normalan život* (normal life), which refers first and foremost to better living conditions (jobs, education, city services and so on) (see Jansen 2015). In many respects, the unification of Mostar has only been superficial while in reality deep divisions remain. This is true, for example, of public services, which remain inefficient and costly. Even where the unification of public services has been officially achieved, the services are still provided along the lines of the old division. Presently Mostar faces the situation where services run under the same name but are operated separately (ICG 2009: 4). Rather than believing that politicians represent them and their needs, Bosniaks and Croats alike blame their respective politicians for being primarily concerned with their own privileges.

Five years after the official unification, in 2009, Mostar's citizens were once more certain that the path to normalisation in Mostar remained long. More than a year after local elections Mostar's politicians were still unable to elect a mayor (who is indirectly elected by the city council), having missed more than a dozen occasions to do so. This failure had far-reaching consequences for many people, as for many months employees of publicly owned companies as well as Mostar's civil servants were not paid their salaries. A friend from Mostar reported to me the following via e-mail:

> Mostar still doesn't have a mayor… and there is no prospect that we will get one any time soon. […] We could win the Guinness [book of] records with this situation since it will be one year in less than a month. The general state in the state is really awful and it is getting worse every day with all these political disputes and new threats of war… but I'm ignoring it… what can I do? : -)

This e-mail reflects very well how many Mostarians deal with the political quarrels in their city. Of course they take notice but face it with a kind of (black) humour. My friend's statement 'but I'm ignoring it' cannot be taken literally since in the e-mail she reports on the issue she claims to ignore. It can instead be understood as an attempt to keep these issues away from her private life. Many of my informants told me that they had stopped reading local newspapers or watching the local evening news because they just do not want to deal with it any longer. Whether such

claims can be taken literally or not, I do not know, but nevertheless they are expressions of strong disapproval with local politics.

Since the day the leading Croats in Mostar learned there was a Croat majority in the city, they have demanded not only a united administration but also one that runs on equal terms with other city administrations in BiH: 'Croats point out that Mostar is the only city with a Croat majority and the only city in which the ethnic majority is limited by statute to a minority of council seats, so unable to elect a mayor on its own' (ICG 2009: 7). Bosniak politicians, on the other hand, insist on Mostar's exceptional position due to their nation's troubles during the war years, and they appeal to their pre-war majority position. They also blame Sarajevo for caring too little about Mostar, which they say is in danger of being taken over by Croats. In addition, they blame the capital for its limited financial investment in East Mostar. The unequal financial support for East and West Mostar, with the latter being supported by Croatia, is clearly visible in the cityscape.

Reopening of the Old Bridge

The year 2004 was a year of reunification in Mostar, at least symbolically; the city was officially reunified with a shared administration and city council, but international media reports mostly focused on the reconstruction and reopening of the Old Bridge (*Stari most*) that took place the same year (Fig. 2.2).

The old Ottoman Bridge that had been destroyed in 1993 was finally reconstructed in 2004 with the financial help of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank. The reconstruction of the bridge with its grandiose reopening celebration carried a lot of symbolic meaning. Ten years after the war had ended in Mostar, the international community needed a showpiece of success to signal that the reconciliation process had progressed. In his lecture at the Examination Schools in Oxford on 23 July 2004, Paddy Ashdown spoke of the reopening of Mostar's Old Bridge as a symbol that civilisation had prevailed over barbarism and that it was a clear sign of goodwill for a new start of multinational coexistence in Mostar. This assessment is not shared by all experts on BiH (see, for example Bougarel et al. 2007; Hoare 2004).

Fig. 2.2 Rebuilt *Stari most* (Old Bridge). Photo by the author

Bosniaks and Croats differed on the importance of the reopening of the Old Bridge. While most of my Bosniak informants, who were in Mostar at the time of the celebration, joined the event, most of the Croats did not. Since the Croat army, the HVO, is considered by Bosniaks, as well as by the international community, to be responsible for the final destruction of the bridge (after numerous shells fired by the Croat and Serb army had damaged it), Croats often take a defensive position when the subject of the *Stari most* comes up. Although I do not wish to question the reconstruction of the bridge, it is still not clear to what extent it has had an impact on the reunification of Mostar. Moreover, although often unmentioned, the Old Bridge does not connect the Bosniak and Croat parts of the city (which are divided by the Bulevar west of the bridge).[21]

[21] *Stari grad* (Old Town), where the bridge is located, made it onto the World Monuments Fund list of the 100 most endangered sites of historical and cultural significance (Grodach 2002: 66).

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3

Divided Education: Divergent Historiographies and Shared Discursive Practices

This chapter will show how the interpretations of the local past diverge between Bosniak and Croat historians. At the same time it will also reveal how historians on both sides draw on similar discursive strategies when narrating a national meta-narrative. These meta-narratives can best be described as goal-oriented, while Chaps. 4–6 will illustrate how the individual narratives can better be described as target-seeking. The national and the personal narratives can only be analytically divided. In reality they are tightly entangled. The national narratives dominant in the public discourse serve as reference points for individuals in many specific ways. They support, manoeuvre around and/or contest them. On the other hand, the dominant public discourse is carried on and enacted by the same individuals.

A dominant public discourse has been described as a political practice that 'establishes, sustains and changes power relations, and the collective entities (classes, blocs, communities, groups) between which power relations obtain' (Fairclough 1992: 67). Discourses contribute to the construction of 'social identities', of 'social relations' and of systems of knowledge and belief (see Fairclough 1992). However, a discourse can never be entirely captured, since it is always in the making. It is a simplification to

M. Palmberger, *How Generations Remember*,
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speak of the Bosniak or the dominant Croat discourse as '[c]apturing a discourse in its totality is impossible, both because it is circulated in different kinds of written, oral and performed texts, and because it is continually evolving' (Purdeková 2008: 509). This point is particularly relevant in BiH, where history is still, so to speak, in the process of being (re)written. Clearly, historiography is not static anywhere, but it is even less so after great political changes, such as those following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, where revising historiography has become a crucial way of legitimising new political elites. However, next to the dominant public discourses, voices of dissent can be heard. Even though these counter-voices are less powerful, they clearly matter, for example, within the media, academia, the arts and among different non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and less organised parts of civil society. In addition, there are dissenting or antithetical voices among the politicians themselves.

Referencing the local past is central to the dominant public discourses as it serves political goals. The past is used to legitimise certain ideological views on the present and on coexistence in Mostar. For example, the way national groups are presented as primordial entities that are crucially different from one another leaves little space for Mostarians to define themselves other than along national lines (Palmberger 2013).

Nationalist politicians and the nationalist-orientated media continue to dominate BiH, fuelling distrust among people. But the nationalisation of history is not only promoted by the political elites and the media. What makes it so effective in BiH is the plurality of channels through which it is promoted (see Donia 2010; Torsti 2003). Besides the media and politicians' speeches, the nationalisation of history is also very actively supported by a considerable number of academic scholars and through public commemorations, memorial culture and the education system(s). Education has been said to be one of the main state-controlled redistributions of history (see Wertsch 2002); this is particularly obvious in a post-war context like BiH (see Hill 2011).

Still, we need to reflect critically on the influence education (including textbooks) has on the Post-Yugoslav generation. Even if we can clearly see how history is manipulated in the educational context, this does not mean that students fully surrender to the national discourses they are exposed to, as shown in this chapter and in Chap. 6. Vuckovic (2012) shows in the case of members of the Croat post-war generation that they

evaluate Yugoslavia mostly in positive terms, particularly regarding social life, despite the negative presentations of Yugoslavia in Croatian textbooks. This suggests that we should not underestimate memories transmitted by older family members (Vuckovic 2012: 197), especially memories concerning social aspects of Yugoslavia that are widely omitted from textbooks.

Institutionalising Mostar's Division: Divided Education

In 2007, the University of Zenica in Mostar proposed plans to open a Department of Preschool Education within the Islamic teachers' training faculty. This triggered a discussion on whether such a move was legitimate or if such early religious education constitutes indoctrination and is just another mechanism of national segregation. The debate between proponents and opponents of religious pre-school education involved local as well as international actors, and attracted a lot of media attention. The international community, and in particular the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE),[1] expressed concerns over these developments. The OSCE justifies its active engagement in the education sector with its belief that the status quo has negative consequences for (re-)building a nationally diverse society, as expressed in the following statement: 'Children educated in monoethnic environments will likely be poorly prepared for life in such a country, let alone in an increasingly diverse Europe' (OSCE 2007a: 6; see also OSCE 2007e).[2] The OSCE's intervention triggered strong reactions by Muslim clerics. Reisu-l-ulema Mustafa ef. Cerić accused the OSCE of interference in child education, which in his view should remain the business of the family (*Oslobodjenje*, 4 September 2007).

Even if the debate outlined above revolved around the subject of Islamic pre-school education, it was never much concerned with questions of

[1] The OSCE is the international organisation which most actively engages with the education sector in BiH. The head office in Sarajevo and the field offices, such as the one in Mostar, all had their own education departments until they became part of a larger 'Human Dimensions' department in 2010.

[2] The idea that education is an instrument and a resource for promoting respect for diversity is regarded as a 'Western' idea rooted in the enlightenment tradition (Höpken 2002: 11).

faith but rather—almost exclusively—with the question of nationality. This is because the education system in Mostar, as elsewhere in the country, is divided along national rather than religious lines. Even if the two (religious and national) identities often overlap, it is the national rather than the religious motivation that makes many politicians, teachers and parents support a separate education system. In the case of Mostar, the segregation of children and youth from kindergarten to university institutionalises the city's division and raises a generation with hardly any encounters with their national counterparts (see Chap. 6).

In order to maintain national separatism, pupils in BiH are taught in separated classes using different curricula. More than three different curricula exist; the Federation of BiH already has several curricula, with one issued by the Federation Ministry of Education and others issued by the ministries of different cantons. A separate curriculum exists for the Republika Srpska and Brčko District. With the exception of Brčko District, all curricula show a particular national orientation (OSCE 2007a: 6; see also OSCE 2007d; Swimelar 2013). In Mostar, schools follow a curriculum either in the Bosniak or in the Croat language.[3] Since there is no school following the curriculum in the Serb language, parents with a Serb background send their children to either a Bosniak- or Croat-dominated school. The choice is usually influenced by the location of the school, and as no Serb-dominated schools are provided, the school is often chosen based on proximity.[4]

In principle, children, regardless of their national background, may attend any given school. As most of the schools are dominated by one nation, minority pupils are usually expected to accept a nationally biased curriculum. Provided there is a sufficient number of minority students, students are entitled to attend separate classes for the national group in subjects such as language, history, geography and religion.[5] However, this

[3] Staff of the OSCE education department told me that the politically correct way to differentiate between the curricula is by referring to the language they are based on. This was also confirmed to me by students who used the terms Bosniak/Croat/Serb curriculum.

[4] Serb students are offered Orthodox religious education by a mobile teacher responsible for Serb students in the region.

[5] 'The Implementation Plan of the 5 March 2002 Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children stipulates that all schools shall organize classes from the national group of subjects, provided that parents and students opt to have the national

separate teaching is provided only in rare cases. For this and other reasons, parents of minority status prefer their children to attend schools run by co-nationals, even if they have to accept long commutes. But there is also a small number of parents whose children attend classes with pupils of other national backgrounds. In conversations with parents, I learned that the reasons for such a decision are manifold and range from practical considerations to issues to do with the reputation of the school. In this discussion on separate education systems, it is important to remember that there are children from mixed marriages or children of parents with weak national identification, although far fewer than in pre-war Mostar (see Palmberger 2013).

Returning to international actors' engagement with questions of education in Mostar once more, it is interesting to note that the international community has not always propagated a common education system in the way it does now. In the immediate post-war years, the international community saw the provision of a separate education system as a necessary prerequisite to motivate refugees to return to their hometown. Although this was regarded as only a temporary solution, it showed how long-lasting the effects were for segregated schools but also for 'two schools under one roof'. The latter have two directors, two teacher councils, two student councils, two curricula and separate textbooks in the respective national languages (Ashton 2007: 11).

The staff of the international organisations who were involved in supporting two schools under one roof are aware of the paradoxical situation they have created. Over coffee, two local OSCE staff joked about it and one of them told me: 'Here in Mostar we do not have problems with two schools under one roof because we have two schools under two roofs.' It is true that in Mostar (unlike, for example, the nearby town of Stolac) the 'two schools under one roof' model has not been applied very much. Still, the most famous school that is structured on this model is situated in Mostar. The Old Grammar School, *Stara gimnazija*, was—as all schools were in pre-war BiH—a mixed school before the war. With great effort and the support of the international community, in particular the OSCE,

group of subjects taught according to a curriculum that is different from that already being taught' (OSCE 2007a: 5).

attempts were made to reunite the school after the war (see Hromadžić 2015). Because the case of *Stara gimnazija* exemplifies the deadlocked situation so well and also because some of the Post-Yugoslavs introduced in Chap. 6 attended the school, I will briefly introduce the school here.[6]

Opened in 1898, *Stara gimnazija* has been housed continuously in a lovely Habsburg building, with an interruption during and shortly after the war. Before the war the school's excellent reputation was known in BiH and throughout the other republics of Yugoslavia. To this day, its pupils are proud to be a part of this school. Situated at the former frontline, *Stara gimnazija* was destroyed during the war. A few years after the war ended, the Croats rebuilt a few classrooms and claimed ownership of the school. The pre-war Bosniak students were taught in one of the primary schools instead, taking shifts with the primary school children (Ashton 2007: 8). Today, *Stara gimnazija* is administratively unified but students are still taught under two curricula. However, the school offers joint extra-curricular activities and recently the first integrated classes were launched (Ashton 2007: 4).

Hromadžić (2008) describes the school as an outcome of the Dayton Peace Agreement:

> The school embodies the paradoxical spirit of the Dayton Peace Agreement, where simultaneous segregation (in the name of ethnic groups' survival) and unification (in the name of democratization, reconciliation, and the common national identity) of citizens take place. New forms of schools and youth—not fully integrated but not segregated, either—emerge from the collision. (Hromadžić 2008: 20)

Even if the Dayton Peace Agreement does not name the right to separate education, the agreement nevertheless leaves the central government in a weak position and the constitution emphasises national prerogatives rather than individual rights. Nevertheless more integration and mixing among the pupils of *Stara gimnazija* could be observed in the last couple of years. In an interview survey (Ashton 2007) with students from *Stara*

[6] I obtained information on recent developments of *Stara gimnazija* as well as on grander developments in the education sector of BiH in interviews with staff from the OSCE education department in Sarajevo and Mostar.

gimnazija, those surveyed expressed little concern over mingling with students from the other curricula. Most students, moreover, did not perceive the prospect of united classes as a threat to their national identity. The report concludes:

> The Gymnasium Mostar students interviewed had moved over three years from support of separate languages to believing that language was a 'silly' thing to be fighting over. This did not happen because they were forced to integrate language in school, but because they made contact with each other and, over time, began to accept each other's language. (Ashton 2007: 39)

The fears, the author of the report suggests, come more from the parents than from the students, so in fact joint activities among the parents would be needed to help overcome the barriers and scepticism (Ashton 2007: 32).[7] These observations support the idea that encounters between Bosniaks and Croats—be they as limited as in the case of the pupils at *Stara gimnazija*—do make a difference.[8] Conversely, the lack of possible encounters and contact is likely to foster prejudices and mistrust (see Hewstone et al. 2005; Lederach 1997) (Fig. 3.1).

Stara gimnazija is an isolated case in Mostar. The remaining schools keep to the separation promoted by the political elites, particularly by Croats. The language issue is taken as the core argument, whereby it is claimed that children can only learn proper Croatian if taught in mono-national schools. In this discourse, the right to be taught in Croatian is a necessity in preventing assimilation. The OSCE counters such claims by referring to the Dayton Peace Agreement, which—although based on national rather than individual rights—does not include a right to be

[7] I was also able to observe how the fears and barriers rather were on the side of the parents than the teachers during my previous research in Brčko. Since the 2002 school year, in Brčko, students are together for more than 80 % of the time and only national group subjects are taught separately (see OSCE 2007d: 29). After overcoming initial difficulties, Brčko's education system today has a very good reputation and even students from across the border come to Brčko for their education.

[8] Creating opportunities for young people to meet is a central aim of some of the youth NGOs in Mostar, such as the youth centres *OKC Abraševi*ć, *Nansen Dijalog Centar* (Nansen Dialogue Centre) and *Mladí most* (The Young Bridge)—as I learned in interviews with these youth centres' staff and from regular visitors. The events I attended at these centres proved successful, even though only a small percentage of Mostar's youth participated in their projects.

Fig. 3.1 *Stara gimnazija*, the Old Grammar School in 2008. Photo by the author

taught in one's language: 'While the right to learn one's own language is guaranteed, there is no guarantee in any convention or in the BiH and Entity constitutions that peoples have the right to be taught in a particular language' (Ashton 2007: 9). Yet we should be aware that the position of the international community towards the language issue is itself ambivalent. For example, on the one hand the OSCE does not support the idea that children should be taught in their respective languages, while on the other hand all official OSCE documents (and its website) are written in all three official languages: Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. This OSCE practice strongly signals the need for linguistic separatism.

Aside from language, the curriculum acts as another strong boundary marker. Even if textbook commissions have 'cleansed' the textbooks of obvious offensive content towards co-nationals, it does not mean that current textbooks are not biased. In 2008, an analysis of 20th-century

history textbooks for the final primary school grades was launched by the *Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research*. The report of the analysis reveals that the quality of the textbooks differs greatly in respect to the *Guidelines for writing and evaluation of history textbooks for primary and secondary schools in BiH* adopted in 2006. One of the central principals of the Guidelines states that the region and the country of BiH have to be the main reference points in the textbooks (see Karge 2008: 22). The selected textbooks used for the curriculum in Croatian and Serbian ignore this guideline and instead take as their reference point Croatia or Serbia, respectively. Textbooks taking BiH as their reference point, however, are similarly biased by tending to focus on Bosniak history rather than presenting a balanced account of the history of all the nations in BiH. This analysis also corresponds with my observations during history lectures at Mostar's two universities discussed later in this chapter.

At present, the war of the 1990s is not part of the curriculum in most of the cantons of the Federation of BiH, but is part of the curriculum in the Republika Srpska (Karge 2008). Most of the cantons of the Federation of BiH follow a recommendation by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe expressed in 2000 that suggests excluding the war of 1992–1995 from the schools' curriculum. This does not mean, however, that textbooks do not deal with the recent war at all, but they do so in very different ways. The space provided for such a discussion varies greatly, as does the quality of historical analysis. The fact that even the date given for the outbreak of the war in BiH differs says a lot. While the textbooks identifiable as Bosniak-biased and Serb-biased date the outbreak of the war to the day of the EU's recognition of BiH, the textbook identifiable as Croat-biased gives a much earlier date, namely 5 October 1991, when an attack against the Croat-dominated village of Ravno in Eastern Herzegovina was launched by JNA forces (see Karge 2008).

Even if the war in the 1990s is not covered in the curriculum of Canton 7 (the canton to which Mostar belongs), it is likely that discussion of the war finds its way into the classroom. Regardless of the content of the textbook, its use is up to the teacher. We can assume that in both directions—towards a balanced understanding or towards separatism—teachers find a great spectrum of possibilities in what and what not to

teach their students.[9] As I observed in Mostar, teachers would often bring a whole school class to attend a commemoration ceremony, most of which were in remembrance of the 1992–1995 war. This was, for example, the case in Mostar on 14 June 2006 when an exceptional history lesson took place under the Old Bridge. In order to illustrate the way in which history is taught to students at commemorations and how memories are transferred from the older generations to the younger, let us take a closer look at this particular commemoration ceremony.

My notes from my Mostar field diary on 14 June 2006 state:

> An exceptional history lesson is taking place under the *Stari most* today. What makes it exceptional is not only the location but the choice of 'history teacher'. The event is being organised by the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ABiH) and the 'history teacher' is one of the former soldiers who fought for the ABiH during the war between 1992 and 1995. The event is one of a series of events to celebrate the liberation from Serbian-Montenegrin aggression and is announced as a 'history lesson'.

It is a bright, sunny day and I arrive a bit early at the *Šehitluci* (martyrs' cemetery, Fig. 3.3) waiting for the pupils and teachers to arrive. All the children who arrive have a red carnation in their hands. Soon the crowd grows and it becomes a noisy, cheerful gathering. Kids are very excited, talking to each other, giggling and waving their flowers in the air. The excursion seems to be a welcome change; nothing yet reminds us of the serious purpose behind the event. A handful of soldiers and the imam stand out amid the cheerful youngsters. A few children have wreaths in their hands, waiting to lay them on the martyrs' graves.

The cheerful noises quieten down once the official ceremony begins and a soldier lays a wreath at the martyr's grave while the imam says a

[9] Although this section has concentrated on the aspects of a divided education system, it does not mean that this is the only problem students face. Students and parents have expressed to me great dissatisfaction with teaching methods as well as school facilities. One tremendous shortcoming is the lack of space, and it is not uncommon that secondary school children are taught in primary schools, especially in East Mostar (see OSCE 2007c, n.d.). Despite the defects of the education system in BiH, there are also pupils from families in economically disadvantaged situations who are not able to attend school at all (see OSCE 2007b).

short prayer. Afterwards the imam addresses the children by telling them that the soldiers of ABiH gave their lives for their future, for their tomorrow and their fortune. 'We will never forget them!' he announces with such pathos that it comes across rather as, 'We are never allowed to forget them!', pointing towards the graveyard where these words are inscribed on a plaque. 'You have to listen carefully to what you hear in school and you should never forget!', he tells the young audience. 'It does not matter if it is written down in books or not, Tuđman was our enemy!', he concludes and invites the pupils to join him in the history lesson under the *Stari most*.

The crowd moves from the cemetery through *Stari grad* (Old Town) to *Stari most*. The long caravan of children wave their red carnations in excitement. Arriving on top of the bridge, they let the carnations sail down into the Neretva River, which soon turns into a sea of red flowers.

After crossing the bridge, the pupils pass the stone-carved sign, 'DON'T FORGET '93' (written in English, Fig. 3.2). The memorial

Fig. 3.2 A memorial stone at the Old Bridge. Photo by the author

Fig. 3.3 The imam with pupils at *Šehitluci* (martyrs' cemetery), 2006. Photo by the author

stone reinforces what the imam has just told them. Not all pupils seem to notice it, but some do and point in the direction of the stone with their carnations. The caravan moves down to the riverbed to a stage from which loudspeakers burst out popular folk music. The children's excitement increases from being so close to the water. Some of them have little BiH flags in their hands. Listening to the music being played, I notice that it is a song about Tuđman, accursed enemy of beautiful BiH. After two men dive from the bridge into the river (an old tradition associated first and foremost with Mostar's pre-war identity and which today is almost exclusively practised by Bosniaks), the ceremony reaches its peak, the announced history lesson. A man in his early 50s takes the stage and address the audience:

> I wish to tell you a story (*priča*) today. A true story with a beginning and an end. So far you have heard different kinds of stories. Stories that began

> with 'once upon a time, behind seven mountains and seven seas'. This kind of story you will not hear from us today. Our story has a real beginning, has a date, a day and time: 14 June 1992, one of the most important days in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the entire thousand-year old history of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The soldier continues by introducing himself as one out of many ABiH soldiers. By claiming that he is only one of many, he suggests that soldiers were not fighting as individuals but as a collective; from this point his story is the story of the ABiH or of 'the' brave soldier. From the beginning, the speaker makes clear that he is not only a teacher of history but, more importantly, a participant (*učesnik*) of history. This gives him the legitimacy to speak about the past. Moreover, his words seem to suggest that he, as a frontline soldier, really saw what happened, in contrast to those civilians who stayed at home. He embeds the day, 14 June 1992, within a question about the wider history of BiH. The day of the liberation from Serbian-Montenegrin forces occupying Mostar is described as one of the most meaningful days in the long struggle for independence of BiH and the freedom of the Bosniak nation. But before finally achieving independence, the Bosniak nation once again became a victim. The victory of the day in question against Serb forces is narrated by the speaker as the beginning of Croat aggression:

> The entire left bank of our beauty [Neretva River], meaning this part which lies behind us, was occupied and all people, good people, had to leave their homes. On 13 June 1992, the first crossing of the River Neretva succeeded. When we arrived, our two blessed [here the old Turkish expression *rahmetli* is used] friends waved their flags with the lilies on it, flags which I see in your hands. And we thought that it was the end of aggression against our city. But as we soon learned it was the beginning, the beginning of a heroic fight […].

In this part of the speech, it becomes clear that the Bosniaks are portrayed as the victims but also that the soldiers fighting back against the aggressors are the new heroes. When referring to the beauty of the Neretva, the speaker anchors the nation's identity in nature. The Neretva River is the natural beauty that persists even when dark forces are trying to destroy it. It is 'our' (the Bosniaks', not the Croats') Neretva, which, together with

the *Stari most*, constitutes two strong identifiers for the Bosniak nation. The flags in the children's hands serve as the symbolic link between the children and the past. Although the speaker refers to the lilies on their flags, the lilies are no longer on the official flag of BiH, the flags the children hold in their hands. Since the fleur-de-lis is closely associated with the Muslim population it could not remain on BiH's flag, so it gave way to a nationally neutral flag that was adopted in 1998 under the authority of the High Representative.

The day in question was the beginning of a heroic fight for liberation to allow the young generation to live a free life, the soldier continues. Only owing to the heroic deeds of the battalion ABiH 401, 41st brigade, can the pupils live in a free city. It soon becomes clear, though, that this privilege is not free of demands, but requires responsibility and gratitude from the youngest generation. The mission that the youngest generation is entrusted with is formulated by the soldier in an authoritarian tone: 'You should never allow anyone to do to you what was done to us!'—suggesting that the war affected only the older generation and at the same time asking for lifelong gratitude towards the veterans and martyrs. In the speech, the speaker indicates that not only the ABiH but also the Islamic faith saved the Bosniak nation and therefore the youngsters are asked to pray whenever they pass martyrs' graves.

At the end of the speech, the soldier appeals to the young generation to listen to their parents and teachers (implying that they know the truth, unlike some books, as suggested earlier) and to take it into their own hands to fight against evil and dark forces (*sile zla, sile mraka*) so that history does not repeat itself. Although the dark forces are never named, it is clear throughout the speech where they are located, and in order to erase any remaining doubts, the song with the words 'Tuđman is our enemy' in its refrain is played at full volume once more at the end of the speech.

The central message of the soldier to the pupils was simple: there are good people (we Bosniaks) and there are bad people (Serbs and Croats), and even if we have won the fight we have to remain vigilant in the future. The entire history lesson had one clear goal, namely to strengthen the sense of a Bosniak nation and to reinforce the division between Bosniaks and Croats (and Serbs). Although it was (at least in

the announcement) intended to be a commemoration celebrating the end of Serb-Montenegrin aggression, the event was clearly used first and foremost as a reminder of the Croat aggression that was portrayed as a danger until this day.

Dubravka Ugrešić, a Croat writer who in 1993 went into exile to escape nationalist politics in her home country, refers to such commemorations as 'terror[s] of memory'. Such events are evoked in order to re-install the continuity of national identity (Ugrešić 1998: 123; see also Van der Veer 2002). The national memory is thereby narrated through the central dichotomy of a collectively threatened body (us) versus a collectively threatening body (them) (Ugrešić 1998: 117). Considering the riots that took place the night before the commemoration—when Croat hooligans, after losing against Brazil in the World Cup championship, rioted around the Bulevar and eventually picked a fight with their Bosniak counterparts—it was probably easy for the pupils to make the connection to where the 'dark forces' might be located. Although this incident was clearly related to hooliganism, the local and international media described it as renewed 'ethnic violence' in Mostar, reinforcing fear and division in the city.

In order to further analyse the national dominant discourses and the discursive strategies employed to support it, in the remainder of the chapter I mainly draw on material gathered from a range of different university lectures on the history of BiH (and Croatia) in the 20th century held at the Bosniak-dominated *Univerzitet Džemal Bijedić Mostar* and the Croat-dominated university *Sveučiliste u Mostaru* in 2006. My data is also based on conversations and interviews I conducted with historians and students of history. So far, research on the role education plays in propagating nationalist thinking in BiH has concentrated on textbooks (see, for example, Karge 2008; Torsti 2003) rather than the way in which history is taught in the classroom. While in textbooks only the historiography presented by a particular author can be analysed, in the classroom we can observe rhetorical means as well as moments of contestation. By including the interaction between lecturers and students at the two universities, we can also learn more about cross-generational dialogue.

Rewriting History and Placing the Nation

In the foreword to his book *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe* Pål Kolstø writes:

> Groups that share the same history often interpret their common experiences in radically different, sometimes diametrically opposite ways. The stories they tell about themselves and others—autostereotypes and heterostereotypes—may all be based somehow on historical 'facts', but are so radically embellished that they hardly resemble each other any longer. (Kolstø 2005: vii)

This description greatly resembles my experiences when attending lectures on the history of BiH (and Croatia) in the 20th century at the two universities in Mostar, when I participated in commemorations, and the observations I made through reading local newspapers and watching TV reports on the local past. During my participant observation at the two universities, I sometimes had to hurry from one university to the other between lectures. On arriving at the university on the 'other side', it felt as if whole worlds lay between the historiographies I heard in the respective lecture halls.

As briefly mentioned above, two universities have existed in Mostar since the war: *Univerzitet Džemal Bijedić Mostar* (mainly referred to as *Džemal Bijedić* here) on the east side, and *Sveučiliste u Mostaru* (mainly referred to as *Sveučiliste*, meaning 'university' in Croatian) on the west side. At the former, the majority of students are Bosniaks and a number of the professors are affiliated with the University of Sarajevo. At the latter, most students are Bosnian Croats, but there are also a number of students as well as professors from Croatia. From the *Bulevar* dividing East and West Mostar, a street lined with old trees leads to *Sveučiliste*. Many cafés are situated along the street and posters adorn the old trees, making students aware of upcoming student parties and pubs with special student offers. *Sveučiliste* is located only around 50 metres away from the Partisan memorial cemetery and some hundred metres from the football stadium, which in the eyes of the Bosniak population was unjustly taken away from Mostar's pre-war football club *Velež* (previously a multinational

club and today Mostar's Bosniak football club; see Mills 2010). In the meantime it has become the home stadium for the West Mostar football club *Zrinski*, the arch-rival of *Velež*. Due to its national affiliation *Zrinski* had been forbidden and disbanded in socialist Yugoslavia but was re-established in 1992 with a ceremony held in Medjugorje, the Marian pilgrimage place.

So *Sveučiliste* is in-between two highly contested places, the Partisan memorial cemetery and the football stadium. The former is contested first and foremost by Croats because it 'worships' the socialist heroes, while the latter is contested mainly by Bosniaks who claim entitlement to the place. The third highly contested place is the building of *Sveučiliste* itself. *Sveučiliste* is based in the pre-war university building whose premises were used as a prison camp during the recent war.[10] Although this part of the building's history is not visible, other signs of its past are recognisable. For example, one of the lecture halls at the time still housed a world map in Cyrillic letters, a leftover from the old university. It seemed even more out of place when considering the pictures on the wall next to it, displaying Christian themes central to Croats' self-understanding. For example, one of the pictures was titled, '*Pokrštenje Hrvata*', meaning 'Baptism of Croats'.

Sveučiliste, which prides itself as being the only Croatian-language university in BiH, sees its roots in the Franciscan Theological School, which was founded in the late 19th century and closed in 1945. This affiliation with the Franciscans is also visible in *Sveučiliste's* logo, which shows the building of the Franciscan Monastery in Mostar. *Sveučiliste* receives considerable financial support from Croatia and is therefore much better equipped than its Bosniak counterpart. This close relation with Croatia was expressed in and reinforced by the large-scale reconstruction of the university buildings—begun at the end of my fieldwork—which was extensively funded by Croatia.

It is on the premises of *Sveučiliste* where the pre-war university (and Mostar's only university back then) was located. When in 1993 war began between Croats and Bosniaks, the Croats took over the university building and equipment. A group of Bosniak staff and students who

[10] This information I received in an interview with staff at one of the Bosniak detention camp victims organisations in Mostar.

were able to flee to the left bank of the Neretva meanwhile continued to work in the memorial house *Džemal Bijedić*[11] under extremely hostile conditions (Univerzitet Mostar 2002: 18). In 1994 the *University Džemal Bijedić* was relocated to the former Yugoslav Northern Camp army barracks (*sjeverni logor*), which had been heavily damaged during the first year of war. Thus the war was also tangible to me, not only in the presentations of the lecturer—where history was often examined from the perspective of the recent war—but also on the university's premises. The classrooms only have basic equipment and do not provide sufficient heating during wintertime. On a rainy day, looking at the ruins through the barred window of one of the lecture halls is rather depressing. But when the sun is out, the former military camp turns into a lively university campus with a café packed with students in its centre and loud local rock music bursting from the speakers.

The history department was still very new when I did my fieldwork and the first students were expected to graduate in 2006. This relatively short history of the department, as well as the university as a whole, and its difficult start, were still noticeable during the time of my fieldwork. For example, several times during my fieldwork, classes were cancelled without the students being informed in advance or indeed being informed at all. I had plenty of opportunities to interact with students outside of the classroom, joining them during coffee breaks and even making friends with students from different faculties. In these informal settings I also gained insight into the less enjoyable parts of their academic lives, which had to do with the poor university infrastructure (practical issues such as insufficient heating in classrooms, and more substantial concerns such as restricted access to literature) and the absence of some professors over long periods (as they often teach at other universities and only come to Mostar for limited periods).[12]

Although the two universities are divided along national lines, a group of minority students from the respective other side does exist. This 'cross-

[11] Džemal Bijedić was prime minister of Yugoslavia from 1971 until his death in an airplane crash in 1977. Born in Mostar, he had felt a special responsibility to put his home region back on the map. Under his influence, significant progress regarding the economy and higher education was made in Herzegovina. Due to his patronage, Mostar's university, opened in 1977, was named after him.

[12] For a critical assessment of the university system in BiH, see Weber 2007.

ing' is an academically strategic choice students make rather than a choice based on political considerations. For example, *Sveučiliste* did not offer computer sciences at first. So, the only option for students with a Croat background wanting to stay in Mostar but hoping to enrol in computer sciences was to study at *Džemal Bijedić*. From conversations with such students, I learned it was not always easy for them to convince their families that this was the right thing to do. Parents were afraid that they would face harassment and discrimination on the 'other side'. Another reason students gave for studying on 'the other side' was to avoid having to take a difficult entry exam. In the case of national subjects (such as Bosnian or Croatian language and history), however, the barrier seems insuperable even if it conflicts with personal interests. One young history student I met at a seminar for multi-perspective textbook writing told me he is most interested in the Ottoman period. But I was surprised to learn he was studying at *Sveučiliste* because I had thought that this period would be taught in more detail at *Džemal Bijedić*. Although the young historian confirmed my assumption, he made it very clear that he, as a Croat, would want to study history at *Sveučiliste*.

Objectifying History

As Borneman states, historians are granted exceptional authority in speaking of the past:

> Unlike an individual, a state has, of course, no memory by which it can reconstruct anything. It cannot at any point in time tell you its history, though historiographers may take it upon themselves, often with state approval, to do so. (Borneman 1992: 42–43)

In BiH, historians are the spokespeople not of the state, but rather of their respective nations. They are central actors in providing proof of the nation's legitimate existence. For that reason, authors critical of such historians have referred to them as 'ethno intellectuals' (see, for example, Sekulić 1999: 283) or 'national historians' (Donia 2000: 358). They are given authority to speak about/for the nation's past, and what they say possesses a strong normative value. Their authoritative power makes it easy

for their words to be exploited for political means. Following Bourdieu (1992: 116), I suggest we speak of the symbolic efficacy of the words of those people recognised by others as individuals holding authority:

> The power of words is nothing other than the delegated power of the spokesperson, and his speech—that is, the substance of his discourse and, inseparably, his way of speaking—is no more than a testimony, and one among others, of the guarantee of delegation which is vested in him. (Bourdieu 1992: 107)

This authority to speak in the name of the nation was also emphasised by lecturers I encountered at the two universities. Generally a rather positivist approach towards history was taken. The lecturer has the authority to tell the students which historical interpretation is right and which is wrong.

This became most clear when a student's view on history diverged from that of the lecturer. This was, for example, the case when a student at *Sveučiliste* compared the crimes committed by the NDH regime to those committed by the German Nazis. This caused the lecturer to interrupt the student by asking what literature he had actually consulted. The student mentioned that one of his references was a source from the internet and the other a book, the title of which he read to the class. Thereupon the lecturer reprimanded the student for not having been critical enough in his literature review, claiming the literature and website consulted were nothing but propaganda. Trying to persuade his students to be more critical when consulting books, the lecturer explained that a book is not authoritative per se. He then began asking students whether they thought a nation's fight for its rights was understandable. It was true that crimes were committed by the NDH, he admitted, but added that every national liberation struggle in history had been bloody: 'What do you think? What would you do if you had to defend your nation?' He then explained that the Serbs had positioned themselves against the Croats in WWII, while the Partisans had fought against the Nazis only to proclaim a communist revolution. The lecturer continued by saying that one cannot only look at what had happened but always had to ask why something had happened as well. At the very end of the lecture, he once again looked straight into his students' eyes and repeated his plea for a critical reading of historical documents.

The lecturer made it clear to the student that his representation of history was not acceptable at all, first by criticising the choice of literature, then his uncritical reading of it, and finally the presenter's analysis itself, as the student had only looked at the events and had not asked why the NDH had resorted to violence. In his explanation, the lecturer partially admitted that what the student had said was correct, although his interpretation was not. In a conversation outside the classroom, the lecturer once told me that national identity becomes most important when it is threatened and that in contrast to well-established nations, such as France, nationalism in former Yugoslavia was still in its infancy. 'How can one ask a 10 year old to behave like a 20 year old?' he rhetorically asked me.

The lecturer's unequivocal reaction shows that only one interpretation of history is acceptable in the class. This interpretation of history stands in stark contrast to the one taught in socialist Yugoslavia, where the NDH regime was referred to as the enemy within who collaborated with the Nazi oppressors (see Chap. 2). Instead, the lecturer's interpretation is in line with that of the first president of Croatia (also a historian), Franjo Tuđman, who downplayed the number of victims of the NDH (see Campbell 1998). Similar to the lecturer's argument above, Tuđman had stated that when looking back in history, one could see that all national liberation movements were violent to some degree (the same argument is often made to justify or at least downplay the crimes committed by the HVO in the wars between 1991 and 1995).[13] At the same time, when crimes committed by Croats are downplayed (or whenever possible, silenced) the victimisation of Croats is emphasised. For example, the dominant Croat public discourse claims that Tito discriminated against the Croat people because of the crimes committed by the NDH.

History was taught in a similar authoritarian and positivist fashion at *Džemal Bijedić*, even if there the opinion was upheld that history teaching in BiH does not need to be separated along national lines. In an interview I conducted with a lecturer of the history department at *Džemal Bijedić*, teaching 20th-century history, he clearly positioned himself

[13] With the election of Croatia's new Prime Minister, Ivo Sanader, in 2003, and the political changes that followed his assumption of office, Croatia has taken a clear position regarding Jasenovac, condemning the crimes committed by the NDH regime. In 2004 a memorial site in Jasenovac was officially opened and representatives of the church, the Jewish community, as well as the Serb minority and the highest politicians of the country, were present (Melčić 2007: 558).

against nationally biased historiography without questioning the idea of 'objective history' as such. The lecturer promoted a history without (national) emotionality, based purely on facts. He indeed argued that science has to aim for objectivity and should not be misused for national chauvinistic purposes. He indicated that he had no categorical objections about the two universities in Mostar as long as they were not oriented along national lines. This lecturer's perception was crucially different from that of the Croat lecturer's discussed earlier in this chapter, who viewed the existence of a Croatian-language university as a crucial precondition for the national survival of the Croat people in BiH. However, it soon became clear that it is the historian who has the authority to claim historic objectivity. In order to make the Bosniak lecturer's position clearer, here is an excerpt from my interview with him:

Are there Croat students at your department?

I think we have some, but only a small and insufficient percentage. Why do I think this? History is a national subject and when it comes to national subjects like language, history and culture, students mostly believe that they can only study this subject at one of the two universities. My opinion, frankly, is that students of every nation, not only Croats or Serbs but other nations too, Jews… why not? They are welcome to study at this faculty. We are gaining knowledge of the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We decided right from the beginning that our knowledge of history has to be based on documents, not emotions. I'm always telling my students to exclude emotions. […] History is really sensitive in that sense and we are really trying to be careful not to include those emotions, no matter if this is a national subject; we have to analyse our history, our culture, and tradition on the basis of real facts. I don't think only of Bosniaks in BiH, but of all nations, why not? All of that is our historical-cultural surrounding in which we have developed. We don't gain knowledge of the history of Bosniaks or of Bosnian culture, we don't have those subjects, our subject is history […].

Do you think objective history is possible?

Yes, why? Absolutely yes, why not? History is beautiful, if it is not misused… could we have objective history? Well, if we are going to consider only science, only science and facts, if we are building only on these premises, we could reach objective history. We cannot have objective history if it is based on emotions without facts. I can say that I'm a Bosniak and I love

> my nation and I will now write against the other nations and for my own people without any facts. If I don't have documents for that or evidence, my writing is worthless. […] Here we have one true historical tragedy when we talk about Bosniaks, objectively one true tragedy that was always created by groups that didn't have good intentions, not complete ethnic groups, but from those radical chauvinistic groups of the Serb and eventually the Croat nation. I will briefly go through the history […].

In this excerpt, the lecturer reinforces his disapproval of nationally divided universities. He claims that even so-called national subjects do not have to be taught separately so long as they are based on objective science. In the case of history, the lecturer argues that objective history is possible only if one excludes (national) emotions. If history is based on facts and excludes emotions, it can be objective and therefore attractive to all students regardless of their nationality. However, when we examine the last paragraph of the interview cited above, it becomes evident that the decision of what is defined as an objective fact lies solely with the respective historian. It is the authority his words are granted that enables him to claim objective history for himself while denying it to a national counterpart.

As will be explored further in the remainder of the chapter, the victimisation of the Bosniak people is at the centre of the Bosniak local history representation. This is also the point from which the lecturer begins his narration, as indicated in his last paragraph cited above, in which he legitimises what happened to the Bosniaks as objective historical fact by using phrases such as 'historical tragedy', a 'true tragedy' and 'objectively one true tragedy' in the same sentence. As I will explore in the next section, the Bosniaks, unlike the Croats, do not draw the same conclusion about their perceived historical role as victims.

National Aspirations and Connecting Different Historical Periods

At the university lectures I followed, generally little attention was paid to the atrocities committed by one's own national group or to the atrocities experienced by others, while the victimisation of one's own group took centre stage. 'National historians have a propensity to characterize perpetrators

from their national group as renegades committing isolated acts, while perpetrators from rival groups are portrayed as acting out the historical will of the offending nationality' (Donia 2000: 358). While the Bosniaks locate their victimhood first and foremost in the war of 1992–1995 and in the WWII period, the Croats locate it first and foremost in the time of Tito's Yugoslavia, the 1992–1995 war and the post-war (post-1995) period. Although I will focus on the accusations made by Bosniaks and Croats against each other, it is important to stress that Croats as well as Bosniaks make strong accusations against Serbs, too. The Serbs are presented as the initiators of the war by Croats and Bosniaks alike. However, since the present conflict lines in Mostar run between Bosniaks and Croats, little attention is paid to the third warring party, the Serbs. This is because the battle with the Serbs lies more in the past, while for people in Mostar the battle between Bosniaks and Croats is clearly situated in the present, refers to events in the past, and is all about the future.

In contrast to *Sveučiliste* where national liberation was proposed as the only path towards democracy, strong scepticism was expressed at *Džemal Bijedić* over the feasibility of constructing BiH as a nation-state. The claim that BiH has always been a multinational place and must remain one is central to the Bosniak-dominant public discourse. In the interview I conducted with the lecturer introduced above, this position becomes very clear:

> Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be constituted as a nation-state. Persistent attempts to create a nation-state here caused problems; today we have one monster of a state just because of this idea to create a nation-state. We cannot create a nation-state because history doesn't allow us to do that. We can create a civil state and that is the only way, there is no other!

In the Bosniak-dominant discourse, BiH is presented as a state that always has been and should therefore remain multinational. Faruk, another Bosniak historian, teaching history in one of Mostar's secondary schools, put it in these words in an interview I conducted with him:

> In reality, Bosnia has always been a multilateral community. What the European Union is today, a mixture (*mješavina*) of different nations, a

> mixture, Bosnia has always been. Bosnia never has been unilateral. She has always been multilateral. […] The recent war put Bosnia in great danger. Why? Because a great percentage of local Serbs—Bosnian Serbs—and a great percentage of Bosnian Croats during this war began to turn against, to destroy and to fire at their mother, their Bosnia, their mother, their land, with the goal of killing an entire people, the Bosniaks. And that is a historical fact.

In this narrative, the Croats as well as the Serbs are polemically represented as traitors who have no respect for the nature of BiH, which is portrayed as multinational (see Alićehajić 2004). Croats and Serbs—or a great percentage of them, as Faruk put it—viewed the loss of the Bosniak people with complacency simply in order to achieve their goal of becoming a nation-state. Faruk backed up his last statement with the words 'and that is a historical fact'.

A multinational and centralised state, supported by the two historians discussed above, is a central claim in the Bosniak-dominant public discourse, which is supported by the Bosniak politicians in power. A multinational and centralised state would also ensure Bosniaks, who are in the numerical majority, a privileged status. In addition, the desire for more centralisation is in line with EU regulations that also demand a more centralised state. On the other hand, the notion of such a state is heavily contested by BiH's Croats as well as Serbs, who are afraid of losing power to the Bosniaks. While the Serbs insist on the continuation of the Serb Republic, key Croat political players demand more independence for the Croat population, sometimes expressed in the insistence on a Croat republic modelled after the already existing Serb Republic. The lecture series I attended at *Sveučiliste* communicated the opposite message from the one promoted by Bosniak historians: Croats have been suppressed throughout history and only national liberation ensures the freedom of the Croat nation. Thus local history was taught as a narrative of Croat suppression and their struggle to overcome it.

At *Sveučiliste* the period of Yugoslavia was central to the lecture series I attended; it was presented as a dark period that needed to be overcome in order to achieve national liberation. The lecturer who taught the lecture series was not cagey about his negative feelings towards Yugoslavia.

He once told his students that one can only laugh at people who remember Yugoslavia nostalgically as he was sure they did so only because they were sentimental about the time they were young and healthy.

For the lecturer, the period of Yugoslavia was only about the suppression of the Croat nation. He holds Tito responsible for trying to eliminate national identity through attempts to create a meta-ethnic nationalism. 'Such a nationalism is a nice idea', the lecturer said somewhat sarcastically, 'but impossible to realise'. He told the students that at the beginning of the 1960s Tito gave in to political pressure and spoke publicly about nationalism for the first time although he was afraid that nationalism would lead to secession movements. Shortly afterwards, in 1967, Tito granted the Muslim population a national identity.[14] For the lecturer, this move by Tito, together with Serb dominance, further strengthened the oppression of the Croat nation. Another example he provided to underline the institutionalised disempowering of the Croat people was Tito's apparent gerrymandering of municipality borders in order to prevent Croats from gaining a majority. The lecturer presented Tito to his students as a statesman who sought to erase national feelings; yet, so the lecturer argued, nationalism (national liberation) is crucial for achieving democracy.

In both the Bosniak- and Croat-dominant public discourses, the past is presented in such a way that it serves to legitimise the respective national aspirations. Therefore, as argued earlier in this book, representations of the past are likely to tell us more about the present state and about aspirations for the future than they actually tell us about the past itself. This is true in both Bosniak- and Croat-dominant discourses, where not only is the past represented in often diametrical ways, but so are the future aspirations of the respective nation. In order to validate the suffering of their own nation, different historical periods are strung into one coherent narrative, a narrative of victimisation and suppression. It is indeed a central discursive strategy in the Croat- as well as the Bosniak-dominant public discourse, and is also a tool heavily drawn upon in school history textbooks in BiH:

[14] From then on people could choose the category Muslim (national) in the census while before they could only choose between Muslim (religious), undeclared or Yugoslav. Tito's motivation for granting Muslims a national status was to counter-balance the nationalism of the two big nations (Serb and Croat) (Isakovic 2000: 80–81).

> Generally entire chapters […] could have been analysed from the point of view of how they serve to make the present more understandable by equalising the past and the present. Numerous direct and indirect references across time construct the idea of historical continuity and reoccurrence when the construction of representations of nation, war and peace in the history textbooks is in question. This is true among all three communities. (Torsti 2003: 253)

Among local historians, a central discursive strategy was the linking of the recent with the more distant past, even if the latter was not officially the object of study. Numerous connections to the distant past were made in order to reinforce the ancient history of the Croat nation and to point out the animosities that Croats have faced throughout time. At the end of one lecture in which the national movement was discussed, the lecturer suggested a topic for the students' final paper: the oppression of the Croat people, from the Ottoman Empire through to Tito's Yugoslavia.

The lecturer painted a picture of the Croats as 'a nation in captivity' during the socialist era. The Croats are presented as a suppressed and discriminated nation that was also economically exploited. This discourse is also dominant in Croat history textbooks (Dimou 2007: 131). Moreover, Croats are presented as truly liberal:

> Croatian political identity is portrayed as primordially liberal and conversely, liberalism is identified as the essential political orientation of the Croatian nation. As a narrative strategy it is inserted with the intention to individualize Croatian history and remove any common frame of reference to the second Yugoslavia. (Dimou 2007: 140)

This strategy pointed out by Dimou implies that the Croats did not participate in Tito's socialist project whatsoever. In this national master narrative, Croat liberation was realised with the Homeland War 1991–1995 (*domovinski rat*) that led to Croatia's independence (although independence was only fully realised for the Croats in Croatia and not for the Croats in BiH). As evident later in this chapter and in some of my interlocutors' narratives in Chaps. 4–6, the fear is that owing to the numerical minority of Croats in BiH, Croats will not be able to maintain their independence as a nation and, in the worst-case scenario, will disappear

altogether (through emigration and assimilation). This fear is taken as justification by Croats for claiming further national independence. From the time the Bosnian Croats gave up their hopes of joining Croatia, claims have been made for a separate Croat republic.

In the Bosniak-dominant public discourse, the linking of different historical periods is enacted in order to prove the continuous victimisation of the Bosniak people since the decline of the Ottoman Empire, with a short interruption during Tito's Yugoslavia. Bosniaks are ascribed a victim status, while Croats and Serbs are presented as perpetrators who disregarded the Bosniaks as a distinct people and aimed to conquer them. In order to validate past Bosniak victimisation, the historians linked different historical periods. Sometimes the links are explicit, while at other times the leaping between different historical periods implies that there should be a correlation between them. The war in the 1990s thereby is presented as if it were only the latest historical example of Bosniak suffering and victimhood. In this narrative, the Croats and Serbs are perceived as threats to the Bosniak nation because of their denial of the latter's independent existence. In contrast, Bosniaks present themselves as a nation that respects the other nations. Particularly prominent is the linking of WWII with the recent war. I will use one specific narrative conveyed to me by the history teacher Faruk to demonstrate this linking strategy.

When narrating the local history of the 20th century, two concepts were predominant for Faruk: fascism and genocide. He made an explicit connection between WWII and the recent war, which for him were both initiated by Croat and Serb fascists who committed genocide but were finally defeated. Faruk told me that his elaborations on WWII were necessary in order for me to understand the recent war in BiH. At one point during his narration he stated:

> Serb nationalists, a horde of Chetnics, a fascist unit started a massive slaughter (*klanje*) against the Muslim residents. That was indeed awful; unfortunately it repeated itself 50 years later […].

Faruk cemented this link between the two wars because of the recurring importance of a specific date, which he took as proof that the recent

war was a repetition of WWII. He underpins the connection between the aggression against BiH/against the Bosniak nation (he uses the two interchangeably) by fascists during WWII and the war of 1992–1995, by calling attention to the date of 9 November:

> Mostar first went through destruction performed by the Serb fascists, and then it went through destruction, an urbicide committed by HVO. And in this phase of aggression it came to the final destruction of the Old Bridge, I told you already a few days ago, 09 November 1993. This date is deliberately chosen. On the same day 60 [55!] years earlier, on 09 November 1938, the *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass) had taken place in Hitler's Nazi Germany, which marked the beginning of the Holocaust against the Jews and everything that took place thereafter in occupied Europe. And on that date [09 November 1993] the Old Bridge in Mostar was destroyed! […] The destruction of the Old Bridge indeed was a sign for the Croat fascists that the Holocaust of the Bosniaks had begun like the *Kristallnacht* in Nazi Germany signalled the beginning of the Holocaust of the Jews. The destruction of the Old Bridge for them meant the elimination, the extermination of Bosniaks at the riverbank. But that is monstrous, because the Old Bridge is a symbol of Bosniaks, but also of Serbs and Croats and Jews and of the entire world!

The close connection Faruk draws between WWII and the recent war, and the way he presents Bosniaks as the victims (like the Jews during WWII), while presenting the Croats and Serbs as fascist aggressors (like the Nazis), is characteristic of the dominant Bosniak public discourse.[15] In this discourse, the term 'genocide' is used freely for different kinds of atrocities committed against the Bosniak population. This is also common practice in Bosniak history textbooks (see Karge 2008: 15; see also Torsti 2003). The term genocide in textbooks is used not only for the killing of Bosniaks during 1992–1995, but also for the *Ustaša* policy that aimed to assimilate Bosniaks. Even the early years of the interwar kingdom (1921–1929) are described as 'political genocide of the Muslims' (Ramet 2007). It is a common discursive strategy in Bosniak as well as in Croat and Serb textbooks to describe local history by using the same

[15] The close link drawn between the recent war and WWII also becomes visible in the commemorations held on 9 May in East Mostar, at the so-called Victory Day over Fascism (*Dan pobjede nad fašizmom*).

terms for different historical periods. In the case of the Bosniaks, textbook authors suggest that the recent war can be explained (and perhaps could even have been foreseen) by events in the past, by the decade-long (or even century-long) hostility of Croats and Serbs against Bosniaks (see Torsti 2003: 255).[16]

Towards Multi-Perspectivity

As has been shown, while Bosniak and Croat historiographies could hardly be more antithetical, the central discursive strategies employed by the historians are similar in many ways. This is particularly true for the discursive strategy of linking different historical periods in order to achieve a coherent national narrative that serves present political purposes. This linking is used to incorporate the war of 1992–1995 into the meta-narrative, even if it is not an explicit subject of discussion, as well as to justify aspirations for the nations' respective futures. In this sense, the way that history is narrated by the historians presented in this chapter is strongly goal-oriented. Michael Bakhtin's notion of chronotope (Bakhtin 1981) is illuminating since it pays attention to specific configurations of the time/space relationship in discourse and '(…) the artful interwining of chronotopes can create discursive connections among moments presumed to be differently located in time and space' (French 2012: 346). As Bauman reminds us: 'Connecting events that are separated in time and often space involves an active social process of extracting discourse from one setting and inserting it into a new setting' (Bauman 1986: 22).

Besides linking different chronotopes, discursive strategies of claiming authority and objectivity over history were enacted at both the Bosniak- and the Croat-dominated universities. Rather than providing sources on which a specific interpretation is based, the lecturers made claims that were based on their own authoritative position as historians. The lecturers largely gave direct instructions to the students on how local history should be understood. Rather than being based on a critical

[16] Such strategies are also prominent in textbooks of other similarly divided societies. In Greek and Turkish Cypriot textbooks, for example, national narratives present the future as historically determined (Papadakis 2008).

reading of texts, the lecturers gave the students 'historical facts'. This is the way that history is taught to younger pupils as well, as I learned during a workshop on multi-perspective textbook writing organised by the OSCE together with the *Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research*. History textbooks used in BiH are often written in an encyclopaedic style (listing historical 'facts') and do not encourage pupils and teachers to engage with different perspectives of historical events. There is little room for either interpretation or discussion, and the history of everyday life (e.g., from the period of Tito's Yugoslavia) is entirely excluded from most textbooks.

This workshop had invited potential history textbook authors who were interested to rethink traditional textbook writing and to investigate new ways of teaching history (see Stradling 2001, 2005). Its main aim was to discuss multi-perspectivity in textbooks, the goal of which was to create room for discussion in the classroom and enable students to judge where to locate historical truth themselves.[17] Although university students are sometimes invited to participate in such discussions in their classrooms, they are quickly reprimanded if their representations of history do not correspond with the one authorised by the lecturer. Notwithstanding this bias, or perhaps precisely because of it, the objectivity of historiography is constantly emphasised by Bosniak and Croat historians. Nationalising the past goes hand in hand with a coherent authoritarian narration, which does not allow any room for multi-perspectivity.

Even if in this chapter the Bosniak and Croat public dominant discourses were discussed separately from the narratives of the three generations, I am by no means suggesting that we can clearly delineate between the two types of narration. The differentiation I make is an analytical rather than a real one, as it were. As pointed out in the Introduction, the differentiation between *discursive strategies* (identified in the dominant public discourses) and *discursive tactics* (identified in the narratives

[17] One project aiming for multi-perspectivity was initiated in 2003 by a group of historians from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia under the umbrella of EUROCLIO (the European Association of History Educators) and resulted in a joint textbook *Obični ljudi u neobičnoj zemlji, svakodnevni život u Bosni i Hercegovini, Hrvatskoj i Srbiji 1945–1990. Jugoslavija između Istoka i Zapada* (Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Country—Every Day Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia 1945–1990. Yugoslavia between East and West). In a conversation with one of the authors, I was told that until today only a small number of copies have found their way into the classroom.

of the three generations) makes clear that individuals who are not professionally involved in (re-)writing the past locate their narratives and interpretations of the past in a field predefined by the dominant public discourse, but at the same time they are not fully determined by it. There is no direct transmission between teachers/professors and pupils/students nor is there a direct transmission of 'collective memories' from generation to generation. As will be shown in the following chapters, individuals make use of the dominant public discourses in different ways and their narratives are never independent from them (even if they position themselves strongly against them). The process of making meaning of past events and periods is socio-culturally situated and is always co-constructed and dialogical (Bakhtin 1981). Personal narratives are informed (but not determined) by current dominant public discourses as well as by past dominant public discourses that individuals of different generations have been exposed to (particularly during formative and educative years).

Even if this means that personal narratives cannot be neatly separated from the dominant public discourses promoted by professionals involved in the 'national project', an analytical differentiation helps to carve out the particular ways by which individuals of different generational positioning reposition themselves vis-à-vis the past after great political changes have occurred. Moreover, it allows us to take into consideration the impact on and responses to dominant public discourses by individuals, who draw on a specific range of personal experiences and share a certain stage of life, a certain life situation.

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4

Two Wars and Tito In-Between: The First Yugoslavs

This chapter focuses on the First Yugoslavs, the oldest generation. The First Yugoslavs were born before WWII and were adolescents or young adults when Tito's Yugoslavia was established. The First Yugoslavs' discursive tactics show that the suffering caused by the war of 1992–1995 is likely to be embedded in a wider narrative of suffering, which starts before that war. Interpretative templates from WWII are taken to make sense of experiences during the recent war.

Owing to the experience of WWII early in their lives, the war in the 1990s did not seem to come as a total surprise for the First Yugoslavs. Even if it cannot be claimed that this generation expected the 1990s war, they were still more 'prepared' for it; they also knew that national identities can be radicalised and *komšiluk* (neighbourliness) endangered. One of my younger interlocutors once told me that her grandfather insisted on building concrete walls in their house to provide shelter in case of a future war. The younger family members always teased him about his quirky behaviour, but today they believe that he was actually right in distrusting peace. In addition, he had insisted that WWII was much worse in nature than the recent war my young interlocutor, his granddaughter, had experienced; nevertheless, this difference as a result of life experience does not

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change the fact that the First Yugoslavs also suffered greatly during the 1990s war. I by no means suggest that there is a scale of suffering according to generation.

Moreover, the First Yugoslavs' narratives are characterised by a reluctance to refer to clear-cut national identities and instead to retain other social demarcations, such as along a rural–urban divide. This will be discussed in relation to the idea of *pravi Mostarci* (true Mostarians). In the second part of the chapter, the discussion moves from the individual to a more collective level. Based on observations at a commemoration ceremony, I analyse how members of the First Yugoslavs generation engage in keeping the memory of the Partisan fight alive, while at the same time linking it to the recent war. At this commemoration ceremony, victims of the Croat NDH regime of WWII and victims of the Croat quasi republic *Herceg-Bosna* in the 1990s merge together as 'victims of fascism'. Thus the once multinational character of the Partisan commemoration has increasingly become a Bosniak commemoration, even if this is not at the attention of its key proponents. By supporting the Bosniak-dominant public discourse, the Partisan commemoration runs the risk of failing in its self-declared aim to fight not only fascism but also nationalism.

Otvoreno srce

At *Otvoreno srce* (Open Heart), a centre mainly funded by foreigners but locally run,[1] is a place where elderly people can socialise and share a hot meal. *Otvoreno srce* is located in *Zalik*, a neighbourhood in East Mostar.[2] Although it is situated in East Mostar, *Otvoreno srce* is explicitly open to people of all nationalities. A shuttle bus serves everyone, those living in the eastern as well as those living in the western part of Mostar. *Otvoreno srce* makes announcements on public radio stations to inform all elderly

[1] Based on an interview conducted with staff at *Udruženje Žena B&H* (Association Woman B&H), which runs *Otvoreno srce*.

[2] In 2010 *Otvoreno srce* moved to bigger premises in *Tekija*.

people in Mostar of their activities. Although Mostar has several *klub penzionera* (senior clubs), these are mostly attended by men and are not nationally integrated. During weekdays, the elderly arrive at *Otvoreno srce* around 10 a.m. and spend their day socialising. They engage in exercises for the body and the mind, play cards, drink coffee and enjoy an inexpensive hot lunch. There is also some exchange of home-made goods, from knitted socks to milk and bread. In the early afternoon the shuttle bus drives them back to their homes.

Otvoreno srce was clearly a place dominated by women, although a few men were present too. One can also tell that women had taken over the place by the way the walls were decorated with their hand-made embroideries and other handicrafts. Popular topics of discussion were prices (from that of vegetables to renting flats) and diseases and their cures. Personal problems and family issues, as well as local politics were also spoken about.

I received a very warm welcome at *Otvoreno srce*, where it seemed everyone was happy to have a new (and young) face around. From the beginning, the elderly people literally took me by the hand, patted my shoulder, whispered little secrets into my ears and invited me for coffee. Without expecting much in return, besides my presence, they almost treated me as if they were my grandparents. The staff also welcomed me, treating me like a new staff member. I was invited to lead the morning gymnastics and to introduce new games and other activities. Here, I was able to conduct participant observation in the full sense of the meaning.

Nostalgia for Tito

One day in March 2007, when I visited *Otvoreno srce*, I found five elderly women sitting on the big comfortable sofa, singing the following lines of the famous Tito song:

> *Druže Tito, mi ti se kunemo, mi ti se kunemo. Da sa tvoga puta ne skrenemo, puta ne skrenemo. Druže Tito, preko Romanije, preko Romanije. Ti odvodi svoje divizije, svoje divizije.*
>
> (Dear friend Tito, we swear an oath, we swear an oath. That we will not turn away from your path, we will not turn away from your path.

Dear friend Tito, over Romanija [mountain in Bosnia], over Romanija. You take your divisions, your divisions.)

The women remembered the words as if they had rehearsed them every day over the past 17 years, dating back to when the statesman to whom this song is a tribute died. While singing it, their faces brightened and the song seemed to fill them with energy and joy. It obviously triggered strong emotions, coupled with memories of the 'good old days'. Research on musical memory has shown that older people in particular use familiar songs to revive moods from the past, which may intensify feelings of nostalgia (Van Dijck 2006). This was clearly the case with the women at *Otvoreno srce*. Immediately after the singing stopped, however, these pleasant memories became overshadowed almost, as if the women once again realised that these days were gone. A lively conversation arose among them:

Woman 1: There were Serbs, Croats, and Muslims in Tito's army. Together they fought for justice. That justice remains and we remain!
Woman 2: And if this would not have come over us, it would still be…
Woman 1: And until today… we would be together. But they came here and divided us. The Croats left there, the Serbs there. We… we were left to go nowhere.
Woman 3: Says a Mostarian [laughs].
Woman 2: A powerful state [Yugoslavia], the third most powerful in the world. And that had to be razed. And when it disintegrated… because there were Slovenes, Macedonians and all the others in Yugoslavia. And of course Croatia with Zagreb. This all was Yugoslavia.
I: Did you travel a lot?
Woman 2: Yes, of course, always! I still travel around today. One could go everywhere, everywhere, of course! One could go to Zagreb, one could go to Belgrade, to…
Woman 3: Back then there was no visa. There was no visa. There was…
Woman 2: There was no visa!
Woman 4: You could sleep on the bench on the street. Nobody would have done anything to you, not 'ha', not 'mu', even in the deep forest. Nothing would have happened to you, no one would have attacked you, let me tell you! And now you cannot even sleep peacefully in your house. You wait until someone comes for you, kills you. That's the way it is.

Woman 1: There is no work. If there were jobs, if they would open factories, everything would be a little different. If one would care. […] If the world would care! If people would have jobs, if factories were opened, I tell you how much more Mostar would be united.

Woman 4: I have three grandchildren. Not one of them works. No one works! Only their mother works, she cares, she cares, of course, what else could she do? What else could she do, she wants to provide her children with university education. What can you do?

This conversation came quickly, just after the cheerful singing had ended. It seemed as if the women felt a great urge to share their thoughts and opinions. The Tito song was a powerful trigger for memories as well as for immediate statements on present-day developments. As is made clear throughout, the narratives about Yugoslavia are never only 'memories' but always position the speaker in relation to recent developments. Whether the speaker wishes to make a political statement or not, the way one positions oneself vis-à-vis Yugoslavia always refers to the state of the present political and economic situation.

Let us now examine more closely the themes that were brought up in the conversation among the women at *Otvoreno srce*. The conversation started with praise for a strong and powerful Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia is remembered as a state that was strong to the outside world (in terms of international power relations) and strong within as it kept the different nations together. But then the women said that its strength was a thorn in the side of other powerful national and international actors, making it a target for destruction.

My question about travel, however, turned the conversation towards the women's personal experiences. The women stressed repeatedly that during the time of Yugoslavia there were no visa requirements, so they could travel freely. The freedom of movement associated with the red (Yugoslav) passport is sentimentally remembered by all those who today possess a (blue) BiH passport. Those of Mostar's Croats who hold a Croat passport face far fewer visa requirements than those who only hold a BiH passport, and are free to travel and to enter the EU. In 2009 the EU granted visa liberation to Serbia (but not to BiH), which also allowed Bosnian Serbs holding a Serb passport freedom of movement. This development left those who were only citizens of BiH—mostly Bosniaks—at a great disadvantage. The visa liberation granted to Serbia

and other Yugoslav successor states, but which excluded BiH, fuelled the visa debate and provoked strong emotions. In this debate Bosniaks reacted to their disadvantageous position and claimed that these developments have led to a state where former war criminals (who are mostly still at large) are allowed to travel freely to EU countries, while victims of the war are locked inside their non-functioning country. Although I sympathise with Bosniaks' feelings of unfair treatment, it has to be said that these visa regimes actually create an 'atmosphere of entrapment' (Jansen 2009: 819) for anyone who is affected by it, regardless of nationality.

Returning to the women's conversation at *Otvoreno srce*, we see that the claim of freedom of movement previously experienced is immediately followed by their claim of now being fearful in their homes. I do not know how many times I have heard statements like this; that in the time of Yugoslavia you could sleep on the park bench, in the forest and so on and nothing would have happened to you. Such statements are commonly employed by the First and Last Yugoslavs, and serve as a metaphor to illustrate the feelings of security experienced during the time of Yugoslavia. I assume, however, that it is more than a metaphor for just physical security (in contrast to the physical threat of the wartime) but is rather an expression of an overall feeling of security (physical, social and economic).

At the end of the conversation cited, the women refer to the bad economic situation Mostar faces today. Here, again, the present situation is compared with Tito's Yugoslavia. Interestingly, one speaker draws a direct connection between the weak economy and high unemployment with the tensions between Bosniaks and Croats. This connection is interesting insofar as international observers more often than not simply reduce the dire relationship between Bosniaks and Croats to hatred. When we remember that Tito's goal of Brotherhood and Unity was coupled with the goal of prosperity, the women's awareness of this correlation may come from their experience of socialist times.

Displacement and Loss of Family

Although the subjects of children and family were often an easy way to engage in conversations with elderly people, I soon realised that talking about family could be a sore point in the elderly women's memories.

Similar to the destruction of good neighbourliness, good family life was greatly interrupted and families were often dispersed on account of the war. Indulging in a conversation about children and grandchildren was likely to bring to the surface stories of loss and suffering. Many close family members, such as children, spouses and siblings, died during the war; most of the deaths were directly or indirectly caused by war. As I soon realised, even seemingly shallow conversations had the potential to reveal great wounds. Once, for example, I was sitting with a small group of people at *Otvoreno srce* when one woman said she liked the necklace with the small blue stone I was wearing. Thereupon another woman announced that she had a similar piece of jewellery that was stolen during the war. When she noticed my concerned look, she added that material things are unimportant and the only thing that counts are loved ones. She then recounted with a shaky voice and tears in her eyes that she originally came from Goražde and had lost her husband and one of her two sons during the war. The dead bodies of her loved ones had been thrown on a rubbish dump, so she was unable to say goodbye to them, and only saw on TV the mass grave where they found the remains of her husband and son.

When the woman from Goražde ended her story, another woman from Mostar followed on with hers. Her story started with the loss of her brother around 40 years ago. At that time she was pregnant, and the sad news about her brother's death caused the premature birth of her baby. As there were no incubators in Mostar's hospitals, the baby was transported to Sarajevo but did not survive the journey. Thereafter she lost three more babies. During the last war she also lost her husband. The 'Chetnics' killed him, she told us, so the only family she has left today is her father. Only when I got to know her better after several visits to *Otvoreno srce* did I learn that her husband was not actually killed by a Serb soldier, which I had assumed from her previous statement. She also later told me that she was in a mixed marriage, since she was a Bosniak and her husband a Serb (or at least these were the identities ascribed to them), while they actually saw themselves as Yugoslavs. During the entire war, her husband had to hide in their flat in West Mostar. According to her description, he was in constant fear for his life, which made him sick and resulted in his death. Although his death was not directly caused by the war, in her opinion the war nevertheless killed him. I heard similar stories from other bereaved

people about deaths that were linked to the war even if the war did not directly cause them.[3]

It needs to be added that the stories about broken families revolved not only around the death of close family members, but also the absence of family members as a result of emigration (forced or otherwise). There is hardly a family in Mostar whose members all still live in BiH. Many fled during the war to other Yugoslav successor states (especially to Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia) but also to other European and non-European countries. Many of them never returned to BiH, especially the children and grandchildren of the First Yugoslavs. The wish to return was stronger among the First Yugoslavs themselves, and many of this generation said they were unable to learn the language or to become accustomed to the different mentality and climate with which they were confronted. Moreover, elderly people who fled the Yugoslav wars very much depended on their children, with whom they usually shared an apartment in exile, and their decision to return has also been affected by their concern not to become a burden to younger family members (see Leutloff-Grandits 2006).

The First Yugoslavs' longing to return home was so strong that they often grasped the first chance to do so once the war was over, hoping that the family they had left behind in the host country would eventually follow them. Many people of this generation moved back to their pre-war homes, even if it was now on the 'wrong' side. This is mostly true for Bosniaks who moved back to their flats in West Mostar. Overall, they said that they feel safe today but that *komšiluk* (neighbourliness) has changed (see Chap. 2). Their relationship with their neighbours has become superficial and is reduced to simply exchanging greetings. The pre-war coffee visits common among neighbours and the support they once gave one another is now lost, they say.

[3] During my stay in Mostar I became friends with a young Bosniak man whose parents had died shortly after the war ended. He blames their death on their strong political commitment to a united Mostar during the war in the 1990s and them holding on to the ideal of Brotherhood and Unity at a time when it was already clear that this would not be realised, even once the war was over. When they saw that even their closest friends had betrayed the ideal of a multinational Mostar, they became extremely depressed and lost their will to live.

In order to reveal the specificities of the First Yugoslavs generation further, two persons, Danica and Armen, and their narratives will be introduced in the following sections.

Danica: More than One Rupture in a Lifetime

I met Danica at *Otvoreno srce*. Born in 1926, Danica was the oldest of the women I met at the centre. Only quite a while after I first met her did I learn that she is a Catholic. Interestingly, she did not refer to herself as 'Croat' but only as Catholic. It is not uncommon among the oldest members of the population to refer to the three 'nations' according to their religion—as Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox—as had been common before the rise of nationalism. While younger generations still use the term 'Muslim' and 'Bosniak' alternately, they no longer refer to Croats and Serbs as Catholics and Orthodox, respectively. This linguistic usage manifests clearly how identity categories have changed their meanings even within a lifetime.

Danica's parents migrated from Czechoslovakia to Sarajevo at the beginning of the 20th century, where she lived until she married a Mostarian and moved to his hometown. Today, she feels closer to Mostar than to Sarajevo since she has spent more than 50 years in Mostar. When Danica and I sat together, she liked to talk about the beautiful Mostar of the time when she was young. Central to her narratives were places where young people liked to spend time, among them the Old Bridge and *šetalište* (pedestrian street) at *Rondo* (today in West Mostar), and stories of a happy family life. In 1992, Danica lost most of her closest kin, including her husband, father, mother, brother and sister. A couple of years later one of her two daughters died. All of them, she said, died of a 'natural' death. Now she lives together with her daughter's former husband and her grandson.[4]

Danica's grandson is an active figure in a well-established youth NGO in Mostar. She is very proud of his being a public figure in Mostar, where

[4] In BiH, where it is still relatively uncommon to move older family members to an old people's home. The elderly either still live in their own homes where they are looked after (mostly by a daughter or daughter-in-law), or if they cannot live independently anymore they move in with the family of one of their children or other younger relatives.

he is even present in the media. Danica once told me with pride that both were asked by a local radio station to appear in one of its shows. They invited her to sing a traditional *Sevdalinka*. Danica had taken singing lessons and voice training when she was young and still likes to sing. Sometimes, she also sings for her friends at *Otvoreno srce* and they like to join in. She is most successful in animating others to join in her singing when she intones Tito songs.

For Danica, Mostar is closely linked with Tito, whom she will never stop admiring for what he achieved for her country, Yugoslavia. For her, like for many others of her generation, Tito is more like a saint than an ordinary mortal. When I once asked Danica what Tito meant for Mostar, she answered:

> Everything, just everything! He was an extraordinary man, everyone thought that! Everyone liked him, everyone! He was, I don't know, I don't know, and he indeed was, also for the others, a brilliant man. Tito! They made a beautiful mausoleum for him. He truly was a man for the people, for the poor ones, for the gypsies. He did not care who was who but just cared for everyone, helped everyone as much as he could. He really was a great man! And as long as he was alive we lived, how do you say, '*ko bubreg u loju*' ['like a kidney in lard', meaning they had plenty of everything, similar to the English expression 'like a bee in clover'].

In Danica's eyes, Tito had committed his life to helping people live a worthwhile life and treated everyone equally, regardless of their ethno-religious background. This is why she describes Tito's death as a great drama with one straightforward, unhappy consequence: the end of peaceful coexistence.

It might be easy to think that Danica must be very pessimistic about her country's future since the man who in her opinion held everything together had died. Interestingly, however, this is not quite true. Sometimes, I had the feeling with Danica that she somehow stands 'above politics'. When talking to her, I gained the impression that she did not consider the recent war was any of her business. Once, she said she still did not see why she should not be friends with a Muslim or an Orthodox. Indeed, Danica's best friend, who is also a regular visitor at *Otvoreno srce*, is Muslim. What binds them together is that they both

grew up in Sarajevo and they both perceive themselves as true city dwellers; religion or national background to them is secondary.

Danica feels empowered enough to at least improve her life by coming to *Otvoreno srce* every morning to socialise with other women. Although a lot of her optimism is likely due to her personality, I observed that the First Yugoslavs compared to the Last Yugoslavs actually expressed fewer feelings of despair (see Palmberger 2008). As will become clear in Chap. 5, the Last Yugoslavs feel much more at the mercy of history and as if they have been caught off-guard by history more so than the generation discussed here. Moreover, it seemed to me that Danica also realised that, because of the long life she already has behind her, national categories are less primordial than they are said to be, but are instead artificial creations. She herself has seen how national categories suddenly appear (e.g., the category 'Muslim' in the national census) or change their meaning. It is the second time that she has experienced a war in her home country, including war among the Yugoslav people. While the situation looked grim after WWII, people somehow found a way to live together. Perhaps this experience gives her hope that what has been possible once will be possible again.

When Danica told me about the recent war, she often linked it to WWII. This she did in two ways. Firstly, through her personal experiences she remembers WWII as more threatening than the recent war. Secondly, she saw that the fight against fascism had to be fought twice, during WWII and during the recent war. Generally, WWII took a more prominent role in her narratives than the war in the 1990s. Moreover, it was interesting to note that Danica often misunderstood my questions if they concerned the war in the 1990s. When, for example, I asked her a question related to the recent war but only referred to it as 'the war', she assumed I was asking her about WWII and not about the war in the 1990s. During that conversation, I was speaking with her about *Otvoreno srce* when she said that it had become her second home; she always finds nice people there to talk to, regardless of their religious affiliations. When I asked her what they liked to speak about, she answered 'just about everything'. When I asked her if this included the war, she affirmed it and added:

> I have to tell you, I remember this time better… and how it was during the war than let's say what happened here yesterday or the day before yesterday. It is just like that, that I simply remember it better!

Were you in Mostar during the war?

Yes I was, yes I was. Half of the time in Sarajevo and half of the time in Mostar. In Sarajevo I met my husband. He was a sports official. And I married him, he was a Mostarian. And when I married him we moved to Mostar and there I stayed.

From her last sentences I realised that Danica was elaborating on WWII and not on the recent war. I realised that I had to explain myself better when speaking with someone who was old enough to hold vivid memories of WWII. In contrast, in conversations with the younger generations it seemed self-explanatory to them (and to me) that 'the war' referred to the war of the 1990s. For Danica, memories of WWII are very present, often more present than the immediate past.

While the narratives of the Last Yugoslavs all circle around the turning point of the 1992–1995 war and are classified either as stories of 'before the war' or 'after the war', this is not the case, at least not to the same extent, among the First Yugoslavs generation. This is because the war in the 1990s is not the only disruption in the oldest generation's lives around which their narratives are structured. Most of them possess very vivid memories of WWII. In conversations with Danica, I realised that WWII and the fear she went through during that time occupied her thoughts more than the recent war.

That the memories of the Last Yugoslavs were less marked by the war in the 1990s became also visible when initiating an activity at *Otvoreno srce*, asking the participants (including Danica) to name the most important places in BiH and later in the entire former Yugoslavia. In a second round I asked them to tell me their memories of these places from the time when they were young and their associations with the cities and towns I had drawn on the board. In a third round I asked how these places had changed in the intervening time and how they look now. The elderly people were all women, aside from Adis, a self-declared Yugoslav and atheist. All were very engaged in the activity and first named many cities and towns spread all over Yugoslavia. These places were then associated with a lot of different things, for example, nature (vegetation, mountains, lakes and so on), the local industry or local specialities. When I finally asked them how these places had changed since when they were young, their

answers were strikingly apolitical. For example, they said that one place had become more polluted or another place had more car traffic now than when they were young. Only at the end of the exercise did Adis, who stood slightly apart from the others, say that one of the towns is now populated mainly by Serbs while before the war the Muslim population had been in the majority. I was amazed that this was the only politically critical contribution during the entire exercise, since many of the places written on the board have seen extreme violence and severe population shifts. I, for my part, had associated many of the places with the war in the 1990s, for example, with detention camps, which I had learned about through news coverage during the time of the war or from reading about them later.

One could argue that the older people had purposefully avoided associating the places with war and atrocities in order not to offend anyone in the room. However, I had listened to politically controversial conversations at *Otvoreno srce* before, when I was amazed by how openly people attacked one of the former war parties. While not precluding that this was one of the reasons for the participants' apolitical behaviour, I strongly believe that it is neither the only reason nor the most decisive one and that it is first and foremost connected to their generational positioning as will be discussed below.

The second of the three individuals belonging to the First Yugoslavs I discuss in this chapter is a man whom I met during my first visit to Mostar and with whom I kept in contact over several years. From his narrative we learn about his powerful identification with Mostar and its history, which was particularly strong among those belonging to the First Yugoslavs generation.

Armen: A 'True Mostarian' Embedded in Local History

I met Armen for the first time during my first visit to Mostar in 2003, when I rented a room from him. When I finally moved to Mostar with my husband and our twin sons, he eventually hosted all of us. It was a pleasure to live at his house for several weeks because of his kind and

humorous nature, and because of the many stories he shared with us. As I soon found out, Armen's house has an open door policy, not only welcoming foreigners but also German language students studying at the nearby university *Džemal Bijedić*. His young friends provide him with company and he in return provides them with local culinary treats as Armen is a gifted cook. As a former German teacher, he was also able to help with language issues.

Armen has spent his entire life in Mostar, with only a short interruption during the 1990s war when he first fled to Croatia for a few months and then to Turkey where he stayed until 1996. He is still grateful to Turkey for hosting him during the time of war. Armen originally studied German and his German is still excellent even if some words sound antiquated. It must be said that Armen is no exception among his generation, one that still feels a strong bond to the former Austrian-Hungarian monarchy. I encountered a man in Sarajevo who illustrates this connection very well. He was a child during the end of the Habsburg occupation and was sent to Austria by his father every summer to improve his German. When sharing his memories with me, we shared a Viennese *Sachertorte* (typical Viennese chocolate cake) and drank coffee in a café in Sarajevo's Old Town called *Wiener Café*. It was touching for me, as an Austrian, to see these old bonds between Austria and BiH still sustained in this old man who spoke old-fashioned Austrian German and incorporated the so-called Viennese-School in the way he conducted himself. The Viennese café, on the other hand, I recognised as a place for reviving old bonds for a 'new' Sarajevo identity.

Armen's strong bond to the German language is also connected to the Habsburg history, which he 'remembers' as a good period for Mostar and all of BiH, although, in contrast to the man I met in Sarajevo, he holds no personal memories of it but only memories transmitted to him by older family members. Armen is an experienced city guide and several times I had the pleasure of walking around Mostar with him. It was fascinating to see how he revived the history of the buildings and places we visited. It must be said, though, that his tour always only covered East Mostar. He did not make this an issue, as if it was self-evident why we did not cross over to West Mostar.

According to Armen, Mostar has a long history of occupation that continues to this day. 'We have always been under occupation', he said,

'first under the Ottomans, then under the Habsburgs, then under the fascists and now under the Europeans!' Of the first two occupiers—the Ottomans and Habsburgs—he painted an entirely positive picture. He emphasised their achievements, especially the harmonious coexistence of BiH's different religious groups during the Ottoman occupation and the great architectural realisations of that time. He praised the Habsburgs first and foremost for the construction of public buildings (e.g., schools and hospitals) and infrastructure (e.g., roads and railways). When he spoke of *Kaiser* Franz Josef and his heir to the throne Franz Ferdinand, he almost sounded sentimental. He still remembered the positive feelings old people held for the *Kaiser*. He also told me that Mostarians warned Franz Ferdinand not to travel to Sarajevo but that he, unfortunately, did not heed their advice. Armen is sure that a great number of Mostarians were deeply upset when they learned about the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his pregnant wife by 'Serb terrorists'.

When on our tours we finally arrived at the *Stari most* (Old Bridge), Armen revealed a great repertoire of stories about it including legends about its construction (and destruction) and its meaning for Mostar. He made it clear that he was still upset about its destruction. *Stari most* survived WWII, Armen told me. When the Italian fascists planned to blast it the Partisans prevented the demolition by cutting the fuse just in time. To his great sorrow, the Croats managed to destroy the bridge in November 1993. The *stari* (as he sometimes liked to address the Old Bridge as if it were human, an old man) was a place of his youth. This was a common sentiment among many others of his generation (regardless of their nationality) who remembered the Old Bridge as a meeting point for young people, where often memories of first romances are tied to the famous bridge. As we have seen in the case of Danica, for Croats of this generation the bridge is likely to possess a similar importance as it does for Bosniaks. As such, it is clear that Croats of this generation have not taken on the dominant Croat discourse that distances itself strongly from the Ottoman past. The importance of the Old Bridge among members of this generation, regardless of their national background, suggests that the emotional bond that connects Armen with the *Stari most* cannot be reduced simply to his Bosniak identity (Fig. 4.1).

Armen perceives and presents himself as a *pravi Mostarac* (true Mostarian). He has a long family history in Mostar. When he talks about

Fig. 4.1 During one of the memory-guided city tours with Armen, at *Stari most*. Photo by the author

pravi Mostarci (true Mostarians) he does not refer to everyone born in Mostar but only to those belonging to the well-educated pre-war elite. Most of them left the country during the war and did not return, but there still is a small number who remained. Armen often expressed his dislike of present developments in the city in statements such as 'Mostar used to be a small city but today it is a big village!', an expression I have often heard from so-called *pravi Mostarci*. With such statements my interlocutors blamed the refugees who came from rural BiH to settle in Mostar for spoiling the city with their uncultured behaviour. They also linked the decay of good neighbourliness to the newcomers. This is a phenomenon not restricted to Mostar, but one that can also be found in other places in BiH (see Helms 2008; Jansen 2005; Maček 2009; Stefansson 2007).

The group identity of *pravi Mostarci* is strengthened through local activities, such as celebrations of local artists. One of these celebrations I joined was dedicated to Aleksa Šantić (1868–1924), a Bosnian-Serb poet

who lived most of his life in Mostar. Through his poems he attempted to overcome national boundaries and provide a pan-Slavic vision. Although at the ceremony in question that took place on 2 February 2006, the wreath ceremony was organised by the head of Mostar's Serb cultural centre (*Srpsko prosvjetno i kulturno društvo prosvjeta*), the small group of people who attended were of different national backgrounds. The people present were in their 50s to 80s. From an earlier conversation with the head of the Serb cultural centre, and from an Orthodox Christmas celebration I had attended, I knew that the Mostar's Serb cultural centre viewed itself as a place open to all nations interested in Serb culture and arts.

The ceremony in question took place on the 82nd anniversary of the writer's death. But before commemorating Šantić, another local poet, Osman Đikić, was remembered at his honorary grave, which is located close to the Old Town in East Mostar. Šantić's grave, which was visited next, is located at the Orthodox graveyard on the hills in East Mostar, close to Mostar's Orthodox cathedral which was destroyed during the war (Fig. 4.2).

Fig. 4.2 At the anniversary commemoration of Mostar's poet Aleksa Šantić, 2006. Photo by the author

After the ceremony, which I attended together with Larissa Vetters, another anthropologist, we conversed with the participants. They were very open and interested in our research projects and particularly liked the idea that I was interested in memories of Mostar. Without further questioning, our interlocutors were sure that I was interested in learning about the true Mostar, 'Mostar's soul' as they put it. This, they assured me I would only find if I spoke with public figures who had been active in politics and culture in pre-war Mostar. My interlocutors became so excited about this that they wrote down a list of people whom I should contact. This list solely included public figures from pre-war Mostar, such as mayors, poets and artists. Afterwards, they took us on a tour through the Old Town where they introduced us to several artists. On this occasion, we also visited the studio of Jusuf Jusa Nikšić, a local painter, who invited us for a drink (local *rakija*). At the end of our tour visiting *pravi Mostarci* one of our 'guides' told us in a dramatic voice that it will take decades to educate the rural newcomers on how to behave in a city. Thereupon he said that Mostar experienced something like Hiroshima and, accordingly, will take a long time to recover.

Although Armen did not take part in the particular ceremony described, it is the same 'Mostar's soul' that he and the participants at Šantić's commemoration cherish. Even if this local identity is not confined to the First Yugoslavs, it is possible to say that it is particularly strong among them. In the cases of Armen and Danica, local identity, at least at times, even overcomes national identity. This shared local time also implies a shared generational past crossing ethno-national borders.

Summarising, we can say that the First Yugosalvs' narratives show more coherence and are less ruptured than the narratives of the Last Yugoslavs discussed in the next chapter. Furthermore, they are less penetrated by the present dominant public discourses than the narratives of the younger generations, the Last Yugoslavs and the Post-Yugoslavs. Due to the far-reaching experiences connected to their age, the First Yugoslavs have a sense of the constructedness of nationality. This gives them—at least at times—the possibility of resisting the present rigid use of national categories. For example, religious and local identities among this generation are still prominent, but a Yugoslav identity, tightly connected to Tito,

also prevails among the First Yugoslavs. Moreover, the First Yugosalvs are more optimistic that the different groups will live peacefully together in the future. This more optimistic outlook than their younger co-patriots is likely to be connected to their experiences of the post-WWII period, when the different ethno-national groups found a way to live together peacefully. Furthermore, nostalgia among First Yugoslavs for a shared time was less painful than for the Last-Yugoslavs and gave the narratives of the former a potential optimistic outlook that things will improve.

The First Yugoslavs' reluctance to current national politics and developments is also related to the particular life situation they find themselves in. In contrast to the Last Yugoslavs, who are in mid-life, have to make a living and often are responsible for caring for children (and for their parents too), the First Yugoslavs are not entangled in local post-war everyday politics in the same way. The First Yugoslavs find themselves in a period of their lives that allows them to delve into the past much more than the two younger generations, resulting in a strong feeling of a shared generational past (with special emphasis on Tito's early Yugoslavia). They also felt freer to return to their pre-war homes (even if they were on the 'other side' of the city) and to find spaces to cherish the (multinational) past with others of their generation, as at *Otvoreno srce* or at the Partisan commemoration day that is the subject of the rest of the chapter.

Of course, we have to consider that I met many of this generation at *Otvoreno srce*, a place where all nationalities are welcome. It therefore attracts people who do not perceive nationality as a strict line of division and this means that I was likely to meet a disproportionately high number of people of this generation who resist rigid national categorisation. Moreover, none of my key interlocutors of this generation was loyal to the Croat NDH regime of WWII. Notwithstanding all this, it became clear that for the First Yugoslavs national identity is not such a powerful categorisation as it is for the Last Yugoslavs and the Post-Yugoslavs, even if compared to those of younger generations who I met at places as mixed as *Otvoreno srce*. It is certainly not the exclusive privilege of the First Yugoslavs to resist and challenge Mostar's national division. 'Border crossers' can be found among all three generations as shown elsewhere (Palmberger 2013a).

Remembering the Partisan Past: Old Form, New Meaning

Mostar still has a Partisan association with mainly elderly members.[5] It is one of the SUBNOR (*Savez udruženja boraca Narodno-oslobodilackog rata*, The Federation of Associations of Veterans of the National Liberation War) that existed in former Yugoslavia. The president of SUBNOR of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton is Alija Bijavica, a man in his 80s who is easily identifiable from his appearance and the way he acts and communicates as a member of the pre-war urban elite. He has been president of the canton corpus of anti-fascist fighters for the last 15 years and was a president at the city level before. As I learned during a conversation with him, the Partisan ceremony has taken place every year since WWII, with the only exception being the years 1992–1995 when the war made it impossible to organise the commemoration. Although it was continued after 1995, today it receives little media attention in contrast to the newly established national commemorations for victims and heroes of only one nation. Still, I noticed an increase in media presence at the commemoration compared to 2006, perhaps a sign of its increasing political relevance. Interestingly though, the Partisan commemoration attracted more participants than some of the newer commemorations I attended during my fieldwork. Notes taken from my Mostar field diary on 14 February 2008 read:

> Arriving at the meeting place shortly before the official opening of the ceremony at 10:30 a.m., I see only a few elderly people gathered around the bust of Mustafa Čemalović Čimba (1919–1943). Čimba is one of the people's heroes who lost his life fighting against the Nazis. His bust is situated on the western bank of the Neretva River, but just below the *Bulevar* and so is still located on the Bosniak-dominated east side. Another 15 people are waiting at the other side of the road, chatting and laughing. The commemorators are predominantly elderly people, some of them in festive, others in casual, clothes. Most of them are in their 70s, 80s or even 90s, which means

[5] In present BiH about 25 Tito associations exist including around 8000 members (Halder 2013: 280).

> they were teenagers or young adults during WWII. A few minutes after my arrival, pupils from the school located just next to the bust join us with two teachers. The pupils, around 10 years old, queue neatly behind the bust.

After the children have organised themselves, a man rises to speak. He extends welcoming words, followed by a brief introduction of Čimba and his struggle against fascism. We learn that the German army entered Yugoslavia in 1941 and from this day until the liberation in 1945, 70 Partisan fighters received the honorary title *narodni heroj* (people's hero), one of them being Čimba. During those four years, 800 soldiers gave their lives for Mostar and its people in order to obtain freedom, the speaker tells the audience. The youngest generation, he says, has to learn about Yugoslavia's history and must not forget it because today Mostar is again confronted with these 'roots' of fascism. At the end of his rather lofty speech, a pupil lays a wreath before the bust.

The next speaker is an elderly woman. She is small and wears her white hair unconventionally short. Although still agile, one can see by the wrinkles on her face that she has a long life behind her. I later discover that she is 84 years old and head of the local Partisan women's organisation. She begins her speech by loudly calling out the well-known Partisan slogan: *Smrt fašizmu, sloboda narodu*! ('Death to fascism, freedom for the people!'), whereupon the children are urged to applaud. She continues that Čimba, like all the other soldiers, did not fight for his own benefit but for Bosnia and the entire Yugoslavia. Then she tells the pupils about life in Tito's Yugoslavia where everyone lived together and people did not *odmiksali* (separate themselves, literally 'de-mixing') like they do now. She stresses the importance of history and, while pacing slowly, step by step, she addresses the pupils:

> Step by step. We can learn what we have already learned. History can teach us. We have learned once already from history and today we have to learn from history again. In order to know who we are, what we are and where we are. We are the people (*narod*) of Bosnia and Herzegovina!

At the end of the speech, she calls upon the teachers to teach their pupils how people lived together during the time of Yugoslavia and not to teach

them to live divided. To loud applause, she is warmly received by her female friends who start greeting her with a well-known Tito song. The friends hug and kiss each other, obviously entertaining memories of Yugoslavia. The atmosphere is cheerful, with the singers clapping their hands to the rhythm of the song. Some pupils look bewildered by the singing women, while some start cheering. Before the crowd moves on to the next stop, a friend of the female speaker shouts once again: '*Smrt fašizmu*, *sloboda narodu*!' and everyone claps their hands. When we leave the first stop I spy a fleur-de-lis at the back of Čimba's bust. Someone must have drawn the symbol (closely associated with the Bosniak nation) on the bust of the Partisan hero.

I am surprised to see the next stop is not a Partisan commemoration site but the martyrs' cemetery. At *Šehitluci*, as it is commonly referred to, (Muslim) 'martyrs' who fought 'for the liberation of Mostar' between 1992 and 1995 are buried. Before the war there were only a few old Muslim tombstones. Today, *Šehitluci* is the central place in Mostar for commemorating the Bosniak victims of the 1990s war. More than a hundred additional commemorators are already waiting at *Šehitluci*, among them the organiser, Alija Bijavica. Two buses have been provided for the participants—a yellow bus donated by Japan usually in service for regular public transport—and one from the delegation from Konjic, a town an hour from Mostar on the way to Sarajevo. Behind the windscreen of the latter bus I see a somewhat oversized photo of Tito, a suggestion perhaps that the former leader is overlooking the ceremony from a distance. Some of the people carry Tito closer to their bodies, like an elderly man who has Tito's portrait pinned on a button to his coat. Two elderly men (both from the Konjic delegation, as I later learn) are leaning against the wall at the entrance to *Šehitluci*, distributing little Tito card calendars. On the front of the card is a Tito portrait and on the back a calendar of 2008 with a logo of Forum Mladih SDP BiH (Forum of the Young Social Democratic Party BiH).

The head of the local Partisan women's organisation now holds a big Bosnian flag in her hand, which she then wraps around her shoulders and wears like a big cape. The blue and yellow flag with the white stars suits her well and she does not take the flag off again during the entire ceremony. She is very cheerful and obviously enjoys being unconventional.

But the other commemorators also enjoy her entertaining contribution. Together with the other commemorators I gather around a commemoration stone (the same stone where the school classes met before they attended the history lecture under the Old Bridge; see Chap. 3). Alija Bijavica addresses the commemorators with only a few words, saying that now the victims of the second fascism will be remembered; his words are followed by a '*slave mu*' ('*slave mu*' ends Muslim prayers, like amen ends Catholic ones). The people next to him assume the Muslim prayer pose. In front of us a quote from the Qur'an is inscribed in the stone:

> *I ne recite za one koji su na allahovom putu poginuli*: '*mrtvi su*!' *Ne*; *oni su živi*, *ali ne osjećate* (*Kur'an*: *154*).
> (Do not say of those who are killed in the cause of God, 'They are dead.' They are alive at their Lord, but you do not perceive (Qur'an: 154).[6]

Above the text a fleur-de-lis has been inscribed. It is similar to the one I identified on the back of Čimba's bust. On my way to the bus I pass a reporter from Federation TV who asks Alija Bijavica to provide a message to the people of Mostar. I find it remarkable that the head of the Partisan association is given the opportunity to make a statement to the people of Mostar this way.

The next stop is Musala Square, a central square located in East Mostar, bordering a bridge over the Neretva River. Several significant buildings around Musala Square have been ruined during the war, such as the Hotel Neretva, the music school and the city's swimming pool. All were buildings from Austro-Hungarian times and all apart from the pool are still in ruins. Musala Square is a small renovated park which hosts several memorials erected in different decades. Considering the small size of the park, far too many memorials are placed there. The commemorators pass the Partisan memorial at the entrance to the park and continue to the two busts of Partisan fighters behind it, where flowers are laid. On the left side stands the bust of the *narodni heroj* Mladen Balorda (1921–1945) and on the right side the bust of *narodni heroj* Hasan Zahirović Laca (1920–1943). The busts of the two Partisan fighters face another, very

[6] English translation retrieved at http://www.submission.org/suras/sura2.html [12.09.2010].

modern memorial with the inscription: 'Commemorating the friendship between the people of Kuwait and of BiH'.[7]

Finally, the buses drive the commemorators to the biggest Partisan commemoration site in Mostar, the Partisan memorial cemetery built between 1960 and 1965.[8] During the entire bus ride several of the passengers sing Tito songs at the top of their voices. The atmosphere is lively and one woman intones one song after another, all the while waving her red carnation out the open window. The bus passes heavily shelled buildings on the *Bulevar* and then crosses to the Croat-dominated part of the city. Just when we enter West Mostar, the woman with the carnation in her hand starts a new song with the refrain saying: *A na drugoj strani*, *a na drugoj strani*, *a na drugoj strani. Napred partizani*! ('But on the other side, but on the other side, but on the other side. Move ahead Partisans!'). She almost screams the words out of the windows, making clear who she means by 'the other side'. Pedestrians passing by look either bewildered or amused when they notice the bus full of elderly people singing old Partisan and Tito songs. The bus stops close to *Sveučilište's* campus and we only have to cross the street to enter the Partisan memorial cemetery.

In pre-war Mostar the cemetery was one of the main tourist sites. A travel guide (Njavro 1985) of Herzegovina published in 1985 even suggests that tourists join the celebration on 14 February. During my stay in Mostar, I met several elderly Bosniaks who told me about the Partisan memorial's former beauty and how proud they were to present it to foreign visitors. Today, many people do not even want to be seen there because it is said that only drug addicts frequent the place. One of my young Croat acquaintances even refused to enter the memorial site when he took a group of Viennese university students on a guided tour through Mostar.

The procession slowly approaches the top of the memorial as the path is uneven and difficult for the elderly participants. On the way we pass much graffiti sprayed on the surrounding walls, among them Ustasha

[7] The memorial was erected in 2001, after the city of Mostar received a loan from Kuwait for rebuilding its infrastructure, including Musala Square.

[8] The initiative for the memorial came from former prime minister Džemal Bijedić. It was then realised by Bogdan Bogdanović, an architect, artist and mayor of Belgrade from 1982–1986, who designed numerous Partisan memorials in former Yugoslavia (Mutevelić 1980). Bogdanović left the country in protest against Milošević's politics.

symbols. The ground is covered with splintered glass from broken bottles and with every step I make I hear glass grinding between my shoes and the ground. On the way, I take the opportunity to speak to Alija Bijevica, the organiser of the ceremony. With a sigh he tells me that before the war there were 18,000 Mostarians present at this ceremony, while today there are only about 150 people. I also learn from him that the Partisan memorial cemetery was the site of big protests against the upcoming war in March 1992. After telling me about the beginning of the war in 1992, he returns to WWII. Back then, every third Mostarian fought for the liberation, he says, and every eighth did not see the day of liberation. 'This is why we are fighting against fascism, because the fascists ruined everything', he concludes.

At the top of the hill I meet his wife, a well-dressed woman, like her husband easily recognisable as a member of the pre-war urban elite. I stand next to Mrs. Bijavica, both of us looking down at the Partisan site when she tells me about the way the Partisan memorial looked before the war. It used to be one of the first sites tourists would visit, she assures me like many others before. 'And look what happened to it!' she says in a sad tone, pointing towards the memorial. Indeed, the memorial site is in poor shape: the path is dirty and covered with pieces of broken glass, the stones of the memorial are covered with moss, many are loose and there is offensive writing on the walls. It was the architect's purpose to integrate the memorial into the landscape, but now it seems as if the landscape is taking over the memorial.

The 750 white headstones have softly curved shapes, as do the inscriptions which give the names of the dead and their places of birth and death. But even the stones have not been spared decay and vandalism. Many of them have been broken and forcibly removed from their original places. One old man is obviously disturbed by the bad shape they are in. In a seemingly endless attempt to restore the site back to order, he gathers piece upon piece of broken headstones to set them together again. The woman who gave the speech at the first stop searches for the stone of one of her relatives but does not find it. Other commemorators who are lucky enough to find where their loved ones are buried put red carnations on their stones (Figs. 4.3 and 4.4).

At the top of the memorial some 150 people gather in a semicircle. After some commemorators lay down flowers and wreaths (some of them

Fig. 4.3 Partisan commemoration ceremony, 2008. Photo by the author

pausing for prayer), Alija Bijavica begins his speech in which he calls for 'the sons of our town' who fought for its liberation never to be forgotten. Alija continues to praise the great solidarity Mostarians showed with Serbs, Jews and Roma who became victims of genocide. This Partisan memorial used to be our national memorial, he says, until the nationalists came in March 1992 and started to shell Mostar. At the end of his speech Alija appeals to those present to fight for a secular state. In his view BiH

Fig. 4.4 Partisan commemoration ceremony, 2008. Photo by the author

is only a step away from becoming a religious state. But the future of BiH, he says, is as a secular state that becomes a member of the European Union. At the end of his speech, Alija tells the audience about his plans to maintain the memorial site by building a fence around it and installing big floodlights to make it secure, although he faces obstacles since all energy is now put into erecting nationalist memorials. But one day, he says, the memorial site will look like it used to, and at these final words he receives resounding applause.[9]

The final stop is the alternative youth cultural centre, *Abraševi*ć, where we are invited into the theatre hall. When we enter the hall, which has been painted black, Tito songs blast out of the speakers, occasionally

[9] During my last visit to Mostar in 2010, the Partisan memorial cemetery finally was in the process of being renovated.

interrupted by short sequences of one of Tito's speeches. Obviously recognising the songs, the old people smile, clap or sing along. I realise that a woman sitting in the row before me has tears in her eyes. On one occasion, at the end of a sequence of Tito's speech where the audience on the recording applauds, people in the present audience applaud, too. I feel somewhat uncomfortable because the old recording of Tito's speech, spoken in a very 'authoritarian' tone, reminds me too much of totalitarian political propaganda. After some 10 minutes, the music is turned off and the young host of *Abrašević* starts his speech by wishing the audience a happy holiday (*sretan praznik*). He says that we should never forget the war of liberation fought in WWII and that the fight against fascism is also a constitutional part of the youth centre's identity. But he says that he is aware that the participants at the centre are in the minority, so he invites the audience to tell young people about the way they used to live under Tito and the ideals they lived for. The generations should not stay divided but should engage in exchange with each other, he concludes and then gives the floor to Alija Bijavica, who ends the ceremony with a meticulous description of the Partisan fight for Mostar's liberation. At the end of the speech and three hours of the programme, the participants seem tired and glad to enjoy themselves over a drink in the company of old friends.

Remarkably, during the entire ceremony there was no explicit explanation or even the attempt to explain who the 'new fascists' are, i.e., who this frequently used term refers to. Although the organiser and central figures of the commemoration made relatively clear in their speeches that fascism/exclusive nationalism is not restricted to one of the national groups in BiH, the strong link to the ABiH found in the same commemoration gives room for other interpretations. When the woman in the bus waved her red carnation out of the window screaming 'But on the other side, but on the other side, but on the other side. Move ahead Partisans!', it was also clear that to her the enemies (fascists) were on the Croat-dominated west side while the (new) Partisans were on the Bosniak-dominated east side.

Every speech given at the ceremony included an element (in the speech itself, in the choice of venue or location, or in the symbolism employed) linking the recent war with WWII. Starting at the first stop, the speakers established a direct connection between the atrocities Mostar witnessed

in the 1940s and those of the 1990s. This comparison is made twice: first, to warn the pupils present at the ceremony about the fascism Mostar again faces today and second to convince them that BiH can overcome national divisions as it has done so once already in its history after WWII. The organiser and head of SUBNOR makes this comparison again in his final speech at the Partisan memorial cemetery, where he indicates that the Partisan struggle against fascism has not yet ended.

During the ceremony I noticed many 'identity markers' that made it an event primarily intended for Bosniaks. First, the event visited *Šehitluci*, which is the place where most commemorations for Bosniak war victims take place. For example, I had previously attended three other ceremonies clearly Bosniak-led at *Šehitluci*: the commemoration on 9 May, a reburial of fallen ABiH soldiers and a protest rally against the ruling of the International Court of Justice on the charges brought forward by BiH against Serbia and Montenegro for committing genocide.[10] Already during the war, fallen Muslim soldiers were increasingly referred to as *šehids* (religious martyrs). Bougarel interprets this upcoming *šehid cult* as a political strategy by the SDA leaders 'to use the war dead to homogenize the Muslim community and to claim a monopoly on the interpretation of the war itself […]' (Bougarel 2007). Beside the Muslim martyrs' cemetery I noticed other signs during the Partisan commemoration suggesting that it is losing its multinational character. At almost every memorial site a '*slave mu*' was spoken after the wreaths had been laid down or after a minute's silence had been observed. I never heard the Croat equivalent of 'amen'.

Another symbol strongly associated with Bosniaks is the fleur-de-lis that was drawn on Čimba's bust and also inscribed on a gravestone together with a quote from the Qu'ran about the immortality of martyrs. This fleur-de-lis was chosen as a supra-ethnic symbol for BiH's coat of arms in 1992 due to its pre-Ottoman origin in the Bosnian Kotromanić Dynasty which represented no particular ethnic group. During the war

[10] In April 2006, BiH presented evidence against Serbia and Montenegro in the first trial on genocide held before the International Court of Justice. When the judgement was announced in February 2007 acknowledging genocide only for the killing of around 8000 men and boys in Srebrenica in July 1995 and did not find Serbia-Montenegro responsible for the actions of the Army of the Serb Republic (VRS), several protest rallies were held all over BiH, including Mostar.

it became a symbol strongly associated with the ABiH, which used the fleur-de-lis as its official sign (Kolstø 2006: 6).[11] The fleur-de-lis not only became the sign on the ABiH's coat of arms but also that of the SDA's, whereupon it lost its supra-ethnic meaning. Therefore we can assume that by drawing a fleur-de-lis on the bust in green, the colour of Islam, the depicted Partisan is marked as a hero of the Bosniak nation, rather than as belonging to the Bosnian nation, i.e., of all Bosnians and Herzegovinians including the three constituent peoples plus others. This symbolism—even if the Bosniak participants are unaware of it—is clearly visible to those who do not identify themselves as Bosniaks (here the territory- or identity-marking works in the same way as the new street names in West Mostar; see Palmberger 2013b).

During socialist times, Partisan commemorations were a fixed part of the annual events calendar and were held several times a year, some statewide, some only in certain republics or towns. The main purpose of these commemorations was to strengthen a united Yugoslav identity for which the Partisan myth was crucial (see Chap. 2). Today only a small number of such commemorations is still carried out. The Partisan commemoration with which we are concerned here continued to take place, even in the post-socialist period, every year on 14 February, the day of Mostar's liberation from the Nazis in 1945. This change in context is important to consider when analysing the commemoration because as Olick rightly states: 'The past includes not only the history being commemorated but also the accumulated succession of commemorations, as well as what has occurred between those powerful moments (Olick 2007: 58).

Although nowadays 14 February is a day like any other for most Mostarians, members of the generations educated during Tito's period of rule are still familiar with its former meaning. Present-day Mostarians in their teenage years or early 20s often associate 14 February only with Valentine's Day. An age difference of only a few years can be significant here. The education of those born in the 1970s was still concentrated on the anti-fascist fight and important dates related to it were learned by heart and are surprisingly well remembered even today. On the other hand, those born in the 1980s (especially in the late 1980s) experienced radical educational change (see Chap. 3). It seems, however, that initia-

[11] The golden fleur-de-lis became ABiH's highest order of distinction.

tives are being undertaken to revitalise 14 February as a day of commemoration on the Bosniak side. For example, one of the young lecturers at the Bosniak-dominated university told me that she had scheduled the final exams for 14 February. I first assumed this was unintentional, but she told me that she did it on purpose because 14 February was an important day in Mostar's history and students should not forget about it. The question remains as to why the lecturer finds it important to revitalise knowledge about 14 February. Is it only because of the crimes committed in Mostar during WWII, or is the awareness being raised first and foremost because it supports the Bosniak claim of victimisation followed by present-day political and academic elites? This discourse of victimisation is coupled with the Bosniak claim to have acted as the liberators of Mostar from fascism twice in history.

14 February is not a day of celebration in Croat-dominated West Mostar, where 14 February 1945 is remembered first and foremost as the day on which 12 Franciscans were executed. The execution took place at a monastery in Široki Brijeg, a village close to Mostar, where a bitter battle had been fought between Ustashe and German forces on the one side and Partisan brigades on the other. According to Perica (2002: 110), the Partisans, after great casualties on their own side, captured the stronghold and executed 12 clerics.

The conflict between Bosniak and Croat historiographies today is not about historical facts but primarily about their interpretation. While in the Bosniak historiography the execution of the clerics is marginalised or even silenced as the clerics are viewed as collaborators with the fascists, the execution is central to local Croat historiography because the Franciscans are seen as legitimate supporters of the Croats' struggle for an independent state. This interpretation has also found expression in the new street names in West Mostar. Since the official Croat commemoration of 14 February 1945 is not a day of celebration but of mourning, the former street *Avenija 14. Februar* (Avenue of 14 February) was renamed *Avenija Kralja Tomislava*).[12] In Bosniak-dominated Sarajevo, on the other hand, the street in memory of this Croat ruler of the Middle Ages was renamed. Additionally to renaming *Avenija 14 Februar* and in order to remember the execution of several clerics by the Partisan, for each of

[12] See Slobodna Dalmacija, 24 February 1995.

the clerics a street has been renamed. With this commemorative street naming, elites attempt to 'introduce an authorized version of history into ordinary settings of everyday life' (Azaryahu 1996: 312). But, as argued elsewhere (Palmberger 2017), even if the renaming of streets is a manifestation of the dominant public history discourses, perceptions and representations of the past are more manifold and overlapping than depicted in the topography of street names.

Returning to the linking of the ABiH with the Partisans as in the commemoration described above, this linking of two histories is not easily accepted by all, even if they have a favourable view of Tito and the Partisans. This became evident in an interview with Miloš, a 40-year-old man who grew up in a Yugoslav family with a Partisan history. Since his parents are Orthodox, the members of his family today are identified as 'Serbs' although they still refer to themselves as 'Yugoslavs'. Before the war Miloš lived in West Mostar with his family, but when the war broke out he and his sister were evacuated by a JNA helicopter. His parents were allowed to stay on the west side only because they had agreed to cooperate, his mother serving as a nurse and his father fighting for HVO. They only did so because they were forced to, Miloš reassured me. When I told him that I participated at the Partisan commemoration (the first one I joined, in 2006) just a few days ago and had been surprised by the large number of commemorators, he gave me his view of the event:

> The only objection I have is that I would really like to keep it separate from this conflict that we had now. That's something else and that was the fight of all the peoples and all the nations against the common enemy, against collaborators that we had before, as that we had now. But the thing is, you cannot compare anybody's fight in this war to the Partisan movement because here even though some people prefer to believe differently, it was clear that you had three ethnic armies. There was the Croat HVO, the Serbian Army of Republic Srpska and the so-called Army of BiH; I like to say 'so-called', because 90 % of it or more were Muslims. In their rows they had *Mudžahedin*, holy warriors from eastern countries, Arabs, coming to fight here, internationally known terrorists, war criminals. People that celebrate February 14 in Mostar put flowers on monuments for Muslim fighters and then go to the Partisan cemetery. How could you? Don't do that

> because it's wrong! History will show what you were fighting for and who was fighting for what.[13]

We gain a better understanding of Miloš's resentment of comparing Tito's Partisans with the ABiH when looking at the historical development of the structure of Bosnia's Partisans and the ABiH (Hoare 2004). The Partisans formed a guerrilla movement and were locally organised. Only towards the end of WWII did the federal Partisan army become organised into a centralised army, the JNA. But with Tito's break with Stalin, the potential need for guerrilla defence was high again. This led the communists to organise a system of territorial defence for which the local population could be mobilised at any point. When socialist Yugoslavia dissolved these territorial defence units, they fell into the hands of the different nationalist parties (the Serb SDS, the Bosniak SDA and the Croat HDZ), depending on which party held the respective territory. The territorial defence units controlled by the SDA, together with the Patriotic League (a Bosniak paramilitary force), eventually formed the Bosnian Army ABiH. At its founding on 15 April 1992, ABiH was—although dominated by Bosniaks—still a multinational army, but at the end of 1993 it became:

> the party political army of the SDA, in much the same way as during World War II the Partisans had been the party-political army of the Communist Party. Just as the Communists had indoctrinated the Bosnian Partisans with the ideology of Brotherhood and Unity of Serbs, Croats and Muslims, now the SDA indoctrinated the Bosnian Army with the opposite ideology—the ideology of Bosniak-Muslim nationalism. (Hoare 2004: n.p.)

Viewed from the angle of historical analysis by Hoare (see also Žanić 2007: 488), who outlines the different ideological orientations of the ABiH and the Partisans, it is curious to see how today the fallen of the ABiH and of the Partisans is now commemorated within the same ceremony.

[13] Unlike most of the other interviews cited in the book which were conducted in the local language, the interview with Miloš was conducted in English so the quotes are from the original interview transcription.

Interpretative Templates for Personal Meaning-Making and as Political Tools

As has become clear from the First Yugoslavs' narratives, the 1992–1995 war is not as central for this generation as it is for the Last Yugoslavs. WWII and the early years of Yugoslavia experienced during youth and early adulthood have a formative potential and serve as interpretative templates for experiences later in life (see Schuman and Scott 1989). Looking at the data presented in this and in the previous chapter, reflecting on the individual as well as collective levels, we can clearly see how the two wars are linked both in the discursive tactics of the First Yugoslavs and in the discursive strategies employed in the dominant Bosniak public discourse. Despite this conformity, the agendas of the different groups of actors may differ greatly.

In the present post-war public remembrance, remembering the Partisans—the constitutive heroes of Tito's Yugoslavia—has taken on a new meaning. The analysis of the ceremony has shown how the Partisan victims, the liberators who fought against fascism and for a free Yugoslavia, are commemorated today equates them with those who fought against HVO from 1993 until 1994—also liberators, in the minds of the participants in the ceremony. Not only are the respective liberators subsumed, but so are the respective sets of enemies: the Ustasha and the Croat Defence Council (HVO) are both referred to as the 'fascists'.

Even if several times the organiser and the key protagonists in the ceremony—all First Yugoslavs—expressed their wish for a shared BiH and peaceful coexistence among all nations (which is also expressed by ending the ceremony in the alternative youth centre *Abrašević*), the ceremony is losing its multinational character. By linking the Partisan liberation fight with that fought by the ABiH, the commemoration has gradually become a Bosniak ceremony. At the same time, it is also acquiring new political relevance and legitimacy.

The analysis of the commemoration held on 14 February also gives insight into the way experiences and their interpretations are communicated by the senior to the junior parts of the population within a commemorative context. While it is common that commemorations are organised by the generation for whom the commemorated event has

the greatest personal reference, it is central that younger generations are included in the 'community of memory' (Misztal 2003); they can then take over the commemoration even if the witnesses have passed away. In the particular case of the Partisan commemoration this is facilitated by its new political relevance. Although the commemoration is still officially held in memory of the ideals of Brotherhood and Unity, it similarly strengthens a Bosniak national identity.

As pointed out in the Introduction to this book, there is a difference in the nature of the 'stratagems' found in the official national narratives and those in personal narratives. While the former present a goal-oriented narrative, the latter can be better described as target-seeking. While the linking of the two chronotopes (Bakhtin 1981), of WWII and of the 1992–1995 war, among the First Yugoslavs introduced in this chapter, is based first and foremost on personal experiences and aimed at a coherent life narrative (see Cave and Sloan 2014), in a public commemorative context, this linking easily becomes a political tool. As Dragojevic has shown, personal war memories can be exploited when political actors 'may intentionally use symbols or discourse that will sound familiar to those individuals who had personal or family memories of the previous cycles of violence' (Dragojevic 2013). This shows the importance of including both the way interpretative templates serve individual meaning making and, at the same time and connected to the former, how they serve as political tools. Interpretative templates are not only powerful tools for collectively representing and politically 'selling' history but are equally important in the process of understanding and giving meaning to the past on an individual level. Thus they appear in discursive strategies as well as discursive tactics.

Wertsch (2008) differentiates between 'specific' and 'schematic' narrative templates when analysing collective memory in post-Soviet Russia. While the former contain specific information about places, dates and actors, the latter are more abstract and may serve as templates for a variety of narratives. The interpretative templates as understood here are closer to Wertsch's schematic narrative templates but with a stronger emphasis on the aspect of sense making these templates offer to individuals.

On an individual level, First Yugoslavs make use of pre-existing interpretative templates around their experiences of WWII and the early years of Yugoslavia to give meaning to the recent past. The suffering experienced during the 1992–1995 war is brought into immediate relation

to the suffering experienced during WWII. Moreover, the recent war is narrated in terms of clear categories: fascist perpetrators and victims of fascism, a template borrowed from earlier Yugoslav representations of WWII. This shows the entanglement between personal/individual and public/collective representations of the past, between discursive tactics and discursive strategies transcending different temporalities.

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5

Ruptured Biographies: The Last Yugoslavs

All of the Last Yugoslavs were born and grew up in BiH during socialist Yugoslavia, that is, after WWII. They thus have no personal memories of that war and few, if any, memories of the first years of Tito's Yugoslavia. The youngest of them were in their late teens when the war began in 1992, while the oldest had already established their own households. This generation does not perceive itself as having built up Yugoslavia, as the First Yugoslavs do (who were born before WWII and were in their adolescence and early adulthood in the first period of Tito's Yugoslavia), but rather as its beneficiaries.

This chapter shows how the Last Yugoslavs, a generation that finds itself between old and new politico-ideological outlooks, deals with the discrepancies they are confronted with when positioning themselves towards the past. The war in the 1990s led to a rupture in terms of a discontinuity in public discourse. It also constituted a period of rupture in the lives of the people. The war was experienced as a disruption in the biographies of all the people I talked to, but the narratives of this generation with their specific discursive tactics show the rupture most prominently.

The Last Yugoslav generation is the generation that grew up under relatively stable political circumstances. At the time the war started, the Last

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Yugoslavs either already had their own households and were pursuing their careers or were just about to do so. The particular life situation the Last Yugoslavs found themselves in when war broke out and still find themselves in at the point of narrating the past is crucial in understanding the Last Yugoslavs' narratives of the war and the effect it had on their lives.

A central discursive tactic characteristic of this generation is the switching between opposing discourses, one vividly and positively remembering life in Yugoslavia and one defending the national developments that resulted in the division of Mostar. The switching between opposing discourses will be discussed in particular concerning Minela and Željko later in this chapter. Both sought explanation for these discrepancies in the fact that they and their nations were suppressed during socialist Yugoslavia, but that they were not aware of it at the time. In this way, they devalued their own autobiographical memories (see Volcic 2007).

As outlined in the Introduction to this book, studies on memory and Yugoslavia (and its successor states) have primarily concerned themselves with collective, national memory (see, e.g., Basic-Hrvatin 1996; Dujizings 2007; Hayden 1994; Moll 2013; Müller 2002). The far fewer studies that have focused on personal memories or the intersection of personal and national memory primarily dealt with memories (collective as well as personal) of violence and war. The impact of the enormous political-economic transformations in the way in which people reflect on the past has received little attention. This chapter shows, however, that these transformations play key roles in understanding life narratives, particularly those of the generation in question here. The immediate time of the political-economic crisis is experienced and thus set in relation to *past time* (memory) and *future time* (prospects).

Regardless of whether people remained in Mostar throughout the entire period of the war or fled to (more) secure places and only returned after the war had ended, they were forced to build a new life in a place that had seen severe transformations. Facing great obstacles and insecurities, many were left in doubt about whether it was the right decision to return to (or remain in) Mostar. While the war and the far-reaching transformations that accompanied it were decisive for everyone, the

Last Yugoslavs experienced the war most prominently as a rupture in their lives. Constituting a relatively big cohort, the Last Yugoslavs have spent most of their lives in Yugoslavia and grew up under relatively stable political and economic circumstances, in contrast to the First Yugoslavs and the Post-Yugoslavs, who spent part of their childhood or early adulthood either during WWII or during the 1992–1995 war. In contrast to the First Yugoslavs, who had already experienced a war and who knew that war always comes unexpectedly, the Last Yugoslavs simply could not imagine a war in Yugoslavia.

The Last Yugoslavs find themselves at a stage of their lives in which they have to, in some way or other, face the political, economic and societal changes they are confronted with. Compared to the Last Yugoslavs, the First Yugoslavs have reached an age that allows them more freedom to retreat into the past and delve into memories of better times with others of a similar age (see Palmberger 2008). Those belonging to the Post-Yugoslav generation, on the other hand, have spent most of their lives in post-war Mostar and do not experience the war as such a prominent rupture in their lives in the way the Last Yugoslavs do. The loss of social security and economic well-being (compared to the present extremely precarious economic situation) has had a severe impact on the lives of the Last Yugoslav generation, as they carry great economic responsibility today, not only for themselves but also for their children and often for their parents. Moreover, the education of many of this generation was delayed due to the war, and the career prospects they held (or retrospectively believe they held) during socialist Yugoslavia vanished.

The transformation of the Yugoslav socialist market economy into a neoliberal, capitalist-oriented economy (see Pugh 2005; see also Hann et al. 2002) directly and most severely affected the lives of the Last Yugoslavs. In this respect, Jansen (2008: 47), working with returnees in BiH, describes the generation who are (or are supposed to be) in the middle of their working lives as particularly vulnerable and thus reluctant to return to their hometown on a permanent basis. Even if future prospects for the younger generation, the Post-Yugoslavs, are similarly grim, they do not feel robbed of their hopes and prospects in the same way as the Last Yugoslavs because they grew up during a time already marked by extreme insecurity.

The economic downfall experienced by Mostarians was stark: ten years after the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed in 1995, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in BiH was still less than 50 % of its pre-war level. The average income in BiH is around 400 Euros a month and about 40 % of the population describes their household situation as below average (see UNDP 2008). Some of the Last Yugoslavs even told me that it was easier during the war, because back then people 'only' had to care about their basic existence and not about electricity bills and so on.

For the generation of the Last Yugoslavs, one of the greatest (if not the greatest) concerns is Mostar's extremely weak job market. Many of the public enterprises went bankrupt due to the war, the loss of markets and a dislocated labour force. As Pugh (2005) reveals, bankruptcy was also an effective way for realizing the privatization promoted by the so-called international community active in BiH after the war. The privatization of public enterprises was propagated as the key to economic growth in BiH. In many cases, however, the enterprises fell into the hands of corrupt nationalist managers and did not contribute to improving the economic situation of Mostar's larger population. Interestingly, most people saw the economic downfall in connection to the war rather than to neoliberal post-war policies. Thus, the experience of the war and the disappearance of socio-economic security were narrated as one disruption that separated their lives into a life before and a life after.

After the war, shadow markets became an important survival mechanism used by many inhabitants to stop themselves from falling below the poverty line (Pugh 2005: 451–456; see also Papić 2001), as illustrated by the example of Igor, a Croat in his late 40s. When fighting for the Croat army, Igor was injured twice and now receives an invalid's pension, but the amount he receives is far too small to support his family. For this reason Igor, a trained electrical engineer, has to work on the side as a pool attendant. Igor is very pessimistic about Mostar's future:

> Life is difficult here. I believe people fight for their bare existence. One cannot see any improvement. What can I, for example, provide for my children? But it is not only difficult for me but also for them; what can they do here, which profession should they assume? There are no jobs; there is no future whatsoever! You cannot see any!

Even if the situation of the war invalids presents a special case, Igor's disappointment with his current situation and his pessimism for the future is shared by many of the Last Yugoslavs, both men and women. Employment is a central concern for this generation.

Aner, one of my Bosniak informants, who was one of the youngest soldiers in the Army of BiH during the war in the 1990s (and who was in his early 30s when I met him), is convinced that traumatic war experiences are not as threatening as the economic insecurity people face. Even though he told me quite openly about the depression he suffers, he hesitated to connect his symptoms with personal war experiences. Instead, he linked them first and foremost to his desperate economic situation and his hopeless career opportunities. Aner believes that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is only a myth[1] that has been exploited for political reasons and is convinced that people in post-war BiH are primarily concerned with practical issues like finding a job. At the time I got to know Aner, he worked in a small private-run grocery shop, but he knew that the shop would be closed in the near future, since it was no longer profitable.

For Aner, the war and the break-up of Yugoslavia constitute a clear disruption to his life, which is characteristic of the narratives of the Last Yugoslavs. Their narratives are clearly divided into a three-fold time frame: before the war, during the war and after the war. To give only one example, after Aner had given me a comprehensive account of his experiences as a soldier, he told me that he had played the piano before the war. There are two remarkable observations about this statement. First, the time reference is the war, not a year or date or his age at the particular time. Second, the statement 'before the war I played piano' is a statement that not only informs the interlocutor about musical skills, but also aims to capture the approach to life that people held in pre-war Mostar. Aner told me about his past as a piano player right after he had told me about his life as a soldier. Making music and shooting people represent polar opposite activities. The former stands for a truly 'peaceful' activity; the latter stands for the opposite, absolute violence. The statement 'before the war I played piano' in the context of his narration also expresses that, at that point in his life, Aner had never imagined that he would ever hold

[1] For a critical discussion of PTSD diagnosis see Young (1995).

a rifle in his hand. Moreover, it implies that since this point, nothing has remained the same.

The war severely changed the life course of those who fought as soldiers and also of civilians who blamed the war for delaying or hindering their education/career and/or their aspirations to start their own family. The war narratives of those who experienced the war as civilians (among the Last Yugoslavs, these were mostly women) often centred on their families. Those who already had children of their own when the war broke out mourned for the time with their children that they lost due to the war. In extreme cases, parents were separated from their children when they were moved to safer locations. One mother who shared this fate broke into tears when she told me her story. While she and her husband remained in BiH throughout the war, their two children lived in Germany. Even when her children assure her that she made the right decision, she still grieves over the long period of separation.

In order to carve out the above-presented particularities of the Last Yugoslav generation, in a next step I will analyse the narratives of some of my interlocutors in more detail.

Aida: A Lost Home

I was introduced to Aida by one of her lecturers at the university on Mostar's east side. Back in 2006 Aida was in her final year of English studies. She already held a degree in science but decided to do a second degree in English—the language she had become familiar with as a refugee in Great Britain during the war—hoping to increase her chances in Mostar's weak job market. In her late 30s at the time, she was older than most of her fellow students who were still in their early and mid-20s. Aida was not alone in having a delayed education or career path; due to the war, many of the Last Yugoslavs shared this fate.

Aida, who was at the end of her science study when the war began, had pictured her future life in a very different way than how it eventually evolved. She experienced the war as an unexpected event that foiled her life prospects. Her narrative has a strong component of nostalgia for her pre-war life. She divides her life into three clear-cut periods: life before

the war, during the war and after the war. According to Tannock (1995) this thrice-divided time frame characterises nostalgic narratives. The rhetoric of nostalgia is always centred around a lapse that was preceded by the pre-lapsarian world—where everything was good or at least substantially better—and is succeeded by a post-lapsarian world where everything has become worse (Tannock 1995: 456). Pre-war BiH is presented as the 'secure past', while present and future BiH are seen as insecure (in some cases even for those who are in favour of Mostar's division, as will be shown in the proceeding text). The act of comparison is imminent in nostalgia since it always forms a reaction to the present state (Davis 1977: 417). This makes clear that nostalgic feelings are never directed towards the past alone but always tell us something about the perception of the present as well as the dreams and fears of the future (Boym 2001; Davis 1979; Pickering and Keightley 2006; Radstone 2010;).[2]

There are two central events in Aida's narration of the war: the imprisoning of her father and brother, and the parting from her parents. At the beginning of the war between Croats and Bosniaks in 1993, her father and brother were taken to a detention camp. Fortunately they were freed after a few days, but Aida describes those days of waiting as a nightmare for her and her mother. Neither of them could sleep; they were restless and worried about the lives of the two men. When Aida told me about those days, her descriptions were so detailed that it was almost as if she were re-living the past once more. When the men were finally released, Aida and her brother fled the country. This moment of leaving Mostar is central in Aida's narrative of the war. Although her parents had insisted their children should leave the country, it was the first time Aida saw her parents cry, which made her realise they might never see each other again.

In the first months Aida spent away from Mostar, in a refugee camp in Croatia, she felt stripped of any privacy and autonomy. Many of my interlocutors narrated the time they spent as refugees in similar ways; the loss of privacy and autonomy is central in their accounts. In his seminal work, *The Politics of Storytelling*, Jackson (2006) describes this experience

[2] In Ugrešić's (2006) well-written novel *The Ministry of Pain*, we learn about the gravity Yugo-nostalgia can bear for Aida's generation.

of losing subjectivity as a decisive experience for refugees and as a form of violation of a person's humanity.

For Aida, this state of her life only changed when she arrived at her host family's home in Great Britain. There she found a new—albeit temporary—home. While she was in Great Britain, Aida's mother was expelled from the west side to the east side of Mostar in 1994 while her father was kept in a detention camp once again. Since their expulsion, Aida's family has been living on the east side of Mostar, and after the war they sold their former flat in West Mostar. In 1997 Aida had to return to BiH at a time when she had already established herself both personally and professionally in Great Britain. Upon her return, she hardly recognised her hometown; not only did its physical shape show heavy damage but the social order had been destroyed as well. The city was divided and most of her friends had left the city. In order to explore her experience of loss of home, which started with the outbreak of the war and did not end with the ceasefire or with Aida's return to Mostar, we need to further investigate her position vis-à-vis Yugoslavia as well as her present life situation.

Aida describes herself as *Muslimanka* (Muslim), although not a practising one. She never joins in prayers at the mosque and tells me that, frankly, she has never learned how to pray. In her family, values taught by Tito such as Brotherhood and Unity had always outweighed any religion, she reminds me on several occasions. Still, the members of her family perceive themselves as *Muslimani* (as a national distinction from Croats and Serbs more than in a religious sense) and celebrate the most important religious holidays. With the war and Mostar's division, her Muslim/Bosniak identity became part of everyday life. Aida studies at the Bosniak-dominated university and teaches in an east-side school which follows the Bosniak curriculum. Her close friends are all Bosniaks and when they meet they do so in cafés in East Mostar.

Aida grew up with her maternal grandmother (who was divorced from Aida's grandfather), a non-practising Muslim. Her grandmother's second husband, Aida informs me, was a Serb or actually a Partisan, a communist, as she immediately corrects herself. Her maternal grandfather (her grandmother's first husband) was also a Partisan. He had reached a high rank in the Partisan army during WWII and was therefore well respected after the war ended. Aida mentions that her grandfather's second wife

was a Serb, as if to stress the fact that her family was a true communist family to whom nationality did not matter. From her grandfather Aida had learned a lot about the history of the Partisan movement, and I was impressed by how she was able to recall a great number of facts about Partisan battles and former Yugoslav holidays. In 1985, at the age of 17, Aida became a member of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (*Savez komunista Jugoslavije*) but burned her membership card in 1993 because she feared it would be held against her if discovered.

Although Aida was open about the fact that she regrets that Tito's Yugoslavia is gone, there was still a kind of secretive atmosphere whenever she talked about it. One day, she said to me in a hushed voice, as if sharing an intimate detail of her life: 'I have to tell you, I am a Yugo-nostalgist!' This 'confession' was followed by praise for the low unemployment rate under Tito, the health insurance everyone enjoyed, the good income as well as the free education. 'And nobody asked you about your religion, everyone got along well. Mostar was the place with the highest number of inter-ethnic marriages', she added. Aida does not acknowledge any comparison of Yugoslavia with other socialist countries and was very disappointed especially when foreigners made such comparisons. In order to address any possible doubts on my side, Aida told me:

> Before the war I went out every night. It was a common practice for parents to give their children money to go out every day. My parents for example were both working and had a good income which we could live a carefree life. I could go out and eat out every night with my friends if I wanted. And not only this, we could also spend a whole month on the coast each summer. Families got a cheap place from the employer for their holidays.

Aida closed her defence of Yugoslavia by saying: 'If I had a hero it would be Tito. This man is my hero! I have to tell you I am really not confident in what the future will bring us' (Fig. 5.1).

Aida believes that the future looked more promising after World War II than after the 1990s war. As her grandmother who raised her used to tell her, a powerful reconstruction of destroyed Yugoslavia was under

Fig. 5.1 Graffito stating: '*Živio Tito*' ('Long live Tito'). Photo by the author

way soon after WWII. Young people at the time responded to the call to volunteer in several big national reconstruction projects. Aida told me:

> That was the reconstruction movement (*radne akcije*). Everyone was optimistic that the situation would improve and they all backed Yugoslavia. These people were volunteering because they believed in it. Many things were built this way, for example railway lines, big factories and such things. This was Yugoslavia at the start. After WWII, from the mid 1950s onward, everything got better. The country rebuilt itself and progressed. Out of its own strength it recovered and got better each day indeed. The standard of living became higher and higher, apartments were built, plenty of jobs were available, good schools and higher education were free for everyone. My grandmother always said that life was best in the 1970s. The state was strong, salaries were good, and one could enjoy the good pension system, health insurance, long vacations, free education. It was indeed great! Midway through the 1980s it started to get worse.

Aida was constantly reminded by her grandparents (just as the youngest generation, the Post-Yugoslavs, today are reminded by those who fought

in the war of the 1990s) of the struggles their generation went through in order to secure the life she later enjoyed. As Aida's case shows, grandparents, not least because they often took over an important part in raising their grandchildren, were crucial in the transmission of memories to the Last Yugoslavs generation (see Bertaux and Thompson 2009). Aida felt as if she were reaping the benefits of the work of her grandparents' generation and of Tito, and that she owed them all her gratitude. This also became clear whenever Aida defended Tito. Several times I noticed how important it was for her that the 'world' (i.e., 'the West') knew what Yugoslavia really was like. Tito was no dictator, Aida insisted, but provided people with security in healthcare, jobs, education, and so on. It is true that Tito accumulated a lot of luxury, she admitted, but he did not keep it for himself or for his family: 'When he died, the luxury goods became state property again—so we can say he only borrowed it'.

Aida's nostalgia for Yugoslavia is different to that of the First Yugoslavs, described in the previous chapter, since it is first and foremost connected to her personal life and only to a lesser extent to Tito's ideology and the idea of Yugoslavia, a country for all South-Slavs. Her nostalgia mirrors the economic insecurities, the loss of a social network, together with the loss of a life prospect. Besides the changes Mostar went through during the war, Aida was additionally exposed to a different lifestyle and value system in Great Britain which influenced her and further contributed to her sense of alienation.

By the end of my fieldwork, Aida had received her second diploma and left university for good. She had difficulty finding a job as a teacher, and today works only part-time. She is upset at her situation, since her job neither fulfils her nor provides her with the necessary money to leave her parents to establish a household of her own. During Tito's rule, she told me, everyone could find a job: 'You knew that once you completed your education you would find a job and a flat. Life was somehow calmer, not so fast and not so tough. It was much easier and nicer to live back then.'

Aida defends Yugoslavia just as other people may defend their home country. One could say that Yugoslavia is what Aida experiences as home, but a home that no longer exists. Today, Aida gives the impression of being lost in her own 'hometown'—longing for the past and at the same time knowing for sure that this past is gone forever. I am certain that if asked about what her

ideal future looks like, she would say it would be like Mostar before the war. Aida is aware of the fact that her longing has no chance of being satisfied. Her mourning over the loss (of her home) at times is so overwhelming that she does not feel strong enough to change anything for the better.

While Aida expresses a strong nostalgia for pre-war Mostar, there is little she does to re-enact pre-war Mostar life in her daily practices, for example by making use of the entire city rather than restricting herself to the Bosniak-dominated part of it. Instead, she prefers to remain and to meet with people on the east side. Each time we met, and we met many times in the three years of my stay, she always proposed to do so somewhere on the east side. Only once did we cross sides because I had my children with me and suggested we visit the only proper playground in Mostar, located just across the *Bulevar*. When we arrived there, Aida immediately called one of her friends and told her that she was in the park for the first time after the war.

Aida's case demonstrates that political loyalties do not necessarily make a difference in the way people move around Mostar and the motivations for not crossing are very diverse. For some it is a matter of insecurity or a lack of trust or even fear, others are restricted by their aim to conform and for yet others it is first and foremost an ideological decision (see Palmberger 2013). In Aida's case I suggest that her reluctance to visit places in West Mostar primarily has to do with the painful experience of loss of her pre-war home (which was located on that side of the city) and only to a lesser degree with conformity and with making a political statement.

Minela and Željko: Shifting Narratives

Minela

Minela was one of the first people I met in Mostar. We stayed in very close contact throughout the first half of my fieldwork until she married a Bosnian-German and moved to Germany with him. We became friends although we had opposing views on many social and political issues. I believe it was exactly these differences in opinion that made our conver-

sations exciting. When I met Minela she was in her late 20s and was looking for a job after she had decided to quit her university studies—started a couple of years before—due to financial difficulties. She was born on the outskirts of Mostar, where she still lived with her parents when I met her, along with her older brother and her younger sister.

Minela was one of a relatively small group of female interlocutors who stayed in Mostar throughout the entire war. She and her family had stayed in their own house during the whole period of the war. Only her father left to join the Bosniak-dominated Army of BiH (ABiH) and still today suffers from nightmares about this time in his life. Her little sister was born during the war and Minela felt a special responsibility to look after her when her family had no electricity for two years and experienced food, hygiene and medicine scarcity as well as the terror of shelling. Besides the fear Minela was exposed to, she remembers the war as a time with little privacy and few excitements for a girl in her teens. Her family hosted refugees and the room where people sought shelter was always overcrowded. Conversations were conducted mostly among adults and were of little interest to teenaged Minela. Out of boredom she learned to distinguish the different types of grenades by their sound.

The war was a crucial experience for her and in the many conversations we had it became clear that she perceived this immediate experience of war as a clear break in her biography. Still, it took a long time until Minela would talk about it with me, but I never tried to press her about her experiences and left it up to her whether and, if so, when she would decide to share some of her experiences with me. The first time Minela gave me a detailed account of some of her war experiences came quite unexpectedly and took place when we were sitting together over lunch. The feta cheese I had put in the salad inadvertently triggered Minela's strong memories of wartime because it was often found in the aid packages. I had had similar experiences with other friends on other occasions, who were reminded of the war by, for example, eating lentils or drinking *Cedevita*, a popular sherbet (see Sutton 2001).

Minela told me that she no longer thinks of the war as much as she used to. Sometimes she realises that she has not thought about it for a couple of weeks. She is relieved by this but at the same time worries about not keeping up her moral responsibility not to forget the crimes committed.

I was surprised to hear that Minela feared forgetting about what happened during the war since it seemed to be almost always present in her narratives as well as in her daily practices.

Even if Minela did not address the war always explicitly in our conversations, it was present in the structure of her personal accounts. Most of Minela's stories built on personal experiences started with either 'before the war' or 'after the war'. For example, she did not refer to the time before the war as the time when she was a child, but divided her life neatly around the rupture of the war. Her personal age was subordinated to the political developments taking place so that 'before the war' for Minela means 'normal life', 'the good and easy life' and 'Mostar in its true sense'. Another piece of evidence for the presence of the war in her mind, even if not directly addressed in her words, is the way Minela moves around Mostar. She restricts herself to only one part of the city, the one dominated by Bosniaks, and she crosses sides for specific purposes only, such as shopping. She does not feel quite comfortable in West Mostar and always thinks that people can tell that she is a Bosniak.

Although more than a decade has passed, the period after the war (including the present) is still perceived by Minela (similar to Aida) as an abnormal state, a 'state of disorder' and moral decay. Pre-war Mostar for her is the true Mostar, a city she liked and felt at home in. I remember the many hours we spent together which were filled with sentimentally remembering life in Yugoslavia. Her memories referred to Yugoslav rock music, actors, sweets and the Sarajevo Olympic Games held in 1984, as well as memories of solidly multinational neighbourhoods. When I bought the book *Leksikon YU Mitologije* (Andrić et al. 2004), which is a 'lexicon' of Yugoslavia including celebrities, cultural and sport events, the arts as well as famous politicians of that period, Minela sat on the sofa with me for a couple of hours, flipping through the pages and sharing little anecdotes about many of the entries. Even if she often indulged in nostalgic discourse about Yugoslav times, she would never refer to herself as Yugo-nostalgist, as Aida does. Instead, Minela liked to make fun of Yugo-nostalgists, who she thinks carry a distorted picture of Yugoslavia.

Minela's nostalgia for pre-war Mostar is not connected to the urban–rural discourse encountered in Armen's narrative in Chap. 4. Due to the fact that

she grew up on the outskirts of Mostar in a village setting, she does not identify herself as an urban Mostarian. It was interesting to hear that for her, not the rural people but the urbanites have spoilt Mostar. Minela finds the way the urban population looks down on rural newcomers unacceptable, especially given the fact that the latter have defended Mostar with their lives and made it possible for the pre-war urban population to return to their hometown. Indeed, she blames those who refer to themselves as *pravi Mostarci* for the decay of the city as well as of moral values. For her, rural people are much more civilised (*kulturniji*) than the urbanites. She pointed out that in the villages surrounding Mostar the streets are cleaner, the gardens are better looked after and that generally villagers care to keep their properties tidier. This attitude in Minela is closely connected to a value system that, besides tidiness, includes respect for others, acknowledgement of authority (especially of children towards adults) as well as social responsibility. The decay of this value system she ascribes not only to the urban population but also to a general trend that came with the war or, to be more precise, with the end of the war.

In contrast to Aida, who only mourns her lost home and does not attribute any good qualities to the life that came thereafter, Minela does see—although on a rather abstract level—positive developments that came with the break-up of Yugoslavia, especially in regard to the awakening of Bosniak national identity. When Minela talks about her Bosniak identity she does so with pride. In contrast to Aida, a central part of being Bosniak for Minela is to be a practising Muslim.[3] For her and her family, religion became very important during the war and has played a crucial role for them ever since. 'There was only God who could save you', Minela told me. God was important in order to survive this time, she said, and praying gave her family some of the comfort they so needed.

Today, Minela's family fasts during the season of *Ramazan* and Minela does not show much understanding for those who do not. She does not

[3] Minela is member of the Bosniak nationalist party SDA. Her father had taken it into his hands to register his daughter soon after the SDA was founded. Since then Minela always carries her membership card with her in her purse. Although Minela shows respect for the early SDA when Alija Izetbegović was president, she is critical of the current SDA leadership. In the general elections in 2006 she therefore decided to give her vote to SBiH (*Stranka za BiH*, more liberal and multinational than SDA, although still clearly dominated by Bosniaks).

understand why people call themselves Muslims when during *Ramazan* they enjoy themselves in Mostar's café and bar scene. Although Minela is quite vehement in her attitude here, she does not endorse the covering of women's hair whatsoever, viewing it as an unnecessary and even repressive gesture. She often emphasises that there was no such tradition in BiH before the war and that only elderly women in the villages covered their heads back then. She is also very critical of former soldiers from Arabic countries who married Bosnian women in order to remain and settle in BiH. For her, Islam in BiH is a European Islam that should not be compared with and should not be practised like its counterpart in Arab countries. This view is shared by the majority of Bosniaks I talked to during my fieldwork.

A Bosniak friend of mine, for example, emphasised his support for a liberal and moderate Islam by telling me how happy he was to see that his younger sister went out for drinks with her friends. Although he felt responsible for her, after the early death of both their parents shortly after the war, he said he was more worried about her being introduced to the new group of radical Muslims than about her drinking alcohol. Indeed, the fact that she did not reject alcohol reassured him that she was on the 'right track'. Of course he told me this story with a certain smile on his face; it was common for my informants to stress their acceptance of alcohol in order to prove their moderate Islamic orientation. Despite this liberal attitude, it is also true that religion has increased in importance in BiH since the break-up of Yugoslavia, for both Christians and Muslims. For many Muslims, as is the case for Minela, Islam has become more central in their lives and religious rules are obeyed more carefully and mosques are visited more regularly than before the war. As described in Chaps. 2 and 3, religion and nation are closely intertwined in BiH.

Importantly, Minela is not only proud of being a *Bošnjakinja* (Bosniak) or *Muslimanka* (Muslim) but also of being a *Bosanka* (Bosnian). In our conversations it became clear that much of her patriotism stems from the experience of war when her compatriots (including her father and other close kin) fought for BiH's independence. This makes it hard sometimes to tell her patriotism for BiH apart from her national identification as a Bosniak. Minela is aware that soldiers of Croat or Serb background also fought in the ABiH for an independent and multinational BiH, but she knows the majority were Bosniaks. She does not have much sympathy for

BiH's Croats and Serbs who do not patriotically stand behind their state but rather stress their national distinctiveness, for example, through language. Only Bosniaks kept their language, Minela once told me: 'I speak like I did before the war. We [Bosniaks] did not change anything. Before the war everyone spoke like this [us].' She added that one did not even know who belonged to which nationality, especially if the name did not tell; and most people did not care, as if they were one big nation. Minela includes herself in the group of people who saw everyone as the same. As if to underline this fact, she said her two best friends before the war were Croat and Serb. This claim for the sameness of the people in Yugoslavia, however, seems to oppose her view of the Bosniak nation as distinct from the Serb and Croat nation.

When referring to pre-wartime, Minela stresses the sameness of people in BiH and claims that distinctions are artificially created. At other times, however, she follows a discourse that strongly essentialises the Bosniak and Croat identity, thereby emphasising people's differences over their commonalities. This discourse of essentialising identities became most clear when Minela spoke about mixed marriages, especially about children from such marriages. She abruptly stopped arguing that all Bosnians were Bosnians first and foremost but focused instead on their national differences:

> Before the war… we were indeed ashamed to say that we were Muslims. Somehow we felt like this. Listen, at the time of Bajram, the last Bajram before the war began, I think it was February, I and a friend of mine were waiting in the hallway for a lecture to begin when someone came in and said, '*Bajram Mubarek Olsun*' [Bajram greeting]. We looked like this [she looks with her eyes wide open] because nobody ever said that aloud. Like they were some Hare Krishna or something like that. And so we stayed there and just looked at her like, 'Why do you say that aloud?' as if she was not allowed to say that. It was because of communism. You know, like there is no religion, there is no religion, nothing like that exists, you know? As if it was wrong, you know? That is why we [Bosniaks] often got married to Serbs and Croats and then you lose, you totally lose your identity. You give up your faith for your family; this is why these marriages were not good. You get married and you lose your faith and then you have nothing. Then you just celebrate Christmas and that's it. You call your child, I don't know… Marija, Kristina [Christian names], you know? Or, for example, a woman

> got married to a Serb or I don't know, it does not matter, and then, for example, immediately gave her child the name 'Tea' or 'Minea'. You know, a name like 'Višnja' (cherry), 'Jagoda' (strawberry). A neutral name, you know? And then everyone knows immediately… I believe that this war had only one positive outcome: that we are no longer ashamed of ourselves!

Minela's narrative is full of ambivalence towards Yugoslavia. As we have seen, she speaks highly of Yugoslavia's progressiveness and the multinational coexistence it enabled and nurtured. She emphasises that people were all the same and that most people did not care about the nationality of their compatriots. She claims that only the Bosniaks have kept this spirit while the others in the Mostar context (referring primarily to Croats) have tried to distinguish themselves from the others. Despite this positive view of Yugoslavia and her values, Minela simultaneously argues that multinationality is dangerous when it affects personal spheres like marriage because it leads to loss of identity. When she says, 'I believe that this war had only one positive outcome: that we are no longer ashamed of ourselves'; she is referring to the strengthening of the Bosniak identity as a consequence of the war. We find both contrary discourses present in Minela's narrative—about the sameness of people and about a primordial national difference that one cannot and should not attempt to overcome.

On the one hand, we could reason that the ambivalences found in her narrative are connected to the ambivalent position Bosniak political elites hold (see Chap. 3). To a certain extent this may be true but I argue that this ambivalence is characteristic for the Last Yugoslavs *regardless* of their nationality. This will become clear with Željko, a Croat informant. As discussed earlier in the book, the present dominant Croat public discourse condemns Yugoslavia much more openly than the Bosniak one does. Željko's positive memories of Yugoslavia thus disturb the negative picture of Yugoslavia that he ideologically supports.

Željko

I met Željko through the so-called snowball effect. A friend of mine introduced me to one of her friends, who then introduced me to her uncle, Željko. I met Željko in his office in West Mostar where he works as

a structural engineer. He was born in 1961 in a town that was then part of the Croat republic of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and today is a town in Croatia just at the border with BiH. When he was 10 he moved to Mostar with his family, where he has remained until today. Only his wife and son spent part of the war in Germany. Before the war Željko enjoyed stable employment and worked for the same company for many years. Today his regular income is much too small to support his family and he has to do other work on the side. He has to support not only his nuclear family but also his mother, whose pension is too small to live on. This responsibility to support his family in the present difficult economic situation weighs heavily on his shoulders.

Like Minela, the war for Željko was a formative experience. Željko experienced the war first and foremost as soldier. He was mobilised by the HVO at the beginning of the war and served in the army until the ceasefire was achieved. The way Željko narrates the war is in stark opposition to Minela's narrative. In his narrative, the Croats are double victims, first of the Serbs and then of their former allies, the Bosniaks. While for Minela *Herceg-Bosna* represents a brutal regime that aimed to cleanse West Mostar of all non-Croats, for Željko the establishment of *Herceg-Bosna* was an absolute necessity since in a state of chaos there was need for some kind of government. In his narrative, the aggression was initiated by the Muslims. He does not admit any guilt of the Croats but holds the Muslims fully responsible. He even justifies the notorious detention camp 'Heliodrom' with an anecdote about two HVO soldiers who were perfidiously killed by two Bosniak snipers. He feels that this incident was reason enough to take more drastic action.

I was surprised about Željko's openness about his experiences at HVO. A while into our conversation, I even had the feeling that Željko was relieved to tell me his story; so I asked him whether he had shared his war experiences with others before. As it turned out, he hardly had. He told me that he does not want to burden his family with these stories and that, if at all, he only speaks with other veterans about the war but then only to share funny anecdotes. All the veterans, Bosniaks and Croats alike, I talked to tend to keep their war experiences to themselves. They gave me different explanations for this decision, but most said they did not want to burden their loved ones.

When Željko told me about his war experiences, his sentences were incomplete and often incoherent. This may be because he had not yet shared his war experiences with others, but it may also be because such experiences are difficult to share, especially with someone without a similar background. This is a small excerpt of what he narrated about his war experiences:

> We all thought that this is something that will be over within three months. They [his parents, wife and young son] were at the sea in Makarska in this period, so that the child was safe. But whoever stayed here did not stay normal any longer. Do you understand what I mean? I went through the war, you know through *bljesak* and *oluja* [names of major military offensives] and so on. And then when I came home for some three months I was just not myself anymore. I think these were… although I was not in these… let's say, situations. Once or twice that I something… That means that, that… especially one of these units we faced. These people needed to be particularly courageous or crazy or on drugs. This is a category of people with which a state has to deal somehow, but the state does not exist. Do you understand? And then the war is over for you and I stayed here in a high-rise apartment building and this guy throws a bomb… throws a bomb from the balcony, he does not look who is down there. You know, that was the way things went. And I don't talk about shooting with, with… still the Serbs shot. We had to defend ourselves and they attacked.
>
> *And do you still think about it a lot?*
>
> Yes I do. Well, sometimes, sometimes… yes I do.
>
> *And with whom do you speak about it?*
>
> Sometimes with colleagues who went through the same things, this and that, some stories, but they are always, how to say, amusing events. These nicer things, not ugly things but, but nice things. There were a lot of, a lot of funny anecdotes, a lot of these tricks and so on. Not everything was so… you did not get killed every metre. Time has to pass. It is like that.
>
> *How much do you want to talk about this with your children?*
>
> Perhaps when they are older. Well, I don't talk about it with them. I don't talk about it a lot.
>
> *Do you think that they need to know…?*
>
> Well, they know that I was there. However, this period… this *oluja* the son remembers, but not really, it took place a long time ago. Well, this operation lasted… I don't know how well you are informed about it, I don't

know from Herzegovina, from Livno and Glamoc, Grahovo, I don't know how well you know this terrain and this other side. I was not aware that I was in this military action (*akcija*) until I was out of it, you understand? I only know that I was there for 22 days. I was not aware that I was part of this military action until I turned on the radio the next day.

But about the war in general?

Generally with the kids, I don't talk about it. I don't talk about it. With the children—no. There is no need to. But I am always afraid when my little ones go to the left riverbank. Then I get a bit afraid.

In the excerpt cited above, Željko describes the war as a period of his life that took much longer than he expected, a period he was forced to go through and in which he became somewhat confused mentally. When talking about his war experiences, his language becomes vague and his sentences incomplete. Although I met an unexpected readiness in Željko to tell me about the war, at the same time it seemed he could not find the right words to do so. Das (2007: 90) describes this in the case of extreme violence experienced in India as the 'non-narrative'. Together with other authors (see, e.g., Argenti and Schramm 2010), Das argues that extreme violence has the potential to leave behind witnesses without words. Such experiences create disruptions in people's lives in the sense that they cannot relate them to the life they lived before. Moreover, the experienced violence is too far removed from 'normal life' for witnesses to share it with others.

The indescribability of their story is the fate veterans' face, not only in BiH. Not only do they not want to burden others with their stories, but their experiences also seem impossible to share because they exceed what is regarded as normal experience (see Jackson 2006: 49). This results in a silence that manifests itself even between close family members, such as spouses, as I was told by several of my female interlocutors. Women who have re-joined their husbands after the war often had no information even about the positions their husbands held as soldiers. Some of the husbands showed clear signs of suffering from that time, for example nightmares, but the couples never talked about it. As Lomsky-Feder (2004) shows on the case of Israeli veterans, the male fighter is expected to return after the battle to 'business as usual', to return home not showing any effects of the war or only at night when nobody notices.

In the last part of the excerpt, Željko states that he does not want to share his war experiences with his children. As will be discussed in the analysis of the Post-Yugoslav generation, the silence regarding the war, particularly by older (male) family members about their war experiences, irritates the younger ones. Even if Željko does not speak with his children about the war, he conveys to them that the 'others' are still the Croats' enemies and one cannot be careful enough. In the last sentence Željko unexpectedly and directly shares, 'But I am always afraid when my little ones go to the left riverbank'. Željko himself had cut all relationships to Bosniaks aside from professional ones. When I asked him whether he sometimes went to the east side of the city, he answered:

> I have no desire to go to theirs [Bosniak side].
>
> *Where?*
>
> Down there to the Old Bridge.
>
> *You don't go there?*
>
> No I don't. I have not been there for I think a year, definitely.
>
> *But before the war you went there, right?*
>
> Before the war, we spent much time down there. When I was a student I was there all the time.
>
> *And now you don't feel like it?*
>
> I don't have any desire whatsoever, whatsoever!
>
> *Why?*
>
> I think because of the way the Muslims behave, with this particular relation to, well, let's say, Islam.
>
> […]
>
> *And your Bosniak friends [the ones he earlier mentioned to me] are they different then, are they not like that?*
>
> We try to avoid such conversations like the two of us are engaged in now. That means we talk about other things, primarily about work related things. […] You know, when my mobile phone rings a Croat song plays, the one from the recent Eurovision [song contest]. If I went down there I would have to turn it off, you know, so that nobody attacks me at the bar… do you know what I mean?

As becomes evident in the excerpt above, Željko has made a clear decision not to cross sides. His relationships with Bosniaks are restricted to his work.

He also strongly wishes that his children do not cross to the Bosniak side, which he justifies with the potential danger that such a crossing implies. In order to strengthen his argument, Željko reminds me about the young Australian man who had been beaten up in East Mostar a few weeks earlier because he wore a Croat football jersey. Although my interlocutors were aware that violent attacks had become rare, they were taken as good reasons why one (or one's children) should not cross sides.

In Željko's view, the future for Croats in Mostar looks grim. He believes that the Muslims want to take over the city and that gradually the Croat population will have to emigrate. Željko claims that Mostar was a Croat city before the war but that this is not the case anymore today. This view is interesting if we consider that Croat population in Mostar has steadily grown since the war and that it is most likely that Croats even hold majority status now, while Bosniaks had been the strongest nation before the war (see Chap. 2). Nonetheless, Željko compares the situation in Mostar with the situation in Kosovo, where the Albanian population became the great majority within a few decades and the Serbs remained only as a very small minority. For him, Muslims are not neighbours anymore, because neighbours know what belongs to them and what does not; as Željko argues:

> We [Croats] know how to communicate with neighbours here in Herzegovina. Because neighbours know what is theirs and I know what is mine. And that is why it works out so well. But if you don't know what belongs to whom then nothing works anymore. And I think in the relation between Croats and Muslims, Muslims think that everything is theirs and they don't know what is theirs. And that is why I am for a third entity!

Here Željko does not contrast the bad neighbourliness (*loš komšiluk*) with the intact one before the war, as is commonly done, but he instead contrasts the Bosniak understanding of *komšiluk* with that of Croats', identifying the former as inferior. This presents a decisive shift in argumentation, since the art of *komšiluk* in this discourse belongs solely to one nation and not to all, as is usually the case in nostalgic discourse on pre-war Mostar. Željko clearly positions himself against future coexistence and is convinced that 90 % of the Croat population shares his opinion and would opt for a third entity, a Croat entity. In his view, as

in the view of the Croat historian introduced in Chap. 3, this is the only viable option for Croats to survive in BiH.

One of the examples Željko gave for his evaluation of Bosniak non-neighbourly behaviour concerns the controversy about the Croat member of the BiH presidency. The presidency is supposed to be shared among Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs, whereby three presidents govern in rotation. In the 2006 general election, Željko Komšić was the SDP's candidate for the Croat seat in the presidency member, which he won. It was the first time since the war ended that the Croat presidency was not a member of the HDZ. Komšić's success can be traced to two main factors: the then recent split of the Croat national party HDZ BiH into two factions, and the strong support he received from Bosniak voters. Komšić is not perceived to be a proper Croat because, although from a Roman Catholic family, he himself is an agnostic. Moreover, he does not hold dual citizenship (BiH and Croat) as many other Croats in BiH. He also propagates a shared BiH and is married to a Bosniak. For Željko, as for many other Croats, these are plenty of reasons why Komšić is not a suitable Croat representative in the presidency. But this was exactly why so many Bosniaks cheered upon his victory. I remember seeing many bright faces among my Bosniak friends and hearing cynical comments about the results of the election. Ultimately, this situation underscores the absurdity of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the governmental structure it produced. But for Željko it was proof of Bosniaks' non-neighbourly behaviour and their attempt to take away what belongs to the Croat nation.

So far, the way Željko represents the situation of Croats during and after the war is very much in line with the current dominant public discourse espoused by the Croat political elites. When he talks about pre-war Mostar, however, his narrative deviates. He acknowledges Tito's achievement in playing an intermediary role between the Soviet bloc and the West. Moreover, he fondly remembers that people had jobs and good incomes, generally enjoyed a good life and that everyone including his parents were extremely sad upon Tito's death. Željko further recalls that when he was in school everyone, regardless of national background, got along well and he is still friends with his former school friends. However, it soon becomes clear that most of these friends have left the city and he has lost contact with them. His statement about still being friends with

his former school friends of other nationalities may rather mean that Željko does not see them as enemies because he was never 'forced' to classify them along a friend–enemy framework.

Indeed, Bosniaks and Serbs from pre-wartime were friends and may remain friends (in Željko's memory) because they left Mostar, but Bosniaks (and Serbs) whom Željko meets today cannot become friends anymore because this would dangerously blur the boundary between Bosniaks and Croats, thereby threatening Croat existence. This fear of the Croat nations' assimilation and absorption is clearly in line with the dominant Croat public discourse. Nevertheless, as opposed to the Croat professor introduced in Chap. 3, who is professionally involved in rewriting history and denies any positive experiences of Yugoslavia, Željko's narrative includes positive personal memories of Yugoslav times. At several points during our interview Željko came to realise the discrepancies between the dominant Croat discourse he follows when narrating the present situation and the divergent discourse when narrating his personal experiences of pre-wartime. The explanation he gave for it, however, rested on the argument that he was simply ignorant during the period of Yugoslavia. He claimed he was not politically sensitive enough to realise his nation was being repressed (including the economic injustices of, for example, Western Herzegovina, a region dominated by Croats). He blames his ignorance on his age, stating he was too young and more interested in playing football than engaging in serious subjects.

Not only on the subject of national coexistence but also his position towards the church and ongoing present language politics demonstrate how Željko is caught between different discourses. Although he ideologically supports Croat national politics, from time to time he reverts to interpretative templates from Yugoslav times. In terms of language, Željko says how amusing it is that his children do not understand some of the words he uses, words that are today regarded as Serb and have been replaced by 'proper Croat' words. From what he told me, I initially concluded that his children are exposed to this revised language in school while he himself is unwilling to change his language, but I learned otherwise:

> No, no, no when we were in school we were taught in what was called Serbo-Croatian and it was predominantly Serb. The Muslims took over a

lot of Serbian. Well, they made some sort of Bosniak language [sic: not Bosnian!]. They made a language and then they unmade it again. There are a lot of these things going on. Well, but I did not know about it. What does a child know? Is it Serbian, is it Croatian *kava* or *kafa* [both meaning coffee but the first is used today primarily by Croats while the latter is used by Bosniaks and Serbs] and so forth.

What do you use now? Hljeb or kruh? [Both meaning 'bread' but the first is used today primarily by Bosniaks and Serbs and the latter by Croats.]

Now *kruh*. Now I use the Croatian word.

Was hljeb more in use or both before the war?

Before it was *hljeb*.

As becomes evident in the cited excerpt, Željko actually expresses sympathy for this linguistic development, even if he finds some situations resulting from it bewildering. He claims, however, that he used these words only because he was unaware they were actually of Serb origin. Now that he knows better, he has adapted his language. This attitude is different for the First Yugoslavs I introduced in the previous chapter, who are more reluctant to change their language.

Later during the same conversation, I asked Željko about his relationship with the church:

And how is your relationship to the church?

To the church? I don't… my father… the relation of my family always has been… my father's not my mother's! My mother always went to church and so forth, but my father was a communist. And so was I. I just did not go to church.

And your children?

The children are… I don't know. You know what? Still, how can I say, religious education. You know, that is for me… I have always been against it. Who wants to join religious education should go, that's fine, but not in school, not to misuse it. Do you understand? Of all these subjects. And they have many of them. They have one year of computer science and four of religious education, right? I think it would be better to invest in another language. I am really against it… I have always had a good relationship with the church. […] Well, but I think it goes too far, too far into our lives. […] I would say, wait until the children are 18 and then they should choose

> for themselves. For some time during the war you could not earn a *domovnica*[4] from Croatia if you were not baptised [in the Catholic Church]. You know, that is discrimination.

It is obviously not easy for Željko to express his (and his family's) relationship with the church. He constantly searches for the right words but does not seem to find them. The way he positions himself vis-à-vis the church is very vague. It is possible that he has not been asked about this issue in such an explicit manner before. While he talked it seemed as if he suddenly became aware of his out-dated views stemming from Yugoslav times. He and his father were both in the Communist Party and his father distanced himself strongly from the church, although his wife attended church. During our conversation, Željko probably became aware that his criticism of the church and its involvement in education and politics is not 'politically correct' anymore, and he eventually softened his criticism towards the church when he talked about his daughter's involvement in it. In this case he believes that his daughter is in good hands and that the values the church teaches are the right ones.

The narratives of Minela and Željko show that the Last Yugoslavs are the generation who struggles most in the process of (re-)positioning themselves towards their own and their nation's past and at the same time of (re-)envisioning the future. In this reorientation process, two central phenomena can be observed: firstly, the narratives of the Last Yugoslavs tend to oscillate between different, even opposing, discourses; and secondly, narratives do not proceed towards a conclusion but show a lack of cohesiveness.

The rupture that the war and the end of socialist Yugoslavia caused in the lives of the Last Yugoslavs not only finds expression in the three-fold time frame discussed above, but also penetrates their narratives as a whole, creating accounts that are characterised by a lack of conclusiveness. This is different for the older and younger generations, whose narratives are much more conclusive. While the First Yugoslavs tend to connect the two wars they experienced during their lifetime into a broader and more coherent narrative, the Post-Yugoslavs tend to distance themselves from wider

[4] The *domovnica* is an official document providing proof of Croat origin.

societal experiences caused by the war. The Last Yugoslavs' narratives of local history and of their lives as being closely bound to it stand out due to the way they oscillate between different discourses: one localised discourse centring around the worsening of quality of life with the break-up of Yugoslavia and the war, and one delocalised discourse centring around the national liberation that came with it. While the former constitutes an immediate experience, the latter exists on a more ideological level.

Lost Homes: Oscillating Between Opposing Discourses

As has been shown, the narratives of the Last Yugoslavs are characterised by two central phenomena. First, they tend to oscillate between different, even opposing, discourses. Second, they are subject to the disruption that the war and the political-economic transformations caused. This disruption in the expected life course (in regard to education and career as well as family life) continues to this day, since for many of this generation life and, in particular, the course of their life remains 'out of order'. In the Last Yugoslavs' narratives, pre-war BiH is presented as the 'secure past', while present and future BiH is seen as insecure, even for those who are in favour of Mostar's division and support the nationalist discourse.

Besides human losses and loss of familiar neighbourhoods, the loss of economic security (viewed with reference to the extremely precarious economic situation many people face today)[5] has had a strong impact on the lives of the Last Yugoslavs. Severe changes brought about by the war, as well as by the transformation of the Yugoslav socialist market economy into a neoliberal, capitalist-oriented economy, directly affected the lives of the Last Yugoslavs. Thus we can say this generation experienced a 'double rupture' (Jansen 2008: 47).

This generation's discursive tactics are marked by their attempts to deal with their ruptured biographies. Compared to the First Yugoslavs, the narratives of the Last Yugoslavs show much less continuity and conclusiveness. While the First Yugoslavs are likely to connect the recent war and

[5] In 2008 the average income in BiH was around 400 Euros; around 40 % of the population described their household situation as below average (see UNDP 2008/3).

their experience of it with WWII or to embed it in a narrative of suffering that goes beyond the experience of war, in the narratives of the Last Yugoslavs the 1992–1995 war stands out as an experience that cannot be connected to any other experience. Moreover, a longing is expressed for the normal life (*normalan život*), which is tightly connected to the social security and economic well-being people fondly remember from Yugoslav times but also to good *komšiluk* (neighbourliness) (see Jansen 2015; Spasić 2012). So, we may say that the idea of *normalan život* and its connotations are an interpretative template borrowed from Yugoslav times.

In this nostalgic discourse Yugoslavia is often remembered as the ideal home, a lost home that can never be regained (Palmberger 2008). Home thus does not represent a geographically defined place but is, as Jansen (2007) vividly shows in the case of BiH's returnees, strongly tied to feelings of security (*Sicherheit*), which again is bound to specific needs arising from the stage of life in which people find themselves. For the Last Yugoslavs, pre-war, not post-war, Mostar presents this 'secure' place. Evidently, only the relatively prosperous Yugoslav period is remembered by the Last Yugoslavs and not the economic decay of the 1980s. Even if social security and equality were central ideals of Tito's Yugoslavia in order to legitimise the socialist regime, these ideals were never achieved and the system failed to develop progressive redistributive mechanisms. Basic social securities, for example, in respect to housing, health care and education—often mentioned by my informants—were not as abundant as they are remembered today (see Allcock 2000; see also Pešić 1988).[6] Nevertheless, in the narratives of the Last Yugoslavs the past is clearly set in relation to the present. Considering the extreme difficult economic situation BiH's citizens face today, Yugoslavia is recalled in a highly idealised fashion and evidently only the relatively prosperous period is remembered and not the economic crisis of the 1980s.

In the case of Aida and her longing for Yugoslavia it became clear that a loss of home can be experienced even when one is, geographically speak-

[6] Especially in urban areas accommodation was in chronic short supply and, with a few exceptions, only those in leadership positions received housing through their occupational position. In terms of healthcare it has to be said that it was free but medicine provision was not. Education was free, too, but there was limited financial aid available. Moreover, unemployment insurance was not sufficient (Allcock 2000: 192–194).

ing, at home. Although after the war she returned to Mostar, the city she grew up in, Aida continues to experience a deep loss of home. Jansen and Löfving (2009) rightly remind us that it is wrong to assume that home is where one grew up or is a geographically defined place as:

> Home itself, then, needs to be problematised, and particularly the self-evidence with which it is territorialised. If we fail to do so [...], home is all too easily represented unwittingly as a timeless entity in an unchanging context of origin, something that is particularly inappropriate if we take into account that that context is often one of dramatic transformation, such as war or socioeconomic restructuring. There is, then, an important temporal dimension to experiences of home. (Jansen and Löfving 2009: 15)

With the above point in mind, we can better understand why those who decided to resettle in Mostar (and even those who never left the city) experienced a loss of home in the sense that they lost the city they felt at home in. Some even said they do not regain a sense of familiarity when re-visiting places, although they previously had lived there for more than half their lifetime.[7] Returning 'home' (or remaining at 'home') actually meant building a new life in a place that has suffered severe transformations. Although this chapter focused on those who remained in or returned to Mostar, it has to be said that this generation was particularly reluctant to return to their pre-war homes, at least on a permanent basis (see Jansen 2009).

The notion of home, we can say, is closely connected to people's sense of socio-economic security and future prospects that abruptly vanished with the war. Life presents itself as fractured and there is a dramatic discontinuity between life before the war and life after the war. This is a phenomenon observed in cases of abrupt and traumatising life changes, particularly researched in the cases of Holocaust survivors (see Rosenthal 1995). As discussed in this chapter, home cannot be defined as a geographical place but is connected to familiar social relationships and physical and economic securities and provides room for dreams of and

[7] Returning 'home' but not recognising that place as home any more is a common experience among Bosnian returnees (see Jansen 2006; Stefansson 2006).

aspirations for the future. This loss of home, I argue, is a crucial reason for the lack of conclusiveness in the narratives of the Last Yugoslavs generation. In contrast to those of my informants who taught local history in school or university, my informants presented here could not rewrite local history by erasing their personal memories. They did not fully adapt their own memories to accommodate the dominant national discourses but rather shifted between different discourses—old and new.

Although the loss of home was discussed most explicitly in Aida's case, it is a consistent theme running through all of the narratives presented. Moreover, a sense of loss of home is not unique to the Last Yugoslavs but is also a strong element in the narratives of the First Yugoslavs, as discussed in the previous chapter. Still, for the Last Yugoslavs, the rupture of the war came at a critical point in life when they were establishing their own households and building up their careers or when they were just about to do so. Aida blames the war for foiling her life plans (especially in terms of career and family) and for the fact that she still lives at home with her parents at a point in her life when she expected to be setting up her own household.

Becker (1997), in her book *Disrupted Lives*, draws a clear parallel between expectations about the course of life that do not materialise because of unexpected life events and the experience of biographical disruption. Becker conducted research with Americans whose lives took an unexpected turn because of diverse reasons, including infertility as well as chronic illnesses. Becker noticed that her informants share the experience of disruption of a life course pictured as a predictable continuous flow. 'Although continuity in life is an illusion, it is an effective one: it organizes people's plans for and expectations about life, as well as the ways in which they understand who they are and what they do' (Becker 1997: 191). Becker's observations, as well as my own, suggest that ideas of the future are closely connected to the life course. When the flow of life is interrupted due to unexpected circumstances, the anticipated future disintegrates and a coherent narrative that connects past-present-future is under threat. As I realised in the case of the Last Yugoslavs' narratives, when expectations concerning one's life course are hampered by wide-reaching societal transformations and war, it is not only one's physical integrity that is threatened, but also the meaningful life that people long for. This makes

clear that we need to consider questions concerning the life course in order to understand the multiple ways people position themselves toward and make sense of historical-political ruptures.

The life situation the First Yugoslavs face (presented in the previous chapter) gives them more leeway where they are not forced to grapple with the political and economic changes the way the Last Yugoslavs have to. The former also seem to find more possibility and legitimacy in indulging in the past and to remain among like-minded people in order to revive the spirit of the 'good old days' and to cherish a generationally shared past time. The Last Yugoslavs face the difficult task of orienting themselves anew in a society that has changed so significantly. Those who feel incapable of doing so experience the world around them as alien and often also hostile. Oftentimes, the place where they were born is not experienced as home anymore and the experience of loss of home is shared not only by those who left the country but also by those who remained in or returned to Mostar.

While there seems to be a consensus in the literature that individuals aim to 'connect disparate parts into a coherent, meaningful whole' (Holstein and Gubrium 1995: 28; see also Roseman 1995), in this chapter I have shown that this is not necessarily always possible. In the case of the generation of the Last Yugoslavs I argued that the experience of disruption and loss of future prospects due to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the war and political-economic transformations prevent people from narrating their lives and the history of their society in meaningful and coherent ways. Moreover, I have revealed that the way wider societal transformations in Mostar are perceived as biographical disruptions varies along generational (rather than national) lines.

I have, moreover, shown that generational demarcations are informed by the past as well as by present shared experiences and by expectations of the future (or lack thereof), which are closely connected to the life course. Due to the life situation the Last Yugoslavs find themselves in, they face a particular challenge when it comes to re-orienting themselves in the new post-war socio-political context. The Last Yugoslavs' narratives discussed above have illustrated how the disappearance of a home and the future prospects tightly tied to it hamper the construction of a coherent and meaningful narrative. As some researchers working with refugees have

observed, a sense of belonging and of home is crucial for a coherent narrative of one's life: 'Forced movement as a rupture with the familiar social world tends to undermine the premises on which meaningful stories are built' (Eastmond 2007: 259). Although not all Mostarians experienced forced movement, they all experienced the disappearance of a familiar world. As long as they have not found a new home that suffices as a base from which to create future projections, they are likely to struggle to find a coherent life narrative. As Skultans (1997) has shown in her vivid account of Latvian life narratives, her interlocutors were able to deal well with loss and discontinuities as long as they found 'an end' to the stories of their lives. For Skultan's Latvian interlocutors, the end of their story is the homecoming. However, as has been shown above, no such homecoming exists for the majority of my interlocutors who belong to the generation of the Last Yugoslavs. Moreover, even for those who believe that the war has fostered national liberation, it seems too abstract an achievement to serve as the 'story's end'.

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6

The (Un)spoilt Generation: The Post-Yugoslavs

In this chapter I give voice to the Post-Yugoslavs, the youngest generation. The Post-Yugoslavs were teenagers or in their early 20s when I met them, between two and 10 years old when the war started, and between five and 14 years old when it ended. This means that all of them spent more years of their lives in post-wartime than in pre-wartime. The majority of my interlocutors spent at least part of the war as refugees away from the war zone (either in BiH or outside the country), some of them accompanied by a sibling or parent and others by themselves.

In Mostar young people are often presented by older people as being crucially different from the rest of society because of their lack of pre-war experience. Mostar's youths are often presented as ignorant, manipulated and lethargic. Pre-war memories are used here as boundary markers, allowing, for example, young Mostarians in their late 20s or early 30s to differentiate themselves from those in their early 20s. Mostar's youths are often presented as ignorant, manipulated and lethargic. As shown in the previous chapters, for many Last Yugoslavs and First Yugoslavs, pre-war Mostar is still the true Mostar while post-war Mostar is a kind of artificial state. Following this line of thought, the youngest generation, which I refer to as the Post-Yugoslavs, are pitied for their lack of memory of true (pre-war)

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Mostar. Due to the post-war division of BiH and Mostar in particular, the youngest generation is much less familiar with customs associated with the other national group, which are part of the older population's common knowledge. A Croat woman in her late 20s when I met her repeatedly expressed her astonishment about the youngest generation. For instance, she once expressed disbelief at the fact that her younger friends are no longer familiar with Bosniak names. Names which for her were typically Bosnian (sic: not Bosniak!) did not sound familiar to her friends who were only a few years younger than her. This unfamiliarity also extends to socialist festivities, pre-war rock bands as well as *turcizmi*[1] (in the case of Croat youth), which were all common in pre-war BiH.

The way the Post-Yugoslavs are presented by older compatriots is contradictory. They are said to be the part of the population that is most manipulated by nationalist politicians as well as traumatised; they grew up in a time of extreme nationalism, war and national partition. On the other hand, the Post-Yugoslavs are the generation who shoulder the hope for a more positive future on behalf of their parents, grandparents and teachers, as well as domestic politicians and members of the so-called 'international community' (see Palmberger 2010). As I will show below, the Post-Yugoslavs instead perceive themselves as the 'unspoilt' rather than the 'spoilt' generation, which is less affected by negative feelings caused by the war.

Even if most of the time my interlocutors 'downplayed' their war experiences, most of them also had an alternative story to tell, indicating that neither their young age nor the fact that they were evacuated to safer places spared them from feelings of fear and insecurity. Three immediate realms were essential in these narratives: the family, neighbourhood and school. It was first and foremost in these places that children sensed changes, changes that were often left unexplained. There were the fathers who began to dress in military uniform (an item of clothing the children had never seen at home before) and to leave the family for days or weeks. Plus the silence upon their return about what they had experienced. There were the pupils who disappeared without saying good-bye, leaving behind empty desks in the classroom. In particular, those who had just

[1] *Turcizam* is the local name for a word of Arabic origin incorporated into what used to be referred to as Serbo-Croatian and is nowadays used mainly by Bosniaks or the older population.

reached primary school age when the war started described how confused and threatened they felt, sensing that something was going on without ever being told.

First, their Serb schoolmates suddenly disappeared. Then, during the following weeks, more and more friends stopped attending classes and their schooling was often interrupted by shelling. For many of my interlocutors this was the point when they first realised that they belonged to a nation or at least became aware of the importance of such an identity. There were long periods when many of the children were parted from their families (or part of their families) after being evacuated to safer places in and outside BiH. In accounts of the time they were away from their family, young Mostarians expressed the anxiety and fear they experienced on behalf of the family members who stayed behind. Lacking any means of communication with their loved ones, they were entirely dependent on the news on foreign TV channels broadcasting images of war and destruction. Some of them even had lost hope they would ever see their family again. One young man, who had been evacuated to a foreign country, learned only months after the event that his little brother had died after being shot by a sniper. He told me this during a stroll through Mostar when we passed by the graveyard where his brother is buried. Such events made it very clear that my youngest informants had also experienced the war in its fullest sense. Nevertheless, they tend to dissociate their experiences from that of the wider society, as I will show in this chapter.

Even though the Post-Yugoslavs tend to present themselves and their environments as somehow 'untouched' by the war, this does not mean that members of this generation are not critical of their city at all. The Post-Yugoslavs often told me how unhappy they were with BiH's education system, especially with the old-fashioned teaching and examining methods. There was also a considerable group of Post-Yugoslavs who complained there was too little to do in Mostar for young people besides meeting friends in coffee bars.[2] Mostar does not even have a cinema. Those who had already finished school especially complained about the constraints they faced around travelling (not only

[2] The lack of public places for young people besides coffee bars is significant throughout BiH (see Abaspahić et al. 2003).

about financial constraints but also about the restrictive visa regulations). Another worry, expressed especially among the older Post-Yugoslavs, was the difficult economic situation in Mostar (as throughout BiH) and the relatively bad prospects for finding an appropriate job. Among the students I talked to, many considered the high unemployment rate as one of several factors causing them to pursue university study (rather than being unemployed). I also sensed that the Post-Yugoslavs (like the older generations) were tired of politicians' inability to improve the situation.[3]

This chapter focuses on two central questions. Firstly, how do the Post-Yugoslavs narrate their and their nation's war experiences and which discursive tactics do they follow to deal with the legacy of the war in everyday life? Secondly, how do they narrate the pre-war period and incorporate the narratives of that time passed on to them by their older compatriots? As this chapter will show, encounters between young Bosniaks and Croats in Mostar are rare and members of the Post-Yugoslavs generation rarely speak about memories of the war. They nevertheless share discursive tactics utilised in order to position themselves with reference to the past and, at the same time, to situate themselves within the context of present-day Mostar. Their discursive tactics, I suggest, are characterised by depoliticising their personal lives and their city. This way of coping with war experiences and defending one's life (and to some extent one's generation as well) is due to generational positioning rather than to national affiliation.

Mario and Lejla: 'Distancing' Personal Experience from that of the Collective

Mario was 22 when one of his friends introduced me to him. Like many other young Croats, Mario came to Mostar to study history at *Sveučilište u Mostaru* (University of Mostar), the only Croat university in BiH, as he

[3] A report on youth and youth policy in BiH confirms that BiH's youth are primarily dissatisfied with the education system, unemployment, lack of prospects and unstable political situation, see *Youth Information Agency Bosnia and Herzegovina* in 2005 for the UN Review of the *World Programme of Action for Youth*.

repeatedly said to me. He grew up in a city that was part of *Herceg-Bosna* during the war, some 50 kilometres away from Mostar, and was divided along similar conflict lines. There, too, Bosniak and Croat forces first fought as allies while during the second part of the war they fought each other. Mario was born in 1984, and was eight years old when the war began. Although he does not glorify the war, he believes that it brought an end to the 'dark and worn-out' period of communism in his country and enabled Croats to freely practise their language, culture and religion. His personal memories of pre-war times, however, are not as dark. He still fondly remembers the building complex he grew up in where families of different nationalities used to live. Although he has always been aware of his Croat identity, he only sensed the impact of it when war broke out and some of his classmates did not attend classes anymore.

Generally, Mario liked to talk to me about BiH's history. This used to change, though, when I showed interest in his personal experiences of the war. His answers then became brief and he was quick to point out how young he was when the war broke out. He claimed the war would surely have had a completely different effect on his life if it broke out now and he had to take up a rifle and fight. Although the war had a traumatic influence on people, this was not the case for him personally, he told me. Mario's narrative of the war is ambiguous. While he states that this war, like any war, did leave behind many scars, he simultaneously removes himself from that experience by stating he had been too young to understand what was going on. He explained why he was spared any feelings of hate due to his age and his lack of direct war experience:

> Because when my town was shelled I was in Split, I went to excursions on islands, I went swimming, I didn't feel the war and later on when I came back to my community I didn't have anything against Muslims or Serbs. (...) Coexistence (*sužívot*) is good, especially among young people in my age who didn't feel the war a lot.

When narrating the war, Mario shows that he distances his personal story, and to some extent also that of his entire generation, from what is often described as a collective experience. Other interlocutors of his age narrated their war experiences to me in a similar way, especially when

they had been evacuated to safer places. This was also the case for Lejla, a 16-year-old, who will be introduced in more detail below. Lejla told me the following:

> It is for sure easier for us than for our parents, because they are familiar with everything, with the situation that led to war and everything else, while we were protected from everything; we were just facing some consequences of the war.

In this citation Lejla clearly expresses what I so often encountered in conversations with young Mostarians, namely that they present themselves as the 'unspoilt' generation due to their young age and thereby distance their personal experiences from that of the wider society. Lejla does so with the phrases, 'we were protected from everything' and 'we were just facing some consequences of the war'. These phrases also show that Lejla (as others of her generation) speaks of youth in Mostar (at times at least) as a 'we' group although the lives of young Bosniaks and Croats are separated and points of encounter are rare. Most of the time, my young interlocutors removed their personal memories from the discourse of victimisation, which is a strong element of the dominant Bosniak and Croat public discourses as well as of the older generations' narratives. Discursive tactics of distancing also find expression in the choice of the grammatical person and, consequently, the pronoun employed. Personal war experiences among the Post-Yugoslavs generation are generally narrated in first person singular ('I'), while those of older generations are often told in first person plural ('we'), in which personal experiences come to be narrated as a collective experience of the nation.

Mario only told me about experiences of fear, including the fear for his father who joined the HVO (*Hrvatsko vijeće obrane*, Croat Defence Council) when I explicitly asked him about it. Otherwise, he spoke about the war without showing much emotion. Without planning it, I obtained a direct reaction to Mario's narrative from Marina, a Croat woman who is only eight years older than him, when she helped me with the transcription of Mario's interview. Apologising for her indiscretion,

she told me how irritated she was by the ease and light-heartedness with which my interviewee spoke about the war and especially about present-day Mostar. She became very emotional and started cursing and accusing 'these kids' of being ignorant of what had happened in and to Mostar. In her view, they do not and cannot know better because they possess too few memories of Mostar before the war, and they do not understand that the war ruined a whole world, her old Mostar, over whose destruction she still grieves.

I heard many similar statements from other young adults who were sometimes only a few years older than those they blamed to be ignorant. Although Mario's words did not provoke me as they provoked Marina, I was still puzzled to hear from Mario about the good coexistence of members of his generation across national lines since in Mostar most young people, including Mario, have little contact with their peers on the other side. To a good part this is to blame on the division of schools and universities introduced during the war, an effective way of institutionalising the division of Mostar (see Chap. 3).

As described above, young Mostarians have a story to tell that includes fear and hardship connected to the war. At many times, however, they distance themselves from the nationalised discourses of victimisation, discourses that serve as important reference points for members of the two older generations. In the following section, I suggest that such apparent ambivalences in my interlocutors' narratives are strongly bound to the specific social context of their present lives. Maurice Bloch reminds us that 'the past is an ever-changing resource according to the situations or moods in which the persons find themselves, situations and moods which will often be due to organised social contexts' (Bloch 1998: 119). With this is mind, let us first explore the immediate environment of my interlocutors, and the attitude towards the experiences of the young generation that they confront.

A study by Freedman and Abazovic (2006) on secondary school students in Mostar and Vukovar, focusing on those who experienced the war as children between the age of five and eight, states that adults tend to belittle the war experiences of this age group or deny them altogether. Freedman and Abazovic report: 'Some said that their parents thought

they were too little to remember very much and that their parents thought that they themselves were the ones who really suffered most in the wars' (Abaspahić et al. 2003). I heard similar complaints from some of my interlocutors, such as Lejla.

Lejla is from a Mostar family whose members identified themselves as Yugoslavs before the war but today declare themselves as Bosniaks. Lejla left Mostar with her parents and sister in 1992 for Italy and only returned six years later, while her grandparents, cousins and other family members remained in Mostar throughout the war. At the time I met Lejla, she was a student of Mostar's prestigious old grammar school (*Stara gimnazija*) that was officially reunited in 2004 (see Chap. 3). Although uniting 'two schools under one roof' was sold as a big success by the international community (OSCE, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, was active in the reunification process), it needs to be said that Bosniak and Croat students attend different classes following different curricula even though they share the same building (see Hromadžić 2008, 2015). Lejla was disturbed by this division and thus became active in school politics. Lejla is very aware of the serious shortcomings existing in her hometown. In spite of her young age, Lejla is active in one of the youth NGOs and full-heartedly fights for more participation of youth in the political decision making process.

Even if, as illustrated above, at times Lejla distances her personal war experiences from that of the older generations similar to Mario, she still claims the right of young people in Mostar to engage with war and post-war issues, which older generations claim for themselves. When it comes to war-related issues, however, she faces a situation in which adults do not find it appropriate to discuss them with her due to her young age. In the following story, she illustrates this experience:

> I wrote [in an article for the youth magazine she works for] how sad it was to see that art, which shouldn't be divided, shouldn't be put under any conditions of national division, had been divided after all. In our city we don't actually realise this anymore because it has become normal to us to have two sides, to have this and that side, left and right side, left is their side and right is our side and so on. I realised that nobody wants to speak about

> it; everybody was avoiding the topic saying that I'm too young and cannot write about it. But it's not only about me! ... When I tell them that I am 16 (Lejla appears older) their faces freeze and they suggest changing the topic. Why? We students, especially from *Stara gimnazija* are faced with this ugly situation of separatism every day, and I really hope it will improve.

It is not only due to her age that Lejla does not feel taken seriously enough but also due to the fact that she left Mostar during the war. On one hand, she feels privileged not to have had to experience the war in Mostar and believes that this gives her the opportunity to be more impartial (in a similar way to Mario). On the other hand, Lejla stresses to always have cared about her hometown and to have feared for her loved ones remaining in Mostar. When she returned she sensed that those who had remained in Mostar did not believe she cared about her hometown since she and her family had decided to leave.[4] Most of the time, Lejla downplays her experiences related to the war, disentangling her experiences from the Bosniak victimisation discourse. However, at other times she contests her exclusion from debate and claims the right to have her experiences accepted as part of the national experience of victimisation.

Darko and Elvira: 'Normalising' Mostar

I observed another discursive tactic among my young interlocutors that I see connected to 'distancing'; the attempt to present Mostar as just another city. Both phenomena represent ways of dealing with the war and its aftermath. In both cases, individuals disentangle their personal experience from (what is claimed to be) collective experience. Not only did my interlocutors distance their personal memories of war from that of their nation, but they also removed their (and their generation's)

[4] She not only shares this experience with others of her generation but also with other returnees who did not necessarily receive a warm welcome by those who had stayed. The latter saw themselves as defenders of the city (nation) and those who left as traitors. On the other side, those who stayed wished that they had left the city too, sparing themselves and their families the direct experience of war. The exclusion of those who fled the country during the war from the discourse of victimisation and suffering has become increasingly contested by the people in question, even if feelings of guilt coexist.

present life from the wider society by narrating their lives (at least at times) as if they were not affected in the same way by the aftermath of the war as the older population was.

In the spring of 2006 I was asked by an Austrian university professor to find a tour guide for a group of political science students from Vienna visiting Mostar on a study trip. I thought the students would benefit most from a tour covering both the east and west sides of the city. Armen, an elderly Bosniak man introduced in Chap. 4, who had grown up in Mostar and possessed seemingly infinite knowledge about its history was my first choice as tour guide for East Mostar. Darko, a young Mostarian, agreed to show the students West Mostar where he lived with his family. Back then, Darko was in his penultimate year at *Stara gimnazija*, the same grammar school Lejla also attended. I was happy about Darko's offer to help, especially as I hoped the relative small age difference between him and the students would make it easy to engage everyone in a post-tour conversation over lunch. Though I knew the sites we were visiting and had read and heard about them before, it was very interesting to see how Armen and Darko respectively presented their city to the foreign students.

It was not particularly surprising how much Armen's and Darko's tours differed. I knew (from conversations and a previous tour) that Armen's knowledge of Mostar's history was extensive, to say the least. Unsurprisingly, Darko did not have the same historical knowledge if for no other reason than his younger age. Still, his tour (after Armen's seemingly endless and detailed explanations) was, I suppose, refreshing for everyone. However, what struck me about Darko's guided tour was his effort to depoliticise all spheres of life that touched upon his own personal life. In order to discuss the discursive tactics inherent in Darko's narrative, I give a short account of the tour he gave us.

The first site Darko decided to show the students was the modern shopping mall at *Rondo*, the central roundabout in West Mostar. He proudly presented this piece of 'modernity' in his city that otherwise was still heavily marked by its destruction. Darko's tour soon revealed which places he thought to be presentable and which not; oftentimes these places did not correspond with the foreign students' ideas of places of interest. This was the case when the students said they wanted to visit the biggest Partisan memorial in the city which, ironically, is located on

the west side where it has survived so far, albeit in a heavily neglected state. Darko had not planned to show the memorial to the students. He thought of it as a dirty place where drug addicts hung out, so he decided to stay at the memorial's entry at the bottom of the hill until the students returned. Darko's strong dislike of this place, which made him refuse to even enter it, is most likely connected not only to the monument's present state of neglect but also to the fact that for him it no longer has a right to exist. In conversations with Croats who pursue a nationalist discourse, such as with professors at *Sveučilište u Mostaru* (the Croat-dominated University), I realised that the place is noticeably absent from discussions such that when I mentioned it I was likely to be asked which memorial I was talking about. Ironically, in such conversations the existence of the by far largest memorial site in all of Mostar (just opposite *Sveučilište*) was neglected or ignored.

A site that Darko was happy to show the students was the Catholic cathedral. On our way there he pointed to the street where he and his family live, proudly stating that the former HDZ leader lived in a flat in the same building. When we arrived at the cathedral, Darko spoke about the suppression of religion under Tito. He shared that while preparing this tour his mother had told him the cathedral's tower had not been allowed to be built any higher than the nearby Partisan memorial (which is located on a hill). This resulted in the church's decision to remove some earth by digging several metres into the ground on and around the site so that building the cathedral in this hollow would maintain the tower's originally planned height. In this explanation, the two sites—the Partisan memorial which he refused to visit and the cathedral that he decided to show the students—were finally put into relation to each other.

Besides this instance, this type of political-historical contextualisation was otherwise absent in Darko's tour, such as when he talked about the annual pilgrimage of young people from Mostar to Medjugorje. The Austrian students, all of whom had taken courses on Yugoslavia and the war in BiH, were well aware of the contested meaning of Medjugorje (see Chap. 2). I noticed their bewilderment when Darko discussed the pilgrimage in a highly apolitical way, stressing only the fun parts of it, like going out with peers before the pilgrimage, listening to music they liked, and so on without acknowledging any religious or political connotation.

At the end of the tour the Austrian students, quite obviously puzzled by the 'depoliticised' tour Darko had given, tried to get to the more 'serious political matters' in Mostar. In the question-and-answer session they persistently asked Darko about his experience of living in a divided city, of being taught in a reunited but still divided school, and so forth. Darko insisted, however, that his life was quite normal and did not differ greatly from any other young person's life. His daily routine included going to school, returning home for lunch and doing his homework so that he could meet friends in one of the numerous cafés afterwards. He made an effort to explain the importance of cafés as places to socialise and the amount of time people spend there. He also said how easy it was for young people in BiH to get hold of alcohol and cigarettes, hinting at the many parties they had. He made clear that he did not support the national division of his school and that young people knew best how to break this division; secretly smoking in the school's bathrooms is the best way to bring pupils from both curricula together and works much better than any of the 'reconciliation programmes' brought to them from the outside.[5] When asked about the effects of war on Mostar, Darko tried to explain that the war had already been over for more than 10 years as if he hoped that the students would finally understand that Mostar had become a normal city.

Darko's representation of Mostar certainly has to be understood in the context of its narration, in the encounter with foreigners. Since the war, almost all international news coverage on Mostar has concentrated on tensions between Bosniaks and Croats; this is also true of most international NGOs active in BiH, not to mention tourists and researchers who visit Mostar, sometimes only for short periods. The fact that Darko presented Mostar as a city just like any other city and his life just like any other teenager's life is not only a reaction towards the judging eye of outsiders, but also serves as a way to protect his own life and to restore hope for the city to which his life is bound.

Considering these attributes ascribed to my interlocutors, normalising present-day Mostar can be seen as a discursive tactic that detaches the actor from the legacy of the war, in defence against the stigmatisation of

[5] For a detailed discussion of this subject see Hromadžić (2015).

being trapped in the realm of the 'lost generation' but also in defence of one's own future. Haukanes (2013) encountered a similar phenomenon among Czech youth, who did not include the far-reaching transformations of their country's recent history and the 'biographical uncertainties' that came with it in their biographical narratives. In the case of Mostar's youth this is complemented by the act of distancing personal memories from the collective. While the latter represents an attempt to disentangle past experiences from that of the nation, the act of normalising present-day Mostar has a similar role for present experiences. I was supported in this interpretation by the observation that those who felt the consequences of war in their personal lives the most were likely to be those who skilfully avoided addressing their experience as related to the wider problems Mostar's society faces today. I encountered this vividly with Elvira, a 21-year-old woman whom I became friends with at the beginning of my fieldwork and whose life I followed for the three years I was based in BiH.

Elvira faced the difficulties of the city's division in her private life more than most others I knew. She had been in a relationship with a Bosniak man for a couple of years but had to keep it entirely secret since she was from a Croat family. Neither her friends nor her family were allowed to know about it as they would have greatly disapproved. Unlike her parents who avoided crossing to the Bosniak-dominated east side of the city, Elvira crossed sides almost every day because she studied at the Bosniak-dominated university. This choice was approved by her parents only because the Croat-dominated university did not offer the subject she had chosen. When asked about the experience of being a Croat student at the Bosniak-dominated university, she told me she had not encountered any problems, after a while adding that indeed nobody knew of her Croat origins as her first and last names are not clearly and exclusively identifiable as Croat. I was surprised she never complained about having to keep the issue about her Croat background as yet another secret.

Love relationships between young Bosniaks and Croats are rarely approved by parents. This is particularly difficult since all of my young interlocutors still lived at home. Sometimes it seems as if such relations are considered a betrayal not only of the family, but also of the nation. As a result, cross-national couples often find themselves forced to keep their relationship a secret. While some of the Post-Yugoslavs were open to cross-

national relationships, when it came to marriages they were sceptical in a similar way as their parents. They thought it would be too difficult in a cross-national marriage to agree upon how to raise the offspring, such as in terms of religion and knowing that children from cross-national marriages face particular hurdles in BiH. A teacher of ethics in Mostar, herself from and in a mixed marriage, told me in an interview that her high school pupils perceive religious identities as primordial. For them their religious and national identity was so intertwined that they did not think they had a free choice to change their religion. In a similar vein many of them did think of Mostar's division as a given and historically grounded.

When from time to time I went for coffee with Elvira and her fellow students in a café on the university campus, I understood how it was possible for her to keep her national identity out of conversations. Elvira and her friends talked about exams, professors, fellow students, fashion and similar topics, but avoided conversations about local politics. Their dissatisfaction with Mostar's present situation was expressed mainly through sharing their mutual dissatisfaction with the bad economic situation and bleak job prospects. Like others of her generation, Elvira would consider leaving Mostar if the right opportunity presented itself.[6]

It was only Elvira's Bosniak partner who, now and then, challenged her way of presenting Mostar's reality as removed from politics. Once in a coffee bar at the beginning of my stay in Mostar, Elvira, her boyfriend and I discussed in which parts of the city it would be good for me and my family to live. Elvira suggested West Mostar (where she lived) since it was greener than East Mostar. Her Bosniak boyfriend, however, found this statement provocative, adding that the east side used to be green as well but during the war people needed heating material so they had cut down most of the trees. I never felt quite comfortable challenging Elvira's depoliticised presentations in such a way and assumed that once

[6] Several opinion polls in BiH have shown a high percentage (more than 70 %) of young people wanting to leave their country, especially for economic reasons. In my judgement this high percentage expresses the frustration experienced by youth due to grim job prospects and other difficulties they face. However, I believe that a much smaller number than those who declare their desire to leave the country would actually decide to move when given the chance. See, for example, UN Review of the World Programme of Action for Youth (2005). *Independent Evaluation of the National Youth Policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina.* http://www.un.org/esa/socdev//unyin/documents/wpaysubmissions/bosnia.pdf [03.07.2015].

we knew each other better she would share her thoughts on such matters anyway. But I was wrong; all my subtle attempts to engage her in conversation about the political situation of her city failed despite the fact that we met frequently over a period of almost three years. By offering me only monosyllabic answers she clearly indicated her desire to change the topic and talk about more light-hearted things such as parties, shopping, holiday plans and so on. When once she passed by a photograph exhibition in the Bosniak-dominated university showing images of a heavily destroyed Mostar, I was sure she would be moved to share her thoughts about Mostar's recent past with me. However, she only said three words: 'That is horrible!'

As shown, the discursive tactics of those who experienced the war as children included strong elements of silencing and distancing the effects the war may have had on their lives. Similar observations were made by Kolind (2008) in Stolac, a town in Herzegovina, where young people also tended to avoid the war in conversations. While those belonging to older generations sometimes expressed the wish to forget about war atrocities that they themselves or their nation had experienced, the war and its aftermath crept into almost every longer conversation. This was particularly true for those who experienced great loss (of family members, property, social and economic status and so on) during the war and did not think that it had changed anything for the better. Instead, they narrated the war as a 'senseless historical drama', as Skultans (1997: 767) termed it in the case of Latvian victim narratives. Often, personal experiences were subordinated within the dominant national discourse of victimisation.

Though individuals tend to embed their personal memories into wider officially accepted narratives, one is also likely to encounter dissonance between stories of individual experience and their larger social and historical context. By analysing life stories of Israeli male veterans, Lomsky-Feder (2004) shows how her interlocutors narrated their lives as not affected by the war. Similarly to the Post-Yugoslavs they thereby separated their personal memories from wider societal experiences. But different to the Post-Yugoslavs, Lomsky-Feder's war veterans described their generation as traumatised, while excluding themselves from this experience. Lomsky-Feder traces this distancing back to the veterans' feelings of inferiority due to the fact that her interviewees did not take part in key battles. Not

being actively involved in the war due to their young age, my interlocutors may, like Lomsky-Feder's war veterans, feel that their personal war stories do not pass as 'true' stories of the war. But their distancing from the older generations' experiences may also be an act of self-protection, as suggested below.

Climo (2002) describes a similar phenomenon of distancing autobiographic from group memories in the case of WWII and suggests that it may be a conscious choice when people do not make a connection between their personal and social memories. This may occur when it feels too threatening to put oneself into the recognised historical context. So, by separating personal memories from collective memories, the person feels protected from the difficult collective experiences (Climo 2002: 126; see also Leydesdorff et al. 1999). This would suggest that past war events are so overwhelming and threatening that young Mostarians prefer to remove their personal stories from the wider social context. This avoidance or distancing may well be a constructive (rather than pathological) mechanism for children who experienced war (Jones 2004). Achugar and colleagues (2013) and Larkin (2010) come to similar conclusions in the context of the Uruguayan post-dictatorship period and the post-civil war period in Lebanon respectively. They show how young people distance themselves from the past in order to construct a positive self-identification (in the case of Uruguay) and in order to make room for reconciliation (in the case of Lebanon).

It is likely that both explanations outlined above are true in the case of the Post-Yugoslavs. They may not feel that their own war experiences count as full ones, not least because this is often suggested to them by older family members. On the other hand, distancing their personal war memories from those of older compatriots may provide a strategy to make room for one's future. For the young Post-Yugoslav generation, adopting a victim identity would not only mean having to acknowledge the effect the war had on their lives but would also lead them into having to adopt a passive position. Discursive tactics of distancing and normalising are then utilised in order to cope with the legacy of the war and as a defence against stigmatisation by the older generations as well as to create room for hope for the city to which the Post-Yugoslavs' lives are inextricably bound (see Palmberger forthcoming). This dynamic is likely to be connected

to the Post-Yugoslavs' strong orientation towards the present and the future, which also becomes visible in their narratives, which are less past-oriented than those of the older generations (see Neyzi 2004). But the relative silence of war experiences may also be connected to the fact that the Post-Yugoslavs have not yet found their meta-narrative. Silence, as Connerton (2011) rightly reminds us, 'is not a unitary phenomenon; there are, rather, a plurality of silences' (2011: 53), which seems also to be the case here.

Sabina: Facing Conflicting Memories of Yugoslavia

Having attended primarily to the war and post-war periods, I now turn to some observations and insights into the way my young interlocutors narrated Yugoslavia. This will open up a discussion about the way the Post-Yugoslavs give meaning to the experiences of the older generations and about the transmission as well as transformation of (collective) memory. Yugoslavia is not a central topic in everyday conversations among the youngest generation as it is among the older generations who often speak of life in Mostar at the time of Yugoslavia as 'normal' compared with the present situation. With the Post-Yugoslavs, I often had to take the initiative in triggering conversations on Yugoslavia.

Unlike the memories of the 1990s war discussed above, memories of Yugoslavia among the Post-Yugoslavs are to a very limited extent only personal memories. Most things they know of Yugoslavia were passed on to them by older family members. Besides personal transmission, the Post-Yugoslavs also gain information about this period in school and through the media. Narratives of Yugoslavia among this generation differ as they do among the other generations. Nevertheless, something distinguishes the Post-Yugoslavs' Yugoslavia narratives. Those who have no or very limited memories of Yugoslavia and mainly refer to experiences shared by their parents express less emotion towards the period. Regardless of whether they condemn Yugoslavia or have positive feelings for it, they do so less vehemently, less emotionally than the First and the Last Yugoslavs.

Although I examine the way Yugoslavia is narrated among this generation by analysing Sabina's narrative, this does not mean that her narrative is representative of her entire generation. Instead, I focus on her narrative because it poses important questions crucial to this discussion.

Sabina, an energetic and communicative young woman in her early 20s, grew up in a town about 200 kilometres from Mostar. By the time I met her, she had been living in Mostar for more than three years already. She fell in love with the city right from the beginning. After spending the war years together with her little sister at her aunt's place in Zagreb (the rest of her family remained in their hometown and her father joined the HVO), she returned to her comparatively small hometown. Later on, it was a relief for her to move to Mostar for her studies at *Sveučilište* because Mostar offers not only a beautiful Old Town but also a vibrant student life, with plenty of cafés, pubs and parties. Already during the first days after her arrival in Mostar, she was desperate to see the Old Bridge. All her colleagues warned her not to go to the Old Town, saying she would put herself in danger if she did not take their advice seriously. But she did not pay attention to them and, as she had expected, nothing untoward happened to her.

Sabina is aware that nobody can tell the difference between a Bosniak and a Croat just from appearance alone. They could identify her from her accent (mainly because she spent a long time in Zagreb) but no one in the Old Town treated her offensively. Today, she frequently crosses the *Bulevar* (the main-street before the war and frontline during the war), especially because of her involvement in one of the youth NGOs situated on the east side. Through her activities at the NGO she met a young Bosniak with whom she fell in love. Sabina is aware that if her parents find out about the relationship they would strongly disapprove.

Sabina is very aware of her national background. She also shows an interest in learning more about it by studying Croat language and literature. Catholicism plays a central part in her life as well. Nevertheless, her strong national awareness does not prevent her from believing that Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs can live together in one city in the same state. She always stresses the fact that Bosnians of all national background share a lot of local customs and attitudes, so what they share is at least as strong as what sets them apart. Sabina maintains a peculiar mixture of sympathy

and antipathy towards Yugoslavia. From her parents she heard many negative stories about the time of Yugoslavia. She was taught, for example, that her paternal grandfather was killed by the communists and that legal action was taken against her mother for using the Croat language (instead of Serbo-Croatian) at her workplace.

In conversations with Sabina (as well as with others), I observed that when she referred to memories of a time she had not experienced she made clear that what she recalls is an account she was told by an older family member. When asked about her memories of Yugoslavia, she characteristically replied: 'I don't remember anything, only some things, I remember what my parents told me.' In this, Sabina not only makes explicit the fact that what she remembers are the memories of her parents and not her own; she also makes clear that the way a political period is presented depends on a person's experience of it. She explains that her father and mother hold different points of views regarding pre-war BiH because of their differing personal experiences. Her paternal grandfather was murdered under Tito's period of rule, but all of her mother's close kin survived. She reasons that this is why her father has much worse feelings about this period and never stops cursing Tito, elaborating:

> My family went through a lot of bad things, especially my father because they killed his father. He doesn't like to talk about it but he thinks that they are all evil people; that nobody can justify what they did. My mother on the other hand is milder about it, she didn't so much… she didn't go through a lot of bad things. I, for example, I don't have any bad memories. I don't know, there is just what I was told and what I found out, but life has to go on.

When Sabina told me the story of her grandfather's execution she did not express the anger her father had felt. And it became obvious that she gave a different meaning to her father's memories. Frequently, memories of a time they have not experienced themselves acquire a touch of unreality when recalled by young Mostarians. Such stories are somewhat absurd to them, exotic and sometimes, even amusing. Therefore it might be more accurate to talk about 'recalling' than 'remembering', with the latter including a heightened emotional component. When Sabina told me the story of her grandfather she eventually even started giggling:

When was your grandfather killed?

Killed? 1979.

And how was he killed?

They suffocated him. They suffocated him close to his home, two metres away, but my father shouldn't know that they killed him, no. He died, they said. They didn't kill him, he died. That was it. [Martina starts giggling] But I'm laughing.

Other Post-Yugoslavs I interviewed also admitted their parents had a certain degree of authority to speak of history, but at the same time the children audited what they were told by their parents by putting it into their own context. Despite the fact that Sabina was a small child when the war broke out, she still has personal memories of life before the war. Her narratives are all about good *komšiluk* which the children as well as their parents enjoyed:

I remember we lived at my grandfather's, my mother's father. Croats lived there, Serbs were there, across from them Croats too, and upstairs Muslims, one mixed family of a Serb woman and a Muslim. They were all married couples of similar age to my parents and they all had kids. We played and hung out together. My parents were drinking coffee with our Serb neighbours every day, and they joined us at Christmas.

Did you know who belonged to which group?

Yes, I knew pretty early who was who. Yes I knew, I knew we were different. I understood that. But not all kids did. For example, I spoke with my friend Božica, she is Croat too, she didn't understand it, but I did.

How did you know, did your parents tell you or did you know it from their names?

Yes, I asked, I went to church on Sundays and I asked why Jovica was not coming with us? Jovica went to another church. In fact Jovica didn't go to church at all. This way I found out. Or for example one of my friends, Alma, came to my place for my birthday party and afterwards her mother called my mother in anger, because we had juice, cake, hats, smoked ham, cheese. In fact my mother asked Amela if she was allowed to eat that. She said yes. She ate smoked pork. It was all settled with a talk. And I was asking why Amela was not allowed to eat smoked ham when it was so tasty.

From the above excerpts we can clearly see that Sabina's personal memories differ starkly from those of her parents'. Unlike her parents' more

straightforward memories, she is confronted with conflicting memories, especially between her father's sad memories and her own cheerful personal ones. When asked about her explanation of how war was possible, considering the good neighbourliness she remembers, she reached the following conclusion:

> I think that most people were just pretending to have good friends and if one day that friend needed help…they wouldn't help, they would act against him.
>
> *But was that also the case for kids?*
>
> No, friendship for kids was true friendship, for sure!

Interestingly, Sabina seems not too bothered by the contradicting narratives between her father and herself. Not before I asked her to do so did she give an explanation for the discrepancies. During my research I realised that many of my youngest interlocutors were confronted with diverse and divergent stories about Yugoslavia because in Mostar it is likely to find in the same family members with different political and religious loyalties.

Although Sabina was certainly influenced by her parents' perception of Tito, she actually grew up at her maternal grandmother's house. It is most likely that Sabina owes to this grandmother, to whom she feels closest in her family, the positive picture she also maintains of Yugoslavia. Sometimes I even sensed something akin to nostalgia for Yugoslavia in Sabina, for example, when she recalls childhood memories like her excitement at becoming one of Tito's *Pioniri* (Pioneers).[7] But nostalgia for her has a somewhat different quality from that displayed by older Mostarians characterised in previous chapters. Even when Sabina recalled positive memories of Yugoslavia, I never encountered the same types of strong emotional ties expressed by older generations. It is also important to bear in mind that the Yugoslavia Sabina grew up in was already in decline, a rather different Yugoslavia than that experienced by her parents.

[7] For a discussion on the Yugoslav Pioneer Organisation and its role in the Yugoslav socialist project, see Erdei (2004).

More often than simply being directed towards the past, Sabina's type of Yugo-nostalgia is an expression of her political views and is used to criticise the present political situation. Sabina strongly believes that BiH should be a multinational place. She herself feels a double identity, as a Croat and as a Bosnian. Her Croat identity is more private/family-based, where religion and religious holidays play a considerable role. Her Bosnian identity links her with all her other compatriots, be they Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox or atheist. In Sabina's case nostalgia for Yugoslavia is actually a tool for overcoming the troubled relationship between Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs in her country; she uses memories of Yugoslavia and the good coexistence as a 'guiding star' for the future. She also employs Yugo-nostalgia in order to find a basis of communication with those of Bosniak background. One day, Sabina and another friend of mine, Minela (see Chap. 5) met at my home. It was their first meeting, and I could feel their mutual uneasiness. It was the time of *Ramazan* and Minela was fasting, but Sabina was not aware of this, so was surprised to hear that Minela did not want to join us for coffee and cake. After a while they found a subject that gave them the way out of this somewhat tense situation: their pre-war memories. They remembered the *Pioniri*, the sweets they liked back then and many other things connected to their childhoods in Yugoslavia. It was a safe discourse for them to follow as it showed their mutual willingness to communicate, to get to know each other without fear of being caught up in some political discussion related to the war or the post-war politics of their country (see Palmberger 2013).

For Sabina, the act of remembering Yugoslavia in a nostalgic way is less oriented towards the past than is the case with the many older compatriots introduced in previous chapters; instead she adopts Yugo-nostalgia in order to envision a future for Mostar specifically and for BiH as a whole. Although Yugo-nostalgia is not always employed to counter the nationalist discourse (as seen in Chap. 5), it brings with it not only the potential for criticising the present situation but also provides an orientation towards the future. Sabina feels free to do so because of her comparatively loose emotional tie with Yugoslavia. Yugo-nostalgia for her does not have the same gravity as for her older compatriots. This gives her the possibility to playfully adopt and adapt the parts of Yugoslavia she believes can contribute to a better future.

As I have shown in the cases of Minela and Sabina, positive (often nostalgic) memories of pre-war times even bear an integrative potential. In sharing positive anecdotes of Yugoslavia (most often with others of the same generation), individuals with different national backgrounds find an initial common ground that is less controversial than topics related to the war or the present situation. The concentration on pre-war memories also includes a strategic silence of more divisive topics, such as the war. The act of silencing memories of war in order to re-establish cross-national relationships has been described by several authors, working in diverse regions, as conducive for post-war coexistence (Argenti-Pillen 2003; Cole 2001; Eastmond and Mannergren Selimovic 2012; Hayden 2009; Skaar et al. 2005; Stefansson 2010). By drawing close attention to strategic silences, the 'ethics of memory' is questioned that emerged at the end of the twentieth century and in which remembering is presented as a virtue and forgetting as a failure (Connerton 2011: 33). Such ethnographic insights may also be valuable for other post-war societies that are equally divided along ethno-national lines, particularly if a relatively peaceful past preceded the violence.[8]

Transmission of Memories: Between Persistence and Change

Sabina's story touches on one central topic of research connected to memory, the transmission of (collective) memory, which at this point deserves a more lengthy discussion. In the tradition of Durkheim[9] and Halbwachs, anthropologists have paid special attention to the phenomenon of the transmission of memories downwards through generations, from old to young, stressing the way that collective identity is main-

[8] Even in cases, such as that of Northern Ireland, whose violent past stretches back centuries, there have been peaceful periods in between the violence that are easily overlooked (Barton and McCully 2003). To shift the focus from violence and conflict between national groups to 'conviviality' (Nowicka and Vertovec 2014) and to elements of a 'shared identity' helps to re-establish post-conflict trust and subsequently encourage more cross-national engagement (see Dembinska 2010; MacDonald 2013).

[9] Durkheim's idea of society as an organism, held together by shared social ideas or the *conscience collective*, greatly influenced Halbwachs' work, see Durkheim 2001 [1912].

tained. Cornelia Sorabji (2006) in her article, 'Managing memories in post-war Sarajevo', engages in a pioneering endeavour by instead focusing special attention on memory as a *personal* experience. Her data reveal that people in BiH are not less conscious of what or what not to pass on to the next generation than anthropologists who study this process. The same is true for those to whom these memories are passed on. In contrast to Cappelletto (2003) who suggests there is no difference between autobiographical memory and historical accounts of WWII massacres in the Tuscan village she studied, Sorabji highlights differences she encountered among accounts of WWII massacres in a BiH village. Sorabji tells of a father who had lost his entire family in a massacre committed by Chetniks and who, more than 60 years later, still mistrusts all Serbs. He has passed on his memories of this traumatic event his son from a second marriage. But even if his son can recall in detail these memories passed on from his father, the meaning ascribed to the memories by the two men should not be viewed as identical:

> While Tarik's son may have been able to imagine (or 'recall') the past events richly and without great deviation from factual accuracy, his imaginings or recollections would also have been partially constructed from other images and ideas which formed part of his experience, and not of Tarik's. (Sorabji 2006: 13)

Sorabji's observations correlate with mine. Sorabji's informant Tarik and my informant Sabina were both told traumatic memories by their respective fathers, which they are able to recall. But their accurate recollections do not mean they share the same emotions as their fathers. Rather than unconsciously adopting their fathers' memories (in which case they could be called 'ingrained memories'), Tarik and Sabina both put what they were told within the context of what their fathers, the narrators, had experienced.

Wertsch (2002) suggests differentiating between 'mastery' and 'appropriation' when analysing the reception of historical narratives. 'Just because someone is exposed to a cultural tool—and just because she has mastered it—does not guarantee that she has appropriated it as an identity resource' (Wertsch 2002: 120). When applying this distinction

in analysing Sabina's narrative, there are good reasons to speak of mastery rather than of appropriation because while she recalls her father's memories they do not serve as vital identity resources for her. When narrating the past my interlocutors, rather than unconsciously taking over the memories of older family members, were aware of the fact that the memories they shared with me were not their own (not least because the emotional tie was often missing) and thus sought to contextualise them vis-à-vis their own personal experiences.

Understanding the transmission of (traumatic) pasts as a communicative practice 'highlights the tension between the determinism of the inherited tradition and beliefs embodied in discourses, in relation to the creative action of individual meaning-making agency' (Achugar et al. 2013). This means that memories are not directly transmitted to younger generations but are rather re-narrated by the latter (Welzer 2010). In a similar vein, Pickering and Keightley (2013) stress the importance of the imagination in the process of transmission. It enables a move beyond straightforward bringing of the past into the present since 'imagination exceeds lived experience insofar as it can make something qualitatively new through recombining ideas, objects, practices and experiences' (Pickering and Keightley 2013: 122). Sabina's case shows very well how transferred memories are scrutinised, contextualised and selectively adopted to accommodate personal worldviews. 'Such a reformatting of heard and narrated stories follows familial loyalty on the one hand and generational and individual needs for meaning on the other' (Welzer 2010: 6). This has become visible in the case of Sabina, whose re-narration was guided by loyalty to her grandfather and by generational and personal meaning making.

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7

Conclusion

At the beginning of 2006, two new graffiti messages appeared in Mostar, one was on the Bulevar, the former frontline, and one next to the rebuilt old Ottoman Bridge. Both read the same words: ETO SVEMIRICI SU SRUŠILI MOST. NLO=HVO ('Look, the aliens destroyed the bridge. UFO=HVO'). This graffiti mocks the seemingly endless ingenuity of local actors in interpreting history. It can also be seen as a statement against the manipulation of history. It implies ironically that people will not just adopt any interpretation of history that is offered to them (Fig. 7.1).[1]

In his methodological critique of memory studies, Kansteiner argues that what studies on memory have to offer is 'the opportunity to acknowledge that historical representations are negotiated, selective, present-oriented, and relative, while insisting that the experiences they reflect cannot be manipulated at will' (Kansteiner 2002: 180). I took this area of tension between historical representations in the making and

[1] These graffiti can be seen as a reaction to an article published in *Nacional* (a Croat weekly journal) just days before, which elaborated on the theory that the Bosniak-dominated ABiH themselves destroyed the bridge and not the Croat army HVO—as is believed by Bosniaks as well as by the majority of the 'international community'. Rogošić, Željko: "Stari most: nije srušio HVO" (HVO did not destroy the Old Bridge), in *Nacional*, 21 February 2006.

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DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-45063-0_7

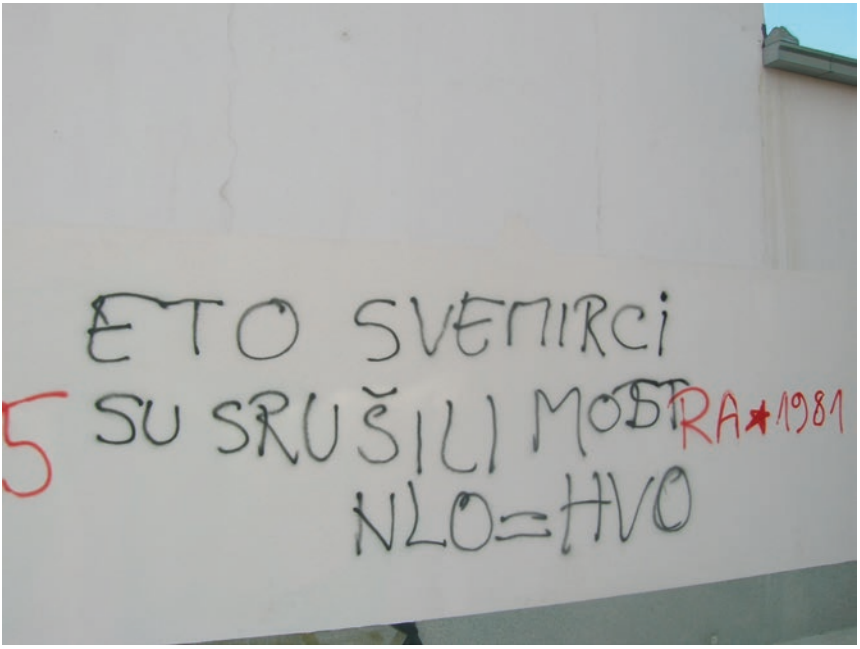

Fig. 7.1 Graffito stating: 'Look the aliens destroyed the bridge. UFO=HVO', 2006. Photo by the author

personal experiences as a point of departure when probing into questions of memory and generation in Mostar.

As shown in the book, individuals are not only exposed to changing political contexts but are also confronted by their personal past and present experiences, which serve as the backdrop against which they rethink the past in the present. By now we have become so sensitive to the idea of the flexibility of the past that we tend to forget that it rests—at least to a certain degree—on an experiential base (Irwin-Zarecka 1994: 17). Appadurai (1981) argues that the past does not offer an infinite source for interpretation but is always told within certain cultural norms and rules. In this book I have demonstrated that the past is not an unlimited resource by showing how it is genuinely influenced, not only by a predefined discursive space but also by people's personal experiences. By looking at the intersection of memory and generations, both continuities and discontinuities

become apparent. By introducing the concept of 'generational positioning', this book demonstrates how the past informs the present (and thereby generates the potential for persistence) as well as how the present informs the past (and thereby creates the potential for change).

What I have argued in this book is that generational positioning has a crucial impact on the way individuals relate to the past, as well as on how they draw on the dominant public discourses of present and past and make use of pre-existing interpretative templates. I revealed generational commonalities across nations in a city which, to a large extent, is still segregated along national lines. This is yet another indicator of the significance of generational positioning in studies of memory, particularly but not only in places that have experienced severe socio-economic transformations and/or war. The nuanced presentation of different generations and of the interplay between public dominant discourses and personal narratives by unravelling different positions as well as commonalities, provides a profound insight into ongoing societal processes in a society that has been in recent memory torn apart by conflict and war.

Between Nation and Generation

I have followed a two-fold aim throughout this book. Firstly, I analysed differences related to generational positioning by considering people's personal experiences of different historico-political periods, and the life situations the narrators were confronted with at the time of narrating the events, as well as at the time of the narrated event or period itself. Secondly, I sought to illustrate how personal narratives of the recent past deviate from present 'official' national narratives in terms of their content and nature. This aim could only be achieved by investigating both the dominant national public discourses and individuals' narratives, two realms that I separated analytically but which in practice are closely interlinked.

My research revealed that there is a difference in the nature of the 'stratagems' found in the official (Bosniak and Croat) national narratives and in people's personal narratives. Using de Certeau's distinction between strategies and tactics as a starting point, I referred to the former as 'discursive

strategies' and to the latter as 'discursive tactics'. Individuals are not only exposed to changing political contexts but are also confronted by their personal past experiences, even if the two do not always fit together neatly. For this reason individuals' reconstructions of the past have to remain more flexible and situational than the official national history. While the latter presents a goal-oriented narrative, the former can be better described as target-seeking.

In order to explore the dominant public discourses, I analysed how history is currently taught to students in Mostar. The main focus was on representations of the local past by history professors at the respective Bosniak- and Croat-dominated universities. My analysis revealed that while the representations of the past (as well as the imagined future) presented by Croat and Bosniak historians are antithetical, the discursive strategies they draw on are not. This is particularly true in the way the historians connect different historical periods in order to achieve a coherent national narrative and in how the respective historiography is objectified. Thereby 'the past' strongly serves national claims and political aspirations for the future in present-day BiH. In this endeavour, history is taught as a coherent narrative as if recent history, including the 1990s war, was predetermined by preceding historical events and as if there was only one future suited to ensure the respective nations' existence.

One discursive strategy employed in linking different historical periods I paid particular attention to was the connection between WWII and the recent war, which was most prominent in the dominant Bosniak public discourse. In this discourse the Bosniak-dominated army ABiH, which fought in the 1992–1995 war, is equated with the Partisans, while simultaneously the Croat army, HVO, is equated with the fascists of WWII. As I have shown, this linking strategy can be found not only in the Bosniak national narrative but also in the personal narratives of the First Yugoslavs, the generation that holds personal memories of WWII. WWII—the first war for this generation that took place early in their lives—constitutes a formative experience and is central in the life narratives of the First Yugoslavs. The war in the 1990s is interpreted in relation to it, whereby WWII serves as the core interpretative template for explaining the recent war. The image of the good Partisans fighting against the evil Nazis was powerfully nurtured by Tito and still serves as

an interpretative template today for many First Yugoslavs. In the case of the First Yugoslavs, the linking of the two wars is strongly connected to their personal experiences and serves to give meaning to their lives, whereby meta-narratives of suffering and loss as well as of a continuing fight against fascism are central. I found this discursive strategy of linking the two wars in personal narratives among both Bosniaks and Croats.

Unlike the First Yugoslavs, who were in a later stage of their lives when the 1990s war began, the Last Yugoslavs were in the middle of their lives and faced very different life situations and challenges. Although the recent war and its subsequent political, societal and economic changes had a crucial impact on the lives of all my informants regardless of their generational positioning, the Last Yugoslavs experienced the war differently in terms of the rupture it caused in their lives. While the war forced everyone to position themselves in relation to Yugoslavia, to the war itself and to contemporary politics, the Last Yugoslav generation, who as young adults had just started life away from their parental homes or were just about to do so, experienced the war as an extreme disruption to their life course.

Depending on their political orientation, members of this generation draw on the dominant national public discourses to a greater or lesser degree. Interestingly, however, even those Last Yugoslavs who strongly believe in the current national project still rely on interpretative templates from Yugoslav times. Thus the predominant discursive tactics of the Last Yugoslavs are characterised by an oscillation between different—often opposing—discourses, old and new. This is also expressed in the non-conclusiveness of the Last Yugoslavs' narratives, which is tightly bound to the rupture in the expected life course this generation experienced due to the war in the 1990s.

Even if there seems to be a consensus in the literature that individuals aim to 'connect disparate parts into a coherent, meaningful whole' (Holstein and Gubrium 1995: 28; see also Becker et al. 2000; Roseman 1995; Zerubavel 2003), I have shown in my work that this is not always possible. After great political and societal rupture and economic transformations—periods that are perceived as chaotic and insecure—people seek to remake order by rethinking the past with respect to the changing present situation and their future prospects. Memory work is thus expected

to become most prominent in times of crisis (Cave and Sloan 2014). But as Pierre Nora (1989) argues, memory not only enables people to maintain a sense of continuity, but also illuminates discontinuity. This is evident in the Last Yugoslavs' narratives, the generation who experienced the war and the transformations that came with it, as a deep rupture in their biographies. Their narratives oscillate between a discourse of exclusive nationalism and fond memories of a multi-ethnic and secure past. This indicates that in situations in which an entire population is affected by war and great political-economic transformations, generational differences exist regarding the extent to which people experience these events as disruptions to their lives. In addition, I have shown through the case of the youngest generation confronted by different and sometimes conflicting narratives of the local past (communicated by parents, grandparents, teachers and through textbooks and the media) that individuals can cope with inconsistencies and discrepancies while simultaneously being confronted with silences.

The Post-Yugoslavs, the youngest generation, who were children during the 1990s war, possess only limited, if any, memories of pre-war times. For that reason, and because they grew up during a period of extreme nationalism and war, they are perceived by the older population as a distinct and often also 'spoilt' generation. In conversation with Post-Yugoslavs, however, it became clear that they adamantly reject this negative portrayal. On the contrary, they perceive themselves as the 'unspoilt' generation because, they argue, they were too young to have really experienced the war. In their narratives, the Post-Yugoslavs present their young age and limited war memories as a gift, rather than as a fault, which they said allows them to be more impartial and less burdened by mistrust and hatred. Their discursive tactics are thus strongly characterised by a dissociation of their lives from the war and its aftermath. They do not subordinate their lives to the dominant national public discourses of victimisation but at the same time have not yet found a meta-narrative in which to situate their experiences of war and post-war time.

This was already noticeable during my revisits (2010 and 2014) in Mostar when I had the chance to catch up with my interlocutors two and four years after my fieldwork period (2005–2008). When I asked them what was new in Mostar, most of them were quick to assure me

that 'nothing has changed', only to add, 'it only got worse!'. But some things, as I learned in the ensuing conversations, had changed, even if only small in scope and mostly concerning private matters. This became most evident when catching up with my Post-Yugoslav interlocutors such as Emina. When we met in 2010 in one of Mostar's new fancy cafés I was most surprised when I learned that she had moved away from Mostar to study abroad. At the end of my fieldwork in 2008, Emina was finishing secondary school. At that time I lived in Mostar and had regular contact with Emina; she always defended her hometown and told me that she could never imagine leaving Mostar and living anywhere else. She never said things were ideal in Mostar, but she always kept a certain distance from Mostar's politics and the way they affected her life, as did many others of the Post-Yugoslav generation. At our 2010 meeting she shared many critical observations of her hometown with me, and the discursive tactic of 'distancing' and 'normalising', so prominent only two years previously, no longer dominated Emina's narrative. In 2014 I met Emina again in my own hometown, Vienna, where she had started work on her PhD, only to move to Asia for a job shortly thereafter.

Between Sharing and Silencing the Past

Individuals' narratives are never solely personal memories but always include a social component, a wider social framework in which the memories are placed and are told. Once past experiences are verbalised, personal memories are no longer exclusive and can be exchanged, corrected, disputed, confirmed and even appropriated (Assmann 2008: 50; see also Tonkin 1992). Moreover, in endeavouring to make the past meaningful, individuals do not draw strict distinctions between 'historical facts' and 'personal experiences'; the two are closely interwoven in people's narratives. Moreover, the personal history that allows people to develop a sense of individual identity is socially contextualised in wider frameworks and is always constructed in relation, even in opposition, to others, since 'people live in, and deal with, a world that extends beyond themselves' (Middleton and Edwards 1990: 7). By examining the role of generational positioning in this book, it was precisely the

intersections of the private and public and of the individual and the social that came to the fore. Memories are created, manifested, but also contested in social fields, through direct or indirect exchange, but also through (individual and collective) silences. As became clear in the analysis of Mostar's generations, different modes of silences and forgetting exist and 'neither silence nor forgetting are necessarily pathological "symptoms"' (Shaw 2010: 255).

The most common practice for keeping memories alive is to share them with others, for example, with schoolmates, colleagues and friends. In many cases this is not possible for people in Mostar (at least not on a regular basis and face-to-face) owing to the tremendous population changes that accompanied the war. Even in the cases where contact had been maintained, the nature of the relationship had often changed. Thus, we can say that, in Mostar, the intimate space required for keeping shared experiences alive has been lost for many. This also concerns the material space to which memories are bound. The houses and flats people inhabited and the personal objects they treasured, which have been identified as a valuable pillar for nurturing memories (see Bahloul 1992; Morton 2007; Parkin 1999), often had to be left behind during the war. As I have shown, the First Yugoslavs were the generation most keen to return to their pre-war houses whenever they could and at the same time to (re-)establish spaces for cherishing a shared past. These intimate spaces enabled them to freely and often nostalgically remember the past with others of their generation.

Even while there is most room for nostalgia for Yugoslavia among First Yugoslavs, it cross-cuts all the generations; still, the phenomenon has different meanings for individuals of different generations. The nostalgia of the First Yugoslav generation is first and foremost related to fond memories of Tito, but also to memories of an intact family and neighbourhood. For the Last Yugoslavs, nostalgia for Yugoslavia is highly connected to the loss of future prospects they experienced with the outbreak of war, while nostalgic expressions for Yugoslavia among the youngest generation, the Post-Yugoslavs, have at times at least a rather utopian character connected to a longing for a better future (see Palmberger 2008). We thus can speak of generation-specific nostalgias.

Generations and the Life Course

Silences concerning the war in the 1990s in BiH were especially prominent in the analysis of the Post-Yugoslav generation, including silences in the narratives of Post-Yugoslavs themselves, as well as the silences of older generations with which the Post Yugoslavs were confronted. I noticed a general tendency for war experiences to be shared among those of the same generation and often also of the same gender, such as in the case of veterans. This dynamic most affected the youngest as many of them faced a disturbing silence about the war, especially among their parents. Parents justified their silence by stating that they did not want to burden their children with war stories, but at the same time they made clear that they expected the young to be grateful to them. After all, it was they who had fought for a better future for their children. This can be seen as an act of demarcation between generational groups in which hierarchies are created by defining who is eligible to speak for the past. Secrecy about the past and the selective disclosure of only parts of it is a privilege of power of those who hold personal experiences of the past in question. It is in their hands which parts and versions of the past to transmit to younger generations (Berliner 2010).

Importantly, however, this does not mean that silences in the transmission of memories down the generations necessarily result in forgetting. The 'charged silences' transmitted to younger generations, as Filippucci shows in the case of memory of war destruction in Argonne (France), bring the war into the lives of the younger generations despite silences around personal war experiences 'as a gap to be filled by imagination and emotion' (Filippucci 2010: 171). In a similar, although different, vein, Kidron (2009) analyses this phenomenon in the case of Israeli Holocaust survivors. As Kidron learned, while the Holocaust is silenced in the family context, it takes on a 'copresence' in the everyday life of the family. The children of Holocaust survivors whom Kidron interviewed thus did not experience an absence of the past but rather a 'silent matrix of Holocaust presence' that Kidron analyses as a 'silent transmission'. Like Kidron, I suggest refraining from any overhasty interpretation of silences as pathological. This would not do justice to the multiple silences I encountered in my interviewees' narratives nor to the silences my interlocutors encountered within their families.

Since people's representations of the past and the importance they give to past events are likely to change during the course of their lives, not only because of changing political contexts but also because of the different life situations people face, longitudinal studies are needed to generate more rigorous theorising. Other than in ambitious studies of generational memory of the Holocaust, which seek to analyse changes in public and autobiographical memory discourses over a period of more than 60 years (see, e.g., Hirsch 2012; Welzer 2007), a long time frame is not available when analysing memories of recent conflicts and wars, such as those presented here.

In the case of Mostar a longitudinal study could, for example, follow the lives of the Post-Yugoslavs and their changing representations of the recent local past throughout the course of their lives to, for example, investigate the way they position themselves vis-à-vis the recent war and Yugoslavia. Will they keep their defensive position about the effect the war had on their lives? Will they break the silence about the war, with which they were confronted by their parents? And how will they attempt to transmit their past experiences of war and its aftermath on to their children? We cannot yet predict how the Post-Yugoslav generation will narrate their autobiographical memories at a later point in their lives and which memories they will pass on to their children and grandchildren. But we can assume that narratives will change during the course of the lives of my interlocutors, due to political-societal changes and changes in the historiography of the local past and due to their progressing age and the different life situations they will find themselves in over time. Longitudinal research, moreover, would have the potential to further explore the role trust plays in the processes of the generational transmission of past experiences. When and why do individuals of different generations decide to pass on their memories and to whom; and whose narratives are perceived as trustworthy?

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Glossary of Bosnian/Croatian Terms

Bratstvo i jedinstvo Brotherhood and Unity
Komšiluk neighbourliness
Nacija nation
Narod people (nation, ethnic group)
Otvoreno srce Open Heart
Pravi Mostarac/Mostarci true Mostari/Mostaris
Radne akcije working projects
Šehitluci martyrs' cemetery
Stara gimnazija Old Grammar School
Stari grad Old Town
Stari most Old Bridge
Stranci foreigners
Suživot coexistence
Sveučiliste u Mostaru University of Mostar (Croat-dominated university)
Turcizam word of Arabic origin incorporated into what used to be referred to as Serbo-Croatian and nowadays used mainly by Bosniaks or the older population
Univerzitet Džemal Bijedić Mostar University Džemal Bijedić Mostar (Bosniak-dominated university)

M. Palmberger, *How Generations Remember*,
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Note: Page numbers with "n" denote notes.

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