

After War's End

Understanding ethnic-political tensions in Bosnia & Herzegovina

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List of abbreviations

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
RS	Republika Srpska
EU	European Union
EC	European Community
NDH	Independent State of Croatia
JNA	Jugoslav People's Army
NATO	North Atlantic Trade Organization
NDH	Independent State of Croatia
SKJ	League of Communists of Yugoslavia
AVNOJ	Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Introduction

In Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter BiH), young professionals throng to the many trendy and modern cafés, situated between new shopping malls and construction projects. At first sight nothing seems out of order. The people seem to get along and the city is thriving. However, contrary to appearance, Sarajevo is the capital of a poor and divided country. Among the mosques and Orthodox churches the thought of war and destruction is very much alive. Between April 1992 and December 1995 the country was torn up in an ethnic war that killed more than 110,000 people and displaced almost half of BiH's 4.4 million inhabitants. Now, more than 16 years after the war ended examples of ethnic unity are rare and the country is facing its most destabilizing political crisis since December 1995. Quarrelling politicians appear to be incapable to solve the country's many problems but they seem all the more willing to stoke ethnic fears and privilege personal political interests. Yet, the problems do not only arise at the political level. Throughout the country ethnic groups are predominantly living their daily lives separate from each other. Since the war mistrust between the country's major ethnic groups -the Bosnian Muslims (hereinafter Bosniaks), the Croats and the Serbs- has severely impeded social and economic progress. Today, fears are mounting that BiH is again moving towards crisis that might result in renewed regional warfare.

As created by the Dayton Agreement, the final peace accord that ended the Bosnian War at Dayton, Ohio in 1995, the country is governed according to a complex political system which divides BiH into two separate entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter FBiH) and the Republika Srpska (hereinafter RS). In this system three presidents – a Muslim, a Croat and a Serb- each serve a term within a rotating presidency. Currently, the country's leaders seem so busy fighting each other at the political level that they are obstructing BiH on all other levels, mainly causing it to fall behind in the areas of economy and security. Milorad Dodik, the Russia-Serbia backed president of the RS has threatened many times that his republic could secede from BiH. As prime-minister (2006-2010) he was especially locked in an impasse of mutual recrimination with Haris Silajdzic, the previous Bosniak member of the rotating presidency of BiH, who called for the RS to be abolished. The quarrel between the two politicians can be considered as an example of the tense ethno-political atmosphere in BiH.

Since 1995 BiH has received more than \$18 billion in foreign aid and it still remains a ward of the West. Two thousand European Union (hereinafter EU) peacekeepers guarantee its security. However, secession of the RS and the declaration of its independence might result Croatia in sending troops to preserve the political system while the Bosniak population would almost certainly take up arms. Because Croats and Bosniaks in BiH would bear the brunt of such a development. Subsequently the capture of the RS capital, Banja Luka, would probably provoke Serbia, protector of Serbs, in joining the conflict, leading to full scale regional war. (Matthew Brunwasser, July 1, 2011)

So, the stakes are high. Nobody in BiH or anywhere else wants a war but it is not beyond the realm of possibility, as it never was. If BiH were to join the EU, the world biggest trading bloc, its prospects for stability might improve. However, the European Commission (EC) warned that the inflammatory, nationalist rhetoric that seems so popular among BiH's politicians has adversely affected the functioning of institutions and has obstructed reforms. The effects of the war are still present and reconciliation has not really happened.

Research significance

In public opinion the Bosnian War is over. The Dayton Agreement of 1995 brought an end to the conflict. However, while the trendy and modern cafés of Sarajevo might cover it up to some extent, the problems are not at all over. As the 2011 International Crisis Group report on BiH shows, ethnic-political tensions are still very high and they have been obstructing the country's progress ever since the war was ended with the Dayton Agreement (ICG report, 2011). This makes it an interesting and relevant topic to study. Social and political life is influenced by the events of the war on a daily basis. In fact, the manner in which the war was ended in 1995, though undoubtedly a necessity at the time, is partly responsible for the continued ethnic tensions of today's BiH. To find out how the country can move away from the war-trauma's and into a brighter future with, at least, a more certain security situation, it is important to understand Bosnia's history. One must understand how the war, that caused Bosnia's current ethnic problems, started, and where the hostilities came from. This is not only important to understand the impact of the Bosnian War on Bosnia's long term political, social and economic developments, but it is also relevant to gain better understanding of all those ethnic conflicts still occurring in the world. Continued research may provide all those involved in future conflicts with more suitable solutions to realize peace, stability and socio-political improvements.

This thesis will therefore attempt to answer the following causality research question. How can we understand the current ethnic-political tensions in Bosnia & Herzegovina using the Bosnian War (April 1992 and December 1995) as a case study? To answer this research question this thesis uses five core questions which themselves consist of sub-questions.

Firstly the thesis will look at how ethnic relations and affairs were in BiH before and during Tito's Yugoslavia. After that it is interesting to examine what the main causes for the Bosnian War were or could have been. Thirdly the thesis will investigate how the war affected ethnic identities in BiH. Following up on that it will look at how new ethnic realities created during this war resulted in the current unstable ethnic-political situation in BiH. The fifth and last chapter offers an discussion of the extent in which the NATO-led peace talks and ultimately the Dayton Agreement contributed to the current unstable ethnic-political situation in BiH.

Finding answers to the core questions and ultimately the research question will lead to a discussion of the formation and break-up of Yugoslavia, the outbreak of ethnic violence in BiH and the foreign involvement in the conflict and the consequences of this all for the current state of BiH. A prospective hypothesis is that the ethnic character of the Bosnian War has deeply divided the BiH of today and that, as a result, the current political, social, economic and security situation is fragile. Short term developments (1990-2010) have catalysed and worsened dormant ethnic tensions. However, the goal of this thesis is to try to investigate how the recent history of BiH can explain the current ethnic and political tensions within the nation using the Bosnian War (April 1992 and December 1995) as a case study.

Focus and structure

Though the focus lays at the Bosnian War and after that, this thesis begins around World War I. The reason for this is that after World War I Yugoslavia became a recognized state after the Versailles Treaty (1919); it was then that it started functioning as a nation-state. The first chapter will discuss the time between the two World Wars, and Tito's rule. It is important to go so far back in time and discuss ethnic relations of that time, because literature demonstrates that many scholars are discussing and questioning 'ancient hatreds' as a cause for the Bosnian War and its aftermath. The scholars argue that ethnic hatreds originated long before the Bosnian War, actually caused the outbreak of violence. This will be further discussed in chapter three. A brief overview of events within this thesis' temporal demarcation is provided in the historical background.

In this thesis the five chapters (core questions) will be discussed in the same chronological order as they are ordered in this introduction. Each chapter will end with a conclusion. After all the chapters are discussed, a final conclusion of the five chapters will provide an answer to the research question, and argue that the Bosnian War proved to have had a large negative impact on the post-war ethnic relations between the major ethnic groups in BiH. This impact is especially noticeable at the political level.

Conceptual framework

When discussing ethnic-political tensions in BiH it is important to have a understanding of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘ethnic violence’, as the Yugoslav region is characterized by ethnic heterogeneity . Literature offers many definitions for both and often they differ only in small details (Brubaker and Laitin, 1998). In this thesis I maintain ‘ethnicity’ as a concept relating to cultural factors such as nationality, cultural practices, ancestry, language and beliefs. It is derived from an article by historian E.J. Hobsbawn in which he also argues that ethnicity is not a political concept, as opposed to nationalism, nevertheless it may acquire political functions in certain circumstances and it may become associated with political programmes, including nationalist and separatist ones. He further argues that ethnicity, whatever its basis, is a readily definable way of expressing a real sense of group identity which links the members of ‘we’ because it emphasizes their differences from ‘them’. Language, he argues, offers the best identification with a certain ethnicity (E.J. Hobsbawn, 1992).

Alleged biological or physical differences were and are also less important because Serbs, Croats and Muslims are visually alike and they descend from the same Slavic peoples (Mazower, 1997). Religion proves more important as a criterion of ethnic identity, because almost all Croats are Roman-Catholic, while Serbs are Serbian Orthodox, the rest in BiH are Muslims; there is thus much religious homogeneity within nationalities. However, it was not the main cause for the fighting in the 1990s, although it seems to have proven itself useful for mass mobilization. Ethnic violence will be used in this thesis as a term incorporating all forms of violence perpetrated across –and motivated by- ethnic lines, such as murder, rape, torture, deportation and dispersion of people through fear (Brubaker and Laitin, 1998).

In this thesis the wordings ‘ethnic realities’ or ‘sense of ethnic identities’ will be employed frequently. Ethnic realities primarily relate to ethnic-political relations as they existed in BiH before, during and after the Bosnian War. However, sense of ethnic identity relates more to human interaction on the grassroots (local) level and how people’s sense of

ethnic identity changed due to the war. Whereas the former concept thus refers to daily social interactions, the latter entails a discourse or a set of constructed ideas that informs one's ethnic identity. As an example of the flexibility of ethnic identity and to foreshadow what will be discussed in the first two paragraphs, one could find Serbs fighting during World War I for the Central Powers and against Serbia. Later, in World War II one could find ethnic criteria exercising a major influence on the course of the conflict. Both the Croatian Ustasha and the Serbian Chetniks (both extreme nationalist movements) recruited (and selected their victims) based on ethnic exclusivism. However, many Croats and Serbs did not join the movements or even opposed them. It is thus not that easy to see the two World Wars in terms of persisting ethnic conflict. However, it is not difficult for the Bosnian War. As this thesis will explain, the Bosnian War was crucial for the ethnic tensions of today.

Throughout the thesis several concepts and terms are used to study the thesis-subject and to find an answer to the research question. Three sets of concepts ask for a brief preliminary explanation.

Anthony Oberschall's distinction between an normal frame and a crisis frame, and Steven Majstorovic' distinction between primordialism and constructivism are first mentioned in chapter two to help explain the causal role of ethnicity, ethnicity's manipulation, and ancient hatreds in starting the Bosnian War in 1992. Oberschall argues that the 'Yugoslavs' possessed two ethnic frames in their minds, a peace and cooperation frame for normal times and a crisis frame which was grounded in the experiences and memories of all the violence that fell upon BiH during and before the twentieth century. According to Oberschall's theory, elites, who controlled mass media, suppressed the normal frame, awakened the dormant crisis frame and spread fear and insecurity, leading to the outbreak of violence. These concepts can thus help explain how ethnic hostilities arose the way they did on the eve of the Bosnian War.

Majstorovic' concepts of primordialism and constructivism are used in this thesis to gain understanding about the causal role of ancient hatreds in starting the Bosnian War. In this thesis the concept primordialism is based on the assumption that nations are ancient, natural phenomena. It argues that ethnic groups and nationalities exist because there are traditions of belief and action towards primordial objects such as biological factors and a certain territorial location. Here members of an ethnic group feel they share origins, characteristics, or sometimes even blood. Contrary to primordialism, the constructivist view argues in this thesis that ethnic-national identity is essentially an artificial and modern (second half of the twentieth century) phenomenon. It deals with the way people create meaning of the

world through a series of individual or collective constructs. In this thesis constructivism is distinct from primordialism mainly in terms of time, since here primordialism relates to centuries-old (gradually constructed) identities, and constructivism to modern social constructions as an instrument of Yugoslav politicians.

The concepts Europeanization and Balkanization are first mentioned in chapter four to help explain how the events of the Bosnian War were decisive in shaping post-war social relations. Europeanization is the process in which a non-European subject adopts a number of European features. According to political scientists Bedrudin Brljavac and Claudio Radaelli Europeanization is best explained as the influence and impact of the EU on the domestic political, legal and economic structures of aspiring members. Balkanization, on the other hand, is a geopolitical term, originally used to define the process of fragmentation or division of a region or state into smaller regions or states often considered hostile or non-cooperative with each other. Balkanization is best understood as contrary to, what may be deemed, 'western' values and norms.

Historical background: from early Yugoslavia to war in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The following historical background briefly gives an overview of the context. This overview of times, persons and major events supports an understanding of the subject discussed in this thesis.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a rather young country with a turbulent history. Since the beginning of the fifteenth century its territory was invaded and ruled by the Ottoman empire. In the nineteenth century the Habsburg monarchy ruled over it, leading to annexations in 1908. On 28 June 1914 the Archduke of Austria, Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo, an event generally recognized as the beginning of the World War I, the war that brought the final end to the great empires of Europe: the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy, the Russian and the German Empire. On the ashes of those empires the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes arose (see Map 1).

A national consciousness had been a long time aspiration for the political leaders in this region. These elites lived in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana and Sarajevo, cities that went through a phase of modernization in the nineteenth century. They played a large role in the nationalist sentiments in the Yugoslav region. They drew the borders on the maps of the Balkans and coloured them in the way they saw fit. Yet the people themselves did not have a voice in these nationalist aspirations. Further, they played a role in creating ethnic-national myths as part of nationalist propaganda. They put the emphasis on semi-imaginary states such

as Greater-Croatia and Greater-Serbia that once would have existed. World War I offered a compromise amidst the ethnic tensions that arose from the Croatian and Serbian ambitions: a South-Slavic state. In this the Serbs saw a chance to realize their dream of uniting all Serbs within one nation; in addition they accepted other ethnic groups in the region. On the other hand the Croats needed Serbia's help to gain enough leverage to realize their independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. (NIOD, 2002)



Map 1. The coloured area shows the territory of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

(Source: Wikimedia Commons Atlas of the World: Bosnia and Herzegovina)

After the new state became a fact, the Serbs, who dominated the ethnic groups with five of the twelve million inhabitants, became prone to subjugate other ethnic entities. The Croats, now free of Austrian-Hungarian rule, did not feel they gained in the new kingdom. They sought to counter the leverage the Serbs enjoyed. However, the Serbs emerged on the winning side in World War I and their dominion in the Balkans was deliberately created by the Allied victors at Versailles in 1919 (France in particular) as a stronghold against a restoration of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and possible German aspirations in the Balkans. So, one could argue that the multi-ethnic Yugoslavia was the product of World War I. In any case it was the start of the rather instable political order in the region (Joel Halpern and David Kideckel, 2000).

The years between the two World Wars were characterized by political violence and fierce ethnic nationalism. Due to external dangers and internal crisis the democracy was abolished by the king in 1929 in favour of his own dictatorship. In his attempts to suppress ethnic-nationalism, he officially changed the country's name into Yugoslavia. However, the

constitution of 1931 reinstated the right to form political parties, though highly censured. Croatia kept lobbying for more autonomy in the by Serbia dominated political situation. Feeling pressured by German and Italian interest in Croatia, the prince-regent Pavle gave in to Croat persistence and granted Croatia territory and autonomous governance of its internal affairs in 1939. However, it was too late. World War II was well on its way.



Map 2. The coloured area shows the territory the NDH.

(Source: Wikimedia Commons Atlas of the World: Bosnia and Herzegovina)

World War II brought an end to the monarchy and established the region as an Axis Power's puppet. Though some Serbs united in a collaborating unit mainly focussed on fighting the communist-led partisan resistance, the roles were visibly reversed. The Serbs dominated the Yugoslav state before World War II, but under Axis rule they were physically threatened by local Serbian collaborators but mainly by extremist Croats who united in the Ustasha movement and now ruled the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) as a Nazi puppet (see Map 2). The rest of the war was characterized by conflicts between the Axis Powers, the Partisans, the Ustasha and the Chetniks (a Serbian nationalist paramilitary resistance organisation aiming for a Greater-Serbia) (Dzenana Efendia Semiz, 2000).

After the defeat of the Axis powers - Germany, Italy and Japan - the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) was founded (see Map 3). The former Partisan rebel leader during World War II, Josip Broz Tito, managed to balance in neutrality between the so-called Western (dominated by the United States) and Eastern powers (dominated by the Soviet Union). Though Serbs again dominated political life in this second Yugoslavia under

Tito, the former rebel leader was able to somewhat suppress the still active nationalist tendencies. He put emphasis on creating a Yugoslav national spirit and his person became the glue that kept socialist Yugoslavia together. However, though Tito's regime tried to suppress ethnic tensions, and inter-ethnic interaction and marriage was quite common, it would become clear during the leader's reign that ethnic divisions did not disappear. During the 1960s and 1970s, ethnic tensions did slip through Tito's, normally, iron grip. A new constitution in 1974 granted more autonomy to some republics but not to others and it stirred up the already simmering ethnic fears and aggressions (NIOD, 2002).



Map 3. Territory of the SFRY.

(Source: Wikimedia Commons Atlas of the World: Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Besides, the end of the Cold War was accompanied by declining economic conditions and, subsequently, a wave of democratization throughout former communist countries of Eastern Europe. In 1980 Tito died. The first multiparty elections in Yugoslavia led to its breakup, whereby Slovenia and Croatia seceded, followed by BiH and Macedonia. The secession was not accepted by all in Yugoslavia, and the aftermath of it was an ethnic civil war involving the entire country. It would prove especially difficult for BiH, which was the shared homeland of all the major ethnic groups, the Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs (Semiz, 2000).

The declaration of independence by Croatia initiated a conflict between Croats and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) that was much more bloodier than that of Slovenia (where the JNA also briefly contested their declaration of independence). However, with its 20,000

people killed and a quarter of a million displaced it was considerably less devastating than the war in Bosnia around the same time. Here, severe violence broke out when the government of BiH declared its independence from Yugoslavia and when the Serbian minority, fearing suppression by the Croatian and Bosniak majorities, declared their own Republika Srpska (RS).

The vicious war split BiH largely along ethnic lines. The ethnic groups were all represented by nationalist parties and armies, though the main portion of the fighting took place between the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (mainly composed of Bosniaks) and the Bosnian Serb forces of RS. RS was backed by Serbia who controlled the JNA. Serbia sought to integrate those parts of BiH in which a Serbian majority lived while meanwhile Croatia tried to do the same with the predominantly Croatian part of BiH. Though the Serbs are generally thought to have committed the most atrocities during the war, all sides engaged in serious abuses. Concentration camps, the systematic use of rape as a weapon and large-scale massacres were the order of the day during the Bosnian War.

In 1994, the war reached a turning point when the Croat-Bosnian FBiH was created and the Croat-Bosnian alliance moved against the RS. In 1995 NATO intervention as a reaction to Serbian massacres proved decisive in ending the war. Later that same year the Dayton Agreement was signed by the fighting parties, officially ending the war and ushering in a new era of peace in BiH, though it was precarious and unstable.

Chapter 1: Ethnic relations in Yugoslavia before and during Tito

This chapter concentrates on Yugoslavia as a federation with BiH as one its members. The focus on Yugoslavia as a whole is legitimate since BiH was largely subjugated by the events that took place in Yugoslavia on a macro-political level. From the second chapter onwards this thesis will focus more on the republic of BiH itself.

When the socialist Yugoslav state was destroyed in 1991, it was the second time an all-Yugoslav state was defeated as an incarnation of what could be referred to as the 'Yugoslav Idea'. The first all-Yugoslav state was created in 1918, when Habsburg rule in the region collapsed and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (hereinafter royal Yugoslavia) was established.

Ethnic relations in Yugoslavia between two World Wars (1918-1939)

Throughout the nineteenth century, the concept of a common state for the South Slavs increasingly found support and had gained stable ground on the eve of the twentieth century (Job, 2002). This idea attempted to construct and maintain a unified state with its varying peoples and cultures, a common state for all the South Slavs. The strongest advocates for this idea came from the political, clerical and intellectual circles of leaders in Croatia and Slovenia that was then under Austro-Hungarian rule. In Serbia, where the Serbs had gained independence from the receding Ottoman Empire after a series of bloody uprisings, the leaders were more interested in the concept of a 'Greater Serbia' in which all Serbs would be united. However, the idea of a South Slav state became more and more also the dream of the common Serbian people. This change in mind-set had partly been a consequence of the start of the Russian Revolution (1917), due to which the Serbs saw their Tsarist support fall away. They feared that the other members of the Entente, or Allied Powers, would recognize an independent Croatia, that would have a large Serbian population living within its borders. Nevertheless, its independence from the Ottomans made Serbia the embodiment of liberation and unification and it was so regarded in most Bosnian, Croatian and Slovenian provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This, too, was partly due to diplomatic reasons. Croatia and Slovenia, aiming for independence from the Habsburg monarchy, found out through the Russian revolutionaries that the Allied Powers had promised Italy Slovenian and Croatian lands in exchange for fighting on the side of the Allies (called the London Agreement of 1915). They thus saw the benefits of a 'Greater-Serbia'. BiH, in this time, was pretty much dominated by the surrounding states and they had only little to bring to the table. Though

dominated by the Ottoman Empire for a long time and therefore predominantly Muslim, it also had large Christian Croat and Serb populations which made it important for Serbia and Croatia, who both wanted to protect their ethnic group across the border and held aspirations of uniting these people within their respective home states.

Besides the elites, that enjoyed large popular support and wanted to permanently free themselves from Italian, Austrian or Hungarian rule and assimilation – or who wanted to complete their liberation and unite the South Slav under their own rule as Serbia aimed for –, more aspects that underpinned the ‘Yugoslav Idea’. The peoples of the region seem to have felt a general cultural closeness that was primarily based on feelings of common ancestry, and ethnic and linguistic similarities. The common people supposedly saw it as a unifying factor that overtook all considerable differences (Semiz, 2000).

This might give the impression that the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the aftermath of World War I did enhance ethnic-political relations in the Yugoslav region. However, that might just be true in the light of the ‘Yugoslav Idea’ but the power realities show something quite different. Already at the outset of royal Yugoslavia, Serbs and Croats quarrelled over power sharing and territorial autonomy. The Croats claimed status and rights they allegedly had under Habsburg rule, yet Serbia was cautious. Its monarchy and political leaders saw in the Croatian aspirations a possible threat to the dominant role they intended to play in the new Yugoslav state (NIOD, 2002).

In the new royal Yugoslavia both the Serbo-Croat and the Slovenian language were constitutionally recognized, just as the three main religions: Serbian Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam (Semiz, 2000). Yet the monarchy was more unitary, centralist and Belgrade dominated more than the Croats ever planned to agree with. However, they justly felt they had little choice, and the Croatian representatives at the negotiations accepted royal Yugoslavia. After all, only the Serbian troops, who were coming out on the victorious side, could challenge the Austrian armies threatening Croatian and Slovene lands. After the war, the Paris Peace Conference formally recognized the new royal Yugoslavia in May 1920, one-and-a-half year after its creation.

This last point is often overlooked but rather important to understand ethnic-political relations in the region during the interwar period. It shows that it was in fact the Yugoslavs who desired and created their own common state, based on the already existing ‘Idea’. Though it was not created in a vacuum, the fact that the victorious Allied Powers also desired such a state for idealist or strategic reasons does not make this first all-Yugoslav state a less authentic and indigenous establishment. It had existed before the Versailles Treaty and

eventually it participated in the treaty negotiations as a sovereign party in its own right. That diminishes the argument often held by the general public that the first Yugoslav state was the product of imperialist and pro-Serbian sentiment at the Versailles negotiations¹ (G. Duijzings, 2002; Semiz, 2000).

From a Western European perspective, the Yugoslav state was an anomaly. It was not a political union based on one ethnic community or a single national people. It was the result of a process of fragmentation of two multi-ethnic empires in Europe: the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Besides, Yugoslavia was allowed to develop politically due to the temporal downfall of Germany and Russia during and after World War I, who for a long time have had considerable influence in the Balkan region. The new Yugoslav state was thus constructed against a very complex, and multi-layered political background. Some areas had a long history of autonomy (such as Croatia), some had never known independence (such as Slovenia). BiH had been part of the Ottoman Empire for many centuries before it was annexed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1878 (NIOD, 2002).

The people in Yugoslavia seem to not have appreciated the Yugoslav state as the product of their collective actions. The Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and Montenegrins argued for a pan-Slavism that greatly surpassed the Yugoslav entity and in the end they fought only for their own respective states (NIOD, 2002). The Yugoslav state would have been a great leap forward for cooperation across ethnic lines, however, the reality should be viewed with cynicism. If there had ever been a notion of a possible South-Slav state it was there merely for tactical reasons. The Croats and Slovenes only considered it because they recognized that they needed Serbia's help to free themselves from Habsburg rule. The Serbs, in turn, only spoke of a united South-Slav state (based on the common language) to unite all Serbs living outside Serbia in a new national state.

Soon, probably even before Yugoslavia formally began, the hopes of the 'South-Slavs' living harmoniously in their new and common Yugoslavia were shattered. The Yugoslavs conflicted over national identities from the very beginning. If the Yugoslavs were more than one people living in one state, who should be recognized as part of the Yugoslav people and who should not? Macedonian, for instance, was plainly not recognized as a national identity in the first Yugoslavia, and the Kosovo Albanians were fiercely repressed for their rebellious tendencies.

¹ However, the Serbian influence should not be exaggerated. The great European powers and the United States wielded pretty much all the power and its role in the consolidation of the Yugoslav state was significant. Their ultimate recognition of the Yugoslav state was probably imperative for its survival.

While the Serbian ruler promoted hegemonism and insisted on the Serbian right to lead and dominate as the only true ‘state builders’ in the region, extremist Croatian parties emerged who advocated nothing less than the destruction of Yugoslavia. So, the key players in Yugoslav politics held rather conflicting nationalist ideologies, yet these ideologies were equally ethnocentric, aggressive, racist, xenophobic and demonizing (Job, 2002).

Both Serbia and Croatia held on to impracticable hopes. Serbia thought all of the region would gladly accept them as their leaders and masters out of gratitude or at least out of pure necessity. On the other hand, Croatia held on to the aspiration of a constitutional life within Yugoslavia, with a parliament in which they could promote and articulate the distinctiveness of the Croats. The constant Serbo-Croat recriminations and confrontations severely paralyzed the Yugoslavia parliament, though of course they blamed each other for this. The Serbo-Croat issues became the fundamental problem of Yugoslavia as a nation-state.

In this time, BiH was largely subjected to the dominant conflict between Croatian regionalism and Serbian centralization. In the aftermath of World War I, Serbian farmers and war veterans used the anarchy to attack, kill and rob Muslim landowners. Also in following years the Muslims were subjected to, often violent, reforms that aimed to erase the social, cultural and political heritage of the Ottoman Empire (Duijzings, 2002). The split of royal Yugoslavia into 33 oblasts (administrative divisions) initially erased the presence of traditional geographic entities. However, when the efforts of Bosnian politicians paid off, the six oblasts from which BiH was carved up from, were installed correspondingly to the six provinces (sanjaks) from the Ottoman times, after which BiH matched its traditional boundary as a whole (Halpern and Kideckel, 2000).

However, since the mid-nineteenth century the concept of Croatian and Serbian nationhood had been spreading throughout BiH via its Catholic and Orthodox communities. Austro-Hungarian policy had tried to isolate BiH from its influential neighbours by advocating the ideal of a pluralist en multi-confessional Bosnian nation. The Habsburgs tried to make the population of BiH feel like they were part of a great and powerful nation. Within this policy, the Bosnians were identified as speakers of the Bosnian language (a slightly different form of Serbo-Croatian) and as divided into three different religions (Islam, Catholicism, Serbian Orthodoxy) though with equal rights (NIOD, 2002). However, Croatia and Serbia opposed the policy and ignored the ‘Bosnian nationhood’. Both tried to claim the Bosniaks as their own, attempts that, obviously, the majority of the Bosniaks rejected. Bosnian nationalism became an integral factor of Bosnian politics and elections were dominated by political parties that corresponded to the Muslim, Croatian and Serbian ethnic

groups.

Yet, the 'Yugoslav Idea', the idea of a unified South-Slav state, had won some ground prior and during World War I. The political tensions caused by this, culminated in the assassination of the heir of the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, in Sarajevo, by a Serbian nationalist. It was the spark that set off the fire of World War I. Despite this, BiH managed to survive the war relatively intact and it was attached to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes right after it.

When the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was officially converted into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929, it was not only escorted by the king's dictatorship but also by the redrawing of many administrative regions into banates (administrative divisions²) that deliberately avoided all ethnic and historical lines, thereby removing all traces of a BiH entity. While the Serbo-Croat ethno-political tensions over the structuring of the Yugoslav state continued, the concept of a separate BiH division received little to no consideration. It had, however, long been the order of the day for BiH.

The forces that aimed for the destruction of Yugoslavia were substantial and can be illustrated by taking a closer look on the assassination of king Aleksandar II in Marseille in 1934. This murder was set in motion by the cooperation of Ustasha (fascist Croatian nationalists) and Macedonian terrorists, the Bulgarian secret service, Italian fascist leader Mussolini and Hungarian connections. This destabilizing event was somewhat balanced by the return of the multiparty elections in 1934. Besides, a breakthrough was established in the Serbo-Croat issue in 1939. Both sides agreed to a new Croatian province that was created along lines claimed as ethnic and historical (the famous Cvetković-Maček agreement). Finally the Croats achieved the political and territorial autonomy they had wanted so badly for all those years.

Though this development may have had some stabilizing potential, it in fact had the opposite effect. The new province consisted for a substantial part out of BiH lands. It was, essentially, a partition of Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia. So it actually planted a seed for future troubles along ethnic-political lines (Job, 2002). However, the situation was largely overshadowed by the inferno that was rapidly tearing Europe apart. These external political circumstances forced Yugoslavia's politicians to refocus their attention from each other to the rising threat of Nazi Germany.

² A banate is typical term of the region and is originally a territory ruled by a ban, or in other words, by a lord. In this case it can be referred to an administrative division or a province.

World War II: the effects on ethnic relations

The previous section mainly discussed the ethnic-political developments in Yugoslavia before, during and after World War I. BiH is described as ‘dominated’ by the Serbian and Croatian sphere of influence. However, one should understand that BiH had always been distinct and different compared to the other Balkan states, especially on a more local level. The complex history of the Bosnian people resulted in the creation of a distinctive culture in this area. This culture was characterized by their own dialect of the Serbo-Croat language and a society based on the three major religions (Islam, Catholicism, Serbian Orthodoxy). Nonetheless, for long they shared one mentality. In addition to being Muslim, Catholic or Orthodox, they definitely felt Bosnian. They were proud of their country, and seemingly they used to get along just fine across ethnic lines (Job, 2002). Or, as journalist Roger Cohen wrote: ‘Bosnia belongs to itself. It is culturally and topographically different from its neighbours. All the bombardments, all the destruction, all the killing could not obliterate this fact’ (Cohen, 1995). Throughout the crises of the twentieth century, World War I and the two decades after it, BiH remained, indeed, as one. However, in 1941 BiH and the whole of Yugoslavia was again catapulted into crisis, this time into that of World War II. This war would lay the groundwork for future ethnic tension. It provided fuel for the ethnic hostilities of the Bosnian War and ultimately the current ethnic tensions in BiH.

On 25 March 1941, prince-regent Pavle and his government were pressured into the pact of the Axis Powers after Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria had invaded Yugoslavia. It brought an end to the monarchy. Almost all existing institutions in Yugoslavia were destroyed. This would prove to be crucial for the communists to fill the power void that emerged in 1945. However, before this happened several nationalist movements would sweep over Yugoslavia with serious violent consequences. They who tried to escape those consequences ended up with the communist-led Partisan movement and its commander Tito. It was the only considerable organisation that offered a multi-ethnic perspective (Halpern and Kideckel, 2000).

After its capitulation, Yugoslavia was divided between the Nazi and fascist powers. Germany took Central-Serbia, while Italy established the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) and put the extreme nationalist and fascist Ustasha movement in charge of it. After Italy’s capitulation in 1943, the NDH came entirely into the German sphere of influence.

The Ustasha formed a genocidal regime that implemented their own, more cruel version of the *Endlösung* on the Serbs, Jews and Romani, in which they were sometimes supported by BiH's Bosniaks. Their main aim, however, was to cleanse their country from Serbs. All Serbs in the NDH lost their civil rights and protection, and just like Jews and Romani they were excluded from government jobs (NIOD, 2002). Besides, inter-ethnic marriages became prohibited. The Ustasha used forced Christianization and mass killings to forge their ethnically pure and homogeneous Croatian state. Its leader, Ante Pavelic, gave the order to murder one-third of the almost two million Serbs in the 'Ustasha-state' and to disperse another one-third. The remaining Serbs would have to be forced to accept Catholicism with the help of Franciscans and priests. Hundreds of Serbian Orthodox churches, monasteries and synagogues were destroyed en hundreds of thousands of Serbs were forced and deported from Croatia and BiH to Serbia. As mentioned above, the Ustasha sometimes received help from the Bosniaks, to whom the Ustasha took an ambivalent attitude. They were unsure how to rule the big part of BiH that had been incorporated into the NDH. They sometimes committed atrocities on them, but mainly they tried to encourage them to attack the Serbs.

Meanwhile resistance movements were emerging, most notable the Chetniks and the earlier mentioned Partisans. The Chetniks³ were aiming for a homogeneous Serbia, that would include two-thirds of Yugoslavia. For this, one million Croats and 1.5 million other would have to be deported. Muslims were seen a serious problem and before long the Chetniks were killing Croats and Muslims to create their own ethnically pure Serbia.

The second resistance movement, the Partisans, was dominated by the communist party, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (SKJ), and was led by Josip Tito. When Tito assumed the leadership of the SKJ in 1937 the movements goal was to maintain the Yugoslav state intact. Especially in the beginning of World War II its main popular support came from Serbs, primarily from those who lived in Croatia or BiH and were threatened by the Ustashe regime. However, this changed fast. Tito, from Croatian-Slovenian descent, did not aim for a Greater-Serbia.

The Chetniks and Partisans briefly cooperated. Yet, soon arguments broke out between the two movements about command, tactics, division of arms and the state's political future. While Tito's Partisan movement had a clear structure and hierarchy based on the Leninist doctrine of democratic centralism, the Chetnik organisation, under the leadership of

³ Originally Chetniks were nineteenth century Serb guerrillas who fought against their Ottoman oppressors.

Draža Mihailovic, was rather loose. For the greater part of the Chetniks, it was unclear if they accepted the central power of Mihailovic or that they were primarily driven by regional and local motives (NIOD, 2002). Their system, feudal in nature, was unable to provide farmers and others with a realist prospect of social mobility and a feeling of dignity. Contrary, the Partisans did not limit themselves to hit-and-run actions as the Chetniks normally did. They tried to hold conquered areas and govern them.

With their minds set on a Greater-Serbia, the Chetniks were ideologically pushed towards the Germans, Italians and their helpers (who often did not differ much in ideology). Mihailovic sought cooperation with the Axis Powers and turned the Partisans into their common enemy. However, the Partisans did not care much about civilian casualties and, in turn, they executed, pillaged and terrorized whole villages suspected of Chetnik sympathies. Even the Italians and Germans allegedly were shocked by the intra-Yugoslav violence and atrocity that was being inflicted (NIOD, 2002). On the other hand, the Axis Powers also had to consider the practical fact that the brutal actions of the Ustasha was driving people into the ranks of the Partisan and Chetnik resistance.

In 1943, Tito called the second conference of the Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) in the Bosnian town of Jajce. Contrary to the Chetniks and the Ustasha, the Partisans were able to win support among non-Serbs and non-Croats thanks to their ideology of brotherhood and unity and the promise of a federal Yugoslavia after the war, based on decentralized self-determination (NIOD, 2002). At the AVNOJ, a provisional government for this post-war Yugoslavia was created while the emphasis of the conference was put on the equality of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Bosnians. While in pre-war Yugoslavia Serbian rights had dominated, now the rights of ethnic minorities were guaranteed.

When the war came to an end in Europe, Tito received Soviet help to liberate Yugoslavia from Nazi Germany's rule. Directly after the German capitulation, on 7 May 1945, Tito began executing his former rivals and convicted war criminals. In total, probably around one million 'South-Slav' people died in Yugoslavia during the war. Around 500.000 Serbs, 300.000 Croats, 90.000 Muslims, 70.000 Jews, and, in addition, some 27.000 Romani were killed. Almost 80 per cent of the Jews in the region were murdered, 8 per cent of the Muslims, 7 per cent of the Serbs and 5 per cent of the Croats. BiH, remained relatively intact, but it suffered the most deaths. 10.3 per cent of its entire population was killed during World War II (NIOD, 2002).

The end of the war was characterized by Serbo-Croat quarrels. The Serbs insisted that they had led the resistance and suffered as much as the Jews during the war. However, according to the Serbs, the Croats were the perpetrators of the sufferings. Though this was, of course, exaggerated, the Serbs in BiH and Croatia were hit hard, respectively 12 per cent and 17 per cent of their total population group was killed (NIOD, 2002).

World War II unleashed the violence that had been lurking in the shadows since World War I. The first mass killings and other atrocities took place as a result of the destruction, dismemberment and occupation of Yugoslavia by fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria, and their installation of the genocidal regimes and gangs as their agents. In response, resistance movements were created. Most notably the Chetnik movement and the Partisan movement. Subsequently, waves of ethnic violence spread through BiH and the rest of Yugoslavia. The Croatian Ustasha movement aimed for purifying their state of Serbs, the Serbian-dominated Chetniks aimed for a Greater-Serbia cleansed of Croats and in addition they fought the Axis Power's. The Partisans were the only multi-ethnic organisation and therefore received much support. However, like the Ustasha and the Chetniks, they believed in human sacrifice. Many atrocities were committed during the war, on Serbs, Croats and Muslims alike. Ethno-political relations were hostile but people had also been killing each other on the grassroots level. It showed characteristics that would also be evident during the Bosnian War in the 1990s, in which inter-ethnic socio-political relations were thoroughly destroyed, resulting in the current ethnic problems in BiH.

World War II in Yugoslavia had thus also been a period of civil war, of which the wounds would not be easily healed, especially after Tito declared an amnesty-law that made it possible for war criminals such as former Jew-prosecutors and extremist nationalist fighters to hold leading positions in the new state. It would prove a challenge for Tito's wartime and post-war leadership to decide what to do with Yugoslavia, and especially with the ethnically inter-mixed BiH.

Tito, communism and ethnicity

With the creation of a constitution in January 1946, Yugoslavia became the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, consisting of six equal republics (in terms of political power): Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, BiH, Macedonia and Montenegro. None of the six states were ethnically homogeneous, and the ethnic mix was especially complex in BiH. The constitution was modelled after the Soviet constitution of 1936. It was thought that the Soviet federation was the most positive example for solving the question of relations between peoples in human history (NIOD, 2002). The powers the republics had within the new federation were, in practice, rather limited. Tito had chosen for strict centralization from Belgrade, that, again, became the capital of Yugoslavia.

Using the territorial arrangement of the country, Tito tried to smoothen the ethnic tensions that had characterized Yugoslavia before and during World War II. Tito, too, saw himself confronted with the problem of the potential dominance of the Serbs in relation to other ethnic groups since the Serbs formed more than one-third of the entire Yugoslav population. Tito sought the solution in the arrangement of the borders between the republic and provinces. A small communist commission was put in charge of determining these borders. However, the commission lacked the motivation to do this thoroughly, due to the belief that when socialism progressed the borders would eventually lose their meaning (NIOD, 2002). For this reason the commission primarily used the historical borders from before World War I.

On the a macro-political level, major actors Serbia and Croatia initially had few reasons to be content with Tito's political solutions. For Serbia, the return to the situation before 1914 meant that the Macedonians and the Montenegrins, who had been Serbs in the first Yugoslavia, were now actually Macedonians and Montenegrins. Additionally, Serbia had to accept that two autonomous districts, Vojvodina and Kosovo, were part of its territory. Serbia was further disappointed that its 'losses' were not compensated by the attachment of Serbian areas in BiH to Serbia. Tito's new borders made that now 30 per cent of the Serbs in Yugoslavia lived outside Serbian borders (NIOD, 2002).

In Croatia the Ustasha officials had fled the country. However, the Catholic Church stayed and remained supported. The first years after the war were characterized by continuing conflict between the Church and the atheist communists. Numerous church officials were executed for collaborating in World War II. During this war, the Partisan movement in Croatia had for the larger part consisted of Serbian fighters. Subsequently, relatively many

Serbian SKJ officials were present in the republic, which negatively contributed to the acceptance of the party. Further, Croatia lost the province in BiH they had gained after so much effort in the Cvetković-Maček agreement in 1939 (see the first section of this chapter).

In addition to the trust that the SKJ had in the beneficial effect of socialism on the borders, it had trust in their own ability to erase the painful memories of World War II. Discussing ethnic differences, and especially the World War II confrontations, became a taboo imposed from the top, a form of state enforced amnesia. Time would heal the wounds, Tito thought. Meanwhile he tried to grow a Yugoslav nationality with his ideology of 'brotherhood and unity' (Duijzings, 2002). Public expressions of ethnic bitterness were roughly repressed, especially in BiH where the 'civil' war had made most of its victims. The result was that post-war Yugoslavia was characterized by a society in which nobody spoke of the violence during the war, while everybody knew what had happened and who were the perpetrators. Such ethnic tension was further intensified by the massive domination of Serbs in the SKJ and the JNA. In 1981, Serbs in the SKJ consisted of 47,1 per cent out of Serbs, while the JNA counted more than 60 per cent of its officers and non-commissioned officers as Serbian or Montenegrin.

Despite Tito's socialist stimulation of cooperation and communication between ethnic groups, the years after the war saw little social improvement on the local level, in the villages of BiH. Here most people still lived their lives divided along ethnic lines. In the Bosnian villages and cities, the SKJ tried to stimulate co-existence by mixing schools, the army, party meetings and sport clubs (Duijzings, 2002). BiH became a model for the rest of Yugoslavia: Muslim, Croats and Serbs had fought each other hard during the war, but in the end they had all supported the Partisans and now they had to work together. However, this rhetoric did not work as well as Tito had probably hoped. Though most villages and all the cities were mixed, the cultural and religious division in the personal sphere was often probably more substantial than was admitted by the elite (Duijzings, 2002). In the 1970s and 1980s, mixed marriages were very common in the urban areas. Approximately 30 per cent of all marriages were across ethnic lines (Bosnian Institute London, site accessed May 2012). However, the bride and groom could almost never fully escape criticism from their family members or neighbours (primarily the older generation) (Mazower, 1997). It indicates that especially younger people tried to overcome ethnic difficulties (often simply by falling in love across ethnic lines), however, they did experience some (minor) obstruction by more conservative people.

Though focussed on suppressing nationalist and ethnic sentiment, the national leadership in Belgrade also drew upon the language of ethnicity to facilitate its handling of (local) politics, especially in the various provinces. Originally, five ethnic groups were recognized in the constitution: Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Macedonians and Montenegrins. Only later, in 1974, the Bosnian Muslims were recognized as a nation of people, as an ethnic group that was part of Yugoslavia. It was a recognition that led to growing self-awareness among the Bosniak elite, that was uttered in a massive cultural and religious revitalization. Despite the loyalty of the Bosnian Islamic community to the atheist communist leadership, they profiled themselves as the most important advocate of the Muslim-nation within Yugoslavia. For others, the Serbs in particular, the cultural and religious revitalization was crossing a line. The result was a Bosnian SKJ campaign, dominated by its many Serbian members, against Islamic fundamentalism and Muslim-nationalism from the 1970s onwards.

Initially, Tito thought the SKJ was able to create a new human being, by means of a forced industrialization and a strict economic planning, one that would no longer be susceptible to ethnic nationalism. Already early under Tito's reign, it became clear to Yugoslavia's people and Tito himself, this was not possible in the way he had imagined: by means of enforcing amnesia from the top down. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Tito's regime floated away from its original strive for socialist values and the creation of a common Yugoslav culture, but instead moved towards a policy of increased decentralization. However, ethnic nationalist sentiments thrived in the new political system.

Throughout his rule Tito had not managed to find a durable solution for the problematic matter of ethnic nationalism. He, too, had been troubled by the tension that had gripped the first Yugoslavia: the one of the Serbian effort for centralism and the Croatian desire for (at least) autonomy. Tito failed to create mutual tolerance between the different ethnic groups. Instead, he maintained an unstable balance by playing out the different groups against each other, in a divide-and-rule kind of approach. This is demonstrated by his habit of elevating and downgrading certain ethnic groups according to his assessment of what internal stability needed, contrariwise resulting in constant ethnic tensions. Due to his charismatic personality, Tito had been able to keep Yugoslavia together, but after his death there no longer was a powerful, binding symbol that formed the heart of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Before his death, Tito had made sure no politician or ethnic group would preponderate at the cost of others, by installing a rotating presidency. However, it could not keep the country from plunging into severe economic, moral and political crisis.

Chapter conclusion

When the first all-Yugoslav state was created in 1918, the concept of a common South-Slav state had already increasingly found support since the mid-nineteenth century. However, it seems that the actual creation of the state in the form of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later just Yugoslavia) was the result of strategic political reasons. Soon the major actors within the state conflicted over ethnic nationalities and the power that came with it. Until the start of World War II, the state was dominated by the conflict between Serbian centralization and Croatian regionalism. In BiH, where people lived ethnically intermixed, Bosnian nationalism arose, resulting in political parties that corresponded with the Muslim, Croatian and Serbian ethnic groups. In BiH, life across ethnic line was relatively peaceful and harmonious.

During World War II, the Croatian genocidal nationalist and Catholic Ustasha regime was installed to rule the new NDH. They perpetrated their own form of the *Endlösung* on the Serbs. In response the Chetnik and Partisan resistance movements emerged. However, while the Serb-dominated Chetniks fought in aim for an ethnically pure Greater-Serbia, the Partisans actually got the overhand. Led by the communist Tito, they offered a multi-ethnic perspective which granted them growing support during the war, also among Bosniaks, who were often killed or used to kill by the Ustasha movement. In time, all parties cooperated and simultaneously fought each other. The many atrocities committed by all the parties would prove a dramatic strain on future politics and social life. It was a challenge Tito would have to overcome.

After the war, Tito brought the republics of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, BiH, Macedonia and Montenegro into the SFRY which he ruled by means of strict centralization from Belgrade. Tito was confronted with the scars that World War II's ethnic violence had left the Yugoslav people. Besides that, he had to manage the tensions that resulted from a revival of the pre-war Serbo-Croat conflict. He actively suppressed nationalist sentiments, but this had only mixed results. Through his charismatic person and political tactics he kept Yugoslavia together until his death, after which the country slipped back into crisis.

Chapter 2: Causal explanations for the Bosnian War

The previous chapter discussed the time before and during Tito's rule. It described how Tito was able to preserve a precarious peace until his death, in 1980, put Yugoslavia in a crisis situation in which ethnic violence appeared right on the surface. In April 1992 violence broke out and until December 1995 the Bosnian War terrorized the country and left it physically and mentally in ruins. In the literature experts discuss diverging causal explanations for the war. Explanations for this violence are sought in breakup of the Yugoslav state and in the field of ethnic identities, but also in the actions of nationalist political leaders and the so-called 'ancient hatreds'. However, none of these foci can or should be seen separately from each other. There are all complementary and inter-connected. This chapter will draw a conclusion after a discussion of the possible causal explanations for the war in four sections.

The break-up of Yugoslavia

The death of Tito in May 1980, left Yugoslavia in a crisis. As argued in the previous chapter, he left no clear system that distributed the power among the different ethnic groups. However, also under Tito, Serbs had always dominated the politics in the region. Soon after his death, a year later, in 1981, the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, then a province within Serbia, rose up against the brutal violent measures that the Serbian government took against Kosovar Albanian attempts to increase control over their own affairs. Four years later, on the other side of Yugoslavia, in Slovenia and Croatia, the leadership was also showing signs and taking steps towards increased autonomy. In 1985 and 1986, the Slovene government tried to assume complete control over their own budgetary and judicial affairs. The Croats sought to gain more control over the revenues of their profitable industries such as the tourist businesses along the Dalmatian coast. However, using Tito-inspired methods, Croatian conservatives in the government were able to repress manifestations of nationalism. Meanwhile in BiH, lawyer and future president Alija Izetbegovic was jailed in 1983 for so-called hostile and counter-revolutionary acts derived from Muslim nationalism. Bosnian nationalism grew from the 1970s onwards, and the Bosniaks were determined to express this national consciousness as different from that of the Croats and Serbs. After all, they had dominated the political and social lives of the Muslims for so long.

This rising Bosniak nationalism made that the Serbs began to recognize that hostility against them was growing. It resulted in a growing Serbian feeling of isolation from their

neighbors. As shown earlier in this thesis, the Serbs always felt they deserved to dominate, as they had done to a large extent before and during Tito's rule. Therefore, the historian Norman Naimark argues, they were appalled by the troubles their SFRY co-members were causing them. According to Serbia they had nothing to complain and even more horrifying was that Serbian lives and property were seriously threatened by the growing senses of nationalism among other Yugoslav peoples (Naimark, 2002).

However, Norman Cigar adds that the other ethnic groups saw the isolation and suspicion as result of what they saw as Serbian attempts to dominate macro-politics in the re-established Yugoslav state. This caused much of the political gridlock that came over Yugoslavia in the 1980s (Cigar, 1995). Tito's death, and eventually the passing away of his generation of leaders that held on to the idea of a communist Yugoslavia, removed an important element of oppression. It opened the door to democracy and change. However, at the same time Serbs were very concerned. Serbian authoritarianism would have inevitably led to cries for equalization and probably to attempts to dissolve Yugoslavia. For Serbs, this would have meant the potential loss of status and privilege on a communal and individual basis.

In this post-Tito period of political transition, the notion of a Greater-Serbia again became important in Serbian rhetoric. This expedient nationalist ideology was 'lying around' and it again became an attractive political tool. It should also be seen as such; as a tool. Because despite the ethnic complications between Serbs and non-Serbs in the economic and political domains in the period after World War II, and the evident discrimination against Islam, ethnic groups throughout the whole of Yugoslavia, including BiH, were able to live together without severe violence for more than a generation (see previous chapter).

To explain the changes that would occur, Cigar speaks of a 'transformation in interethnic relations' during the 1980s (Cigar, 1995). Indeed, the Serbs needed this transformation in order to mobilize the Serbs in support of a more hostile relationship. So, Serbs drawing back on their historical nationalist ideology seems to have been no unavoidable development, but rather a methodical top-down political campaign, a campaign that was needed to change the values of a whole Serbian generation.

The political tension offered new elites to attain greater roles in the shifting structure within society. Serbian intellectuals initially started the development of the nationalist agenda early in the 1980s. However, after the rise of Slobodan Milosevic in the SFRY in the late 1980s, the Serbian nationalist program got the full backing of the Serbian government. Though not only Milosevic made overtures to the nationalist intellectuals: in Croatia and

Slovenia the same overtures were made by communist leaders to nationalists. It was the reaction to the economic crisis that was mounting since Tito's death. Communist leaders in the republics were primarily concerned with protecting the economic interests of their own republic. With this aim, they increasingly sought political allies outside the SFRY, resulting in improving relations with nationalist oppositions. However, in the highly multi-ethnic BiH this was much too dangerous and therefore not possible. To avoid destabilization, the communist authorities held on to the communist ideal of 'brotherhood and unity', implemented by suppressing all nationalist sentiments.

The fall of communism in Eastern-Europe, starting in 1989, brought an end to the one-party-system in Yugoslavia, ushering in a time of liberation and democratization. The SFRY collapsed in 1990 when the Croats and Slovenes walked out on the last special congress of the SFRY. Concomitantly, the inter-republic political relations were brought to a critical level. After this conference, in Autumn 1990, which broke down talks about the rotating presidency, Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia jointly proposed to transform the Yugoslav federation into a loose federation. However, Milosevic, fearing the loss of Serbia's dominant position, refused to accept this.

Together, Slovenia and Macedonia formed the two most homogeneous states in the federation. Both states managed to break-away from Yugoslavia more or less peacefully. The declaration of independence by Slovenia in 1991 was only briefly contested by Milosevic's regime. This regime controlled the JNA and they used it to challenge Slovenia's right to break-away from the federation. When more than 95 per cent of the Macedonian people voted for independence in September 1991, Macedonia also declared their independence. It was not contested by Serbia. However, other republics would experience a considerably more violent break-up.

The Croatian nationalist were led by Franjo Tudjman, later the first president of the independent Croatia. For these nationalist the break-up of Yugoslavia offered a long-awaited opportunity to gain independence. However, the Serbs in Croatia tried hard to maintain the status quo of Croatia as part of Yugoslavia. In 1991, the conflict transformed into a violent war that would last until 1995. At first the local Serbs were fighting the Croatian police-forces, yet they soon obtained the support of the JNA, which tried to occupy the whole of Croatia. This, however, proved not to be possible due to heavy Croatian resistance. The Serbs living in Croatia then proclaimed the Republic of Serbian Krajina (RSK). This republic claimed approximately 25 per cent of Croatia. The country was plunged into war and many villages and towns were left in ruins, resulting in the displacement of hundreds of thousands

and the death of 20.000 people.

In 1992, 98 per cent of the voters in a referendum on independence for BiH voted for secession from Yugoslavia (with a 63.6% voter turnout). However, the referendum was boycotted by the Serbs living in BiH and they were doubtful about its legitimacy. The passing of the referendum resulted in the declaration of independence by the government of BiH, even though the Yugoslav Constitutional Court ruled against it. Like the Serbs in Croatia, the Serbs in BiH also declared their own state, Republika Srpska (RS), and like in Croatia it led to an outbreak of violence because the RS was backed by the Serbian-controlled JNA.

After the Bosnian declaration of independence the break-up was informally completed. However, de facto the break-up was only finalized in 2006, when Montenegro declared independence from Serbia after a referendum that passed the 55% boundary by 2,300 votes. Serbia, now closely watched by the international community and aiming for EU and NATO membership, did not contest the secession of Montenegro.

Ethnicity, nationalist manipulation and the outbreak of war

For non-experts, the international press left little doubt that the most probable prime cause for the Bosnian War was 'ethnicity'. BiH is ethnically very complex because the three major ethnic groups live highly intermixed. According to some scholars it supposedly has a history of ethnic problems stretching back centuries (Mazower, 1997). Moreover, today's geo-politicians are becoming more and more convinced that ethnicity is replacing ideology as the prime cause for global conflicts (Mann, 2005). This analysis is plausible because, as the previous chapter shows, history and topography together have made BiH (probably) the most ethnically variegated region in one of the most ethnically mixed parts of Europe. So, in terms of the Bosnian War, did ethnicity play a central role in starting the war? And did nationalist leaders manipulate ethnicity to achieve their goals?

To understand how the ethnic variegation in BiH may or may not have played a causal role in starting the war in Bosnia, it is important to look at the effect of localism on ethnicity. For instance, Mazower argues that the citizens of Sarajevo predominantly referred to themselves as Sarajevli, which means 'Sarajevans'. This way they contrasted themselves with the uncultured peasantry of the villages. Moreover, he argues that women in these villages often got along perfectly across ethnic lines. Indeed they got along even better than with women of the same ethnic group who lived in other villages (Mazower, 1997). This demonstrates the importance of the living environment for the quality of ethnic relations on a

local level.

On local, but also on national levels, people were being influenced by nationalist politicians who seem to have been using ethnicity as a political tool to polarise communities in order to win over a particular group. However, the question is: were differences in ethnicity on a local level actually enough to ignite a war such as the Bosnian War? As the previous chapter shows Tito and his communist regime did not succeed in their aim to destroy ethnic nationalities within Yugoslavia, and in BiH it had proven to be especially difficult. While Tito's regime managed to suppress the ethnic nationalism in the earlier years of his rule, nationalist sentiments slipped through his grip during the later years he was in power. After his death, ethnic nationalism reigned supreme. However, it seems that on the local level, among civilians in the villages and towns, ethnicity was not much of an obstructing factor. On the other hand, it seems that the so commonly known ethnic tensions at that time were more the result of radical nationalist politicians, who were using nationalist rhetoric to win over the population.

Around 1990, such rhetoric was already in common use outside of BiH, in other Balkan states such as Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. However, communist attempts to keep it out failed, and after the elections in Slovenia and Croatia, in 1990, (running-up to their secession) ethnically based politics indeed became important in BiH (Duijzings, 2002). After the ban on ethno-nationalist parties was removed, nothing held the Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats in BiH back. The Muslim party Stranka Demokratske Akcije (SDA) was the first party that emerged. It was led by the former political prisoner Alije Izetbegovic. The SDA enjoyed much support among the Muslim majority of BiH. It promoted a religiously inspired nationalism comparable to that of the Croatian and Serbian nationalists, but it was never their intention to create an Islamic society in BiH. In the first place, they were defending the Bosnian Muslim identity, and not Islam itself. The SDA was soon followed by the establishment of nationalist parties of the Bosnian Serbs and Croats.

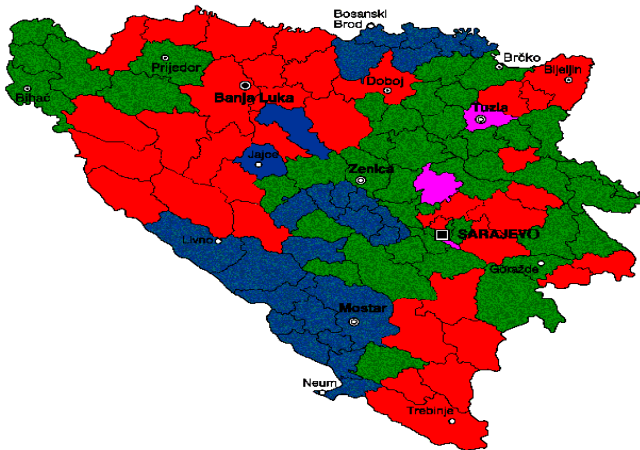
The Srpska Demokratska Stranka (SDS), the Bosnian branch of the Serbian Democratic Party was founded in July 1990. The party was religiously inspired and held close ties with the Serbian Orthodox Church. Besides, it was completely backed by Milosevic's regime and aimed to incorporate the Serbian-dominated areas into a smaller Yugoslavia or a Greater-Serbia.

The third largest nationalist party that was established was the Croatian Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica (HDZ). It was a Bosnian branch of Tudjman's party. However, its

role in the Bosnian War was limited (Duijzings, 2002).

The first election meetings, organized in 1990, were immediately characterized by mutual aggression. These aggressive nationalist election campaigns received broad coverage by the Serbian and Bosnian press. This resulted in an explosive situation that could easily turn into ethnic violence. While ethnicity became more important in the minds of the people, the country became increasingly divided. The more moderate parties, often led by (ex)communists, were situated in the larger cities and had trouble reaching the people in the villages. Thus, they lacked the crucial popular backing that the SDA and SDS were winning in the villages and towns. In the villages around Srebrenica, incidents started to occur after the first election rallies. Serbs and Muslims alike set up roadblocks to check people from the other ethnic group.

Later, in late August 1990, the SDA organised a large public meeting in Foca in which they planned to commemorate the victims of the genocide that was perpetrated by Serbian Chetniks on the Muslim population of Foca in World War II. 100.000 people came to the meeting and the SDA leadership invited the SDS and HDZ leaders to participate in a ceremony in which flowers were thrown into the Drina river, meant as a sign of reconciliation. However, the SDS refused to engage in the ceremony, and during the meeting the atmosphere became increasingly dominated by extremist elements (NIOD, 2002). Combined with the roadblocks that arose everywhere, fear was taking hold of the Bosnian population. People became dangerously aware of their own ethnic identity. Being a Sarajevan was no longer sufficient, now one increasingly needed to be a Muslim, Serbian or Croatian.



Map 4. Ethnic divisions in BiH in 1990, based on 1990 election statistics. Red for Serbs, blue for Croats, and green for Bosniaks. (Source: Wikimedia Commons Atlas of the World: Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Anthony Oberschall (2000) clearly explains this remarkable transition from harmony to hostility in terms of a normal frame and a crisis frame . Before World War I, during the inter-war period and during Tito’s rule, people within BiH had a normal frame in which ethnic relations were cooperative and harmonious. People worked together across ethnic lines and sometimes they did not even know or notice the other person’s ethnical background or nationality. Though people in villages were habitually more conservative and cautious, inter-ethnic marriage was often accepted and holidays were spent together. However, during World War I, during World War II and again after the rise of extreme nationalist rhetoric in politics in the late 1980s, people were prone to adopt a crisis frame. This frame was grounded in the experiences and memories of the Balkan Wars, the two World Wars and all the wars before that. In these wars civilians were not different from soldiers and everyone, including women, children, priests and elderlies were submitted to atrocities, murder and ethnic cleansing (Oberschall, 2000). In other words, everybody was thought of as collectively responsible for the actions of their national or ethnic group and thus they were also targeted for revenge. As explained in the previous chapter, Tito had tried to destroy this crisis frame, that consisted of ethnic and nationalist sentiments. His failure in this gave nationalist leaders the option to activate and amplify the crisis frame to their own needs.

Naturally, the communist leaders wanted to remain in power after Tito died, but the communist system was weakening. Some of them profiled themselves as reform communists (such as Milosevic in the early post-Tito years) and hoped that Yugoslavia would become a European-styled social democracy. However, others believed that ethno-nationalism would

put them into power (as Milosevic also championed in the late 1980s). In this period moderate nationalists were promoting cooperation or at least conciliation among the different ethnic nationalities. Yet, they were overshadowed by extremist nationalists who proved willing to pursue their aims with aggression and violence. The media war that preceded the lethal war accomplished to resonate the xenophobic nationalism amongst the population. However, it remains somewhat vague how this nationalist rhetoric (though undoubtedly very convincing) managed to let people 'forget' their personal experiences with, for instance, their neighbours.

Mazower (1997) argues that key to understanding the abovementioned achievement of nationalist rhetoric, is the relationship of ethnicity to power and politics and not to society or history. This point is proven by the success of Milosevic in Serbia after the collapse of communism. His political success indicates that his adoption of Serbian nationalism was much appreciated among the electorate in Serbia and among Serbs in the other republics. However, it must be said that the NIOD report (2002) states that his strategy deliberately involved the promotion of nationalist sentiment through imposing public displays and through state-controlled mass media. The first example of such a display was Milosevic's, own conversion to Serbian nationalism in the spring of 1987. As a communist deputy, he was sent to Kosovo Polje to cope with the growing Serbian nationalism in this region. When he arrived on the scene, 15.000 Serbs were protesting against the dominant Albanian behaviour. They complained to Milosevic about the violence the predominantly Albanian police inflicted on them. Captured by several TV-cameras, Milosevic then spoke the following words: 'Ovaj narod niko ne sme da bije' – You shall not be beaten again (NIOD, 2002). It established Milosevic as the defender of the Serbs. Though this might seem a spontaneous event, it actually was no such thing. Milosevic was in Kosovo Polje four days earlier and had spoken to protesters already. Seemingly, he realized that a demonstration would fit his politics rather well. Subsequently, he made sure his friends at the state-television would repeat his words at the second visit often enough to make them known throughout the whole of Serbia (NIOD, 2002). Thus, his transformation from a Yugoslav communist to a Serbian nationalist was accompanied by media manipulation.

Though he probably was the most important antagonist of ethnic harmony and cooperation on the eve of the Bosnian War, Milosevic was not the only one using nationalist rhetoric to mobilize his people. His Croatian and Muslim counterparts did the same. It became the new political configuration which replaced communism as central to politics. Communism had not diminished ethnic tensions. Through most of the years after World War II, ethnicity seems to have simply been not the major issue one might think it to have been. With Tito's

communism came a new structure of power in which ethnic identity was only of limited political significance. Why this changed so drastically prior to the Bosnian War, seems to be largely attributable to the power corridors in the Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian capitals, and less to the traditional societies in the villages.

Ancient hatreds and the Bosnian War

In his article 'Ethnicity and War in the Balkans', Mazower discusses the interesting observation of an American painter who arrives in Sarajevo in 1925. The painter observes: 'Tolerance marks the respect with which these peoples of varying faiths mingle their common lot. Here one sees the Bosnian peasant of orthodox faith drop his contribution into the cup of a blind Muslim who squats, playing his gousse, at the entrance of a mosque. Glancing at the peaceful little stall where Christians, Muslims, and Jews mingle in business, while each goes his own way to cathedral, mosque or synagogue.' (Mazower, 1997) The painter goes on wondering if tolerance is not one of the greatest of virtues.

The painter's observation supports what has been argued in the previous sections: while people were well aware of their differences in ethnicity they still lived and worked together with, as the painter puts it, 'respect'. However, ancient hatreds, based on ethnic features, are often considered as a possible prime cause for the Bosnian War. These ancient hatreds would be the result of constructed collective memories among Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. Not just personal experiences, but constructed collective memories of long-past historical developments. Closer examination of these alleged hatreds shows that there is much to be said for this theory (Steven Majstorovic, 1997). The arguments this theory of ancient hatreds produces, might make the emphasis on elite behaviour in contrast to ancient hatreds, fall short. It could therefore help to determine the prime causes for the war.

The primordialist and constructivist contentions of ethno-national identity, as explained by historian Steven Majstorovic, are important in looking at the significance of ancient hatreds in causing the start of the war. In the case of BiH, the primordialist view of the war as the result of ancient hatreds embedded in primordial identity, supports the view that any national group that falls under the political control of another is in mortal danger. Often this view incorporates perspectives of ethnicity as eternal, inflexible and socio-biologically fixed. However, as the previous sections show, ethno-national identity in the region was somewhat flexible and politically adaptive. So, as Majstorovic argues, the primordialist view on the conflict should not be simplified as, for instance, eternal and fixed. The primordialist conception is contrasted by a constructivist view that supports the argument

that ethno-national identity is basically a modern and artificial phenomenon often subjected to social engineering by aspiring leaders who manipulate ethno-national identity (Majstorovic, 1997).

To find out if the war was the result of historically rooted ethnic tensions, or that it was a consequence of artificially created tensions, one must take a closer look on certain early historical developments in the region concerning the three major ethnic groups. It will demonstrate that the stereotypical view of politics in the Balkans as aggressive and conflict-prone is not entirely untrue.

The Balkans have historically been a crossroads for conquest and occupation. The region was settled by Slavic tribes in the sixth century, who enjoyed independence until the twelfth century, when the Hungarians defeated the Croats, and until the fifteenth century, when the Serbs were defeated by the Ottoman Empire. After this period the region was submitted to external rule from Turkey, Italy, Hungary and Austria until the beginning of the twentieth century. However, the Serbs had bargained independence earlier, in the nineteenth century, after a series of revolts. (NIOD, 2002)

The NIOD report (2002) states that after the split of the Christian Church the Slovenes and Croats identified with Roman Catholicism. However, the Serbs, who fell under the Byzantine sphere of influence, formed their independent Serbian Orthodox Church in the thirteenth century. The South Slavs were further differentiated in east and west after the Ottoman Empire overtook the Serbs and Hungary and Rome the Croats. The result was, according to Majstorovic, that when the South Slavs were united in a common state, during the last days of World War I (1918), thousand years of history set a stage for ethno-national tensions and conflict (Majstorovic, 1997).

According to Majstorovic, the Serbian identity was primarily shaped by three historical experiences. First, Majstorovic argues that it is shaped by the famous Battle of Kosovo in 1389, which Serbia lost and that ushered in a period of five hundred years in which Serbs served and resisted Ottoman rule. The Serbian Tsar Dusan established a medieval empire in the region by the fourteenth century. When he died in 1355, his empire fell into crisis. Centralized power diminished as the Serbian nobility broke down the system built up by Dusan. However, prince Lazar re-established control in 1371, and it was his rule that was ended by the Ottoman Turks at the famous battle at Kosovo Polje, the same place where Milosevic would take his stand for the Serbs some 400 years later. The bloody battle decimated Serbian nobility, but it was immediately caught in a process of valorization and primordialization. In other words, it immediately became an important element of Serbia's

national consciousness. It was an heroic defeat for the Serbs, of whom many died martyr deaths. The battle shapes the Serbian national consciousness to this day. The result is an identity marker so embedded in real historical events that it is practically impossible for Serbs to escape its presence in Serbian identity (Majstorovic, 1997).

Second, Semiz (2000) asserts Serbian identity was shaped by the successful series of revolts against the Ottomans early in the nineteenth century which won Serbia its independence. The mythicizing of the Balkan Wars is dominated by the theme of successful revolt and emancipation. Therefore, the remembrance of the independent state that was given up to form the Kingdom of South Slavs became a crucial part of Serbian identity (Semiz, 2000).

Third, as stated by Oberschall, the Serbian identity was moulded by its role as allies of the West in the two World Wars. The Serbs suffered major losses in both the World Wars, and they persistently stress the role they played in the Allied victories. This is also continually compared to the roles of the Croats and Bosniaks, who according to Serbian memory, collaborated with the enemies. The Chetnik resistance and its leader Mihailovich are especially emphasized. However, surprisingly enough the genocidal policies against the Serbs by the Croatian Ustasha and their Bosniak allies during World War II are not considered by the Serbs as a fundamental part of their identity. However, at Serbian grassroots and political levels people use the events to stereotype all Croats and Muslims as Ustasha sympathizers. The leader of the Bosnian SDS branch, Radovan Karadzic, and the Bosnian Serb military commander Ratko Mladic, both used World War II events to demonize Muslims and Croats in Serbian eyes (Oberschall, 2000).

Croatian identity is also closely linked to a medieval empire. However, this empire was given up peacefully to the Hungarian monarchy in 1102. Croats have been shaping their identity by presenting events since 1102 as evidence for the continuity of a Croatian state in waiting. These events are peasant revolts, a line of Croatian kings, and progress in Croatian culture, which in Croatia is seen as Western-European, as distinct from the Serbs, and as dating back to the seventh century. Furthermore, the Catholic Church and its role in opposing Serbian dominance during the interwar period is an important element in Croatian identity (Majstorovic, 1997). As previous sections show, this issue of Serbian dominance, or Croatian obstructionism according to the Serbs, was fiercely debated. However, in 1939 Croatia did become a state within a state after brokering the Cvetković–Maček Agreement.

Croatian identity is also shaped by using World War II events. The Ustasha aspect is minimized, while the Croatian role in Tito's Partisan movement is inflated. However,

literature shows that the majority of Tito's movements were Serbs, and most Croats only joined after the Zagreb-born Tito promised a pardon to all who joined the Partisans in 1943. Yet, Job (2002) adds, many independent Serbian units roamed the region towards the end of World War II to carry out revenge massacres. Thousands were killed and Croats and Muslims argue that they, too, were slaughtered but that the world forgot about the Croatian and Muslim victims of World War II (Job, 2002).

The Croatian identity was further strengthened by events taking place during the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the period between 1968 and 1972, the Croatian Republic tried to secede from Yugoslavia in what is now called the 'Croatian Spring' (Majstorovic, 1997). This crisis started as an attempt to liberalize the communist economic and political system. However, before long, it became infused by nationalist elements that stressed the need of Croatian independence. Tito harshly ended the movement and cleansed the Croatian, and Serbian, party of liberals. This period is used today by many Croats to stereotype the Serbs as the conservative communists and Croats as liberal democrats in Western tradition (Majstorovic, 1997).

As argued before, the Bosnian Muslim identity was basically a tug of war between Croatian, Serbian and Muslim interpretations of historical facts. Majstorovic (1997) argues that Serbs saw the Bosniaks as Slavs who consisted mainly of Serbs, and who were forcibly Islamicized by the Ottoman Turks. Croats saw the Bosniaks as the same Slavs, but as essentially Catholic Croats who got lost under Ottoman pressure. Bosniaks have, of course, their own claims on their geographical and historical descent. As the NIOD report (2002) shows, Muslim identity advanced in 1971, when Tito officially declared them a nationality, in hope that it would stop the claiming of Muslim identity by Serbs and Croats.

In reality, Bosniaks were neither Croats nor Serbs. Before Ottoman invasion, they belonged to a weakly established Bosnian church under Rome's authority (which favours Croatian claims). Yet, the religious practices were closely linked to the Orthodox Church (which favours Serbian claims). However, what would truly characterize Bosniak identity throughout the ages until today was pragmatism. After the Ottoman invasion in the fifteenth century, Bosnian peasants began converting to Islam out of pure pragmatic thinking. After all, it made life under Ottoman rule much easier and less dangerous. Later the Bosniaks would not only adapt to the erosion of the Ottoman Empire, but also to the Austro-Hungarian influence in the nineteenth century, the Balkan Wars, World War I, the first Yugoslavia, World War II, Tito's Yugoslavia, and finally civil war. Serbia and Croatia especially tried to conquer the loyalty of the Bosniaks after the Ottoman Empire fell. In this period, nationalist Bosniaks

stressed the cooperative, tolerant and multicultural nature of the Bosnian society (Majstorovic, 1997). However, was society in BiH really that harmonious and tolerant as the Bosniaks argued?

It is clear that medieval BiH was not isolated and that its development was closely linked to that of Croatia and Serbia. The Ottoman Empire maintained an administrative structure that divided the Bosnian communities along religious, and not ethnic, lines. Mazower (1997) concludes that this meant that people could easily cross from one group to another (Mazower, 1997). In contrast, Majstorovic argues, Croatian and a Serbian national consciousness was very much present as well (Majstorovic, 1997). The Ottomans had built a social system in which ethnic diversity did not constitute the major source of tensions. The Muslim converts were freeholders, or even landowners, while the Serbian and Croatian population formed the majority of peasants who were taxed brutally and suffered constant discrimination. In the reality of this time, we can say class hatreds, between peasants and landlords, and intra-community conflicts over religious practices caused conflict (mainly in the form of small rebellious all-terrorizing militias). Besides, when the Ottoman Empire eroded and lost the capacity to subject populations by force, they tried the method of making concessions. In this period, Bosniak landowners proved to be most hostile to the changes that often favoured Serbian and Croatian minorities in BiH (Majstorovic, 1997).

The Bosnian War has primordial elements as well as constructed characteristics. In these, ancient hatreds have contributed to the outbreak of the devastating war. However, modern politics with its nationalist leaders contributed just as much. It may not be the most satisfactory conclusion, but it seems that an overemphasis on one or the other contention does not provide sufficient understanding of the ethnic-political conflict in BiH and its accountability for starting the Bosnian War.

Chapter conclusion

When he died, Tito left his Yugoslavia in crisis. During the 1980s, many politicians stepped up to fill the power void caused by Tito's death. The Serbian and Croatian aspirations were now no longer suppressed, and during this period nationalist ideology again became an attractive political tool for leaders such as Milosevic, Tudjman and Izetbegovic. While Yugoslavia rapidly fell apart, beginning with the declaration of independence in Slovenia and Croatia, authorities tried to maintain the communist ideal of 'brotherhood and unity' in BiH. However, in 1992, BiH also declared their independence, but it lost a significant part of its territory to the newly created Republica Srpska. Only in 2006 would the break-up be formally finalized after Montenegro declared its independence from Serbia.

It is in the struggle for power after Tito's death that ethnicity assumes a central role. The period around 1990 was characterized by increasingly ethnic-political polarization in villages and cities. Oberschall's theory of a normal and crisis frame can help explain why ethnic polarization progressed relatively rapidly in BiH. In the normal frame people of different ethnic groups cooperated. However, Tito's top-down enforced amnesia had not succeeded and the crisis frame was grounded in the experiences and memories of all the violence that fell upon BiH during and before the twentieth century. Nationalist leaders were offered the option to activate and amplify the crisis frame to their own needs. During this period nationalist rhetoric replaced communism and became central to politics.

A closer look at early historical ethnic, religious and political relations in BiH learns that there is no direct evidence for ancient hatreds as the cause for the Bosnian War. However, as the discussed issues indicate, a set stage in BiH for such ancient hatreds clearly existed. It is clear that from a historical perspective, ethnic identity is both embedded in history and is subject to social engineering. By manipulating public opinion Milosevic, Tudjman, but also Izetbegovic designed the war as its architects. However, the idea of BiH as a multi-ethnic community living in ethnic harmony is a myth. The people's opinions were suppressed, but when the system collapsed it became clear that the collective, nationalist memories were still embedded in exclusivist and ethno-centric discourses.

It is important to discuss the possible causes of the Bosnian War, because it seems that the modern and ancient processes that caused the war are still instigating ethno-political tensions in BiH today. Understanding of the causes of the Bosnian War may be crucial in providing understanding of these current ethno-political tensions.

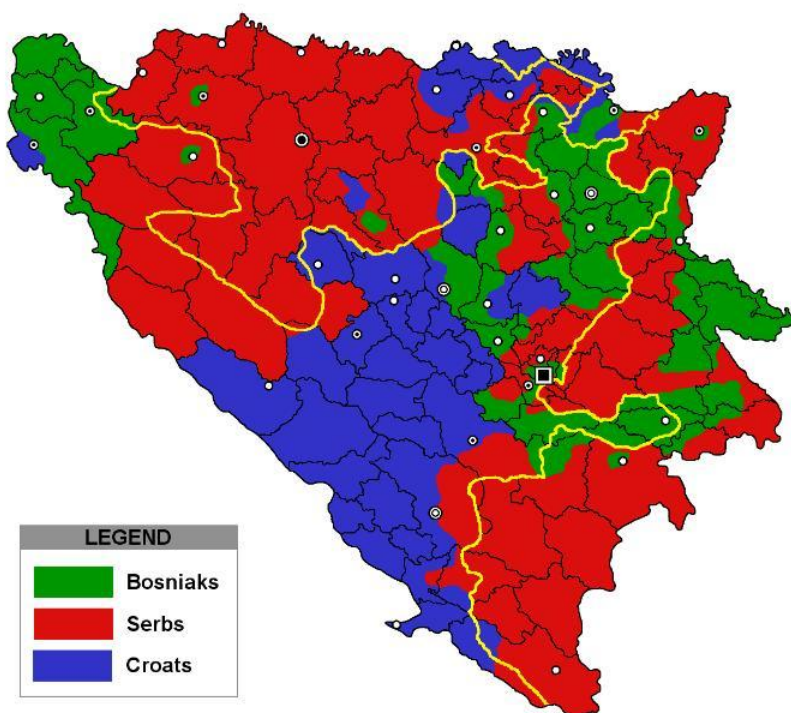
3.0 The Bosnian War and ethnic identities

The previous chapter discussed the possible causes for the Bosnian War. It emphasized political manipulation and ethnic identities which were both confined by history and socially constructed, so-called ancient hatreds. Yet, as this chapter will discuss, the violence of the Bosnian War itself reinforced the difficulties with the ethnic identities of Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats, as described in chapter two. It significantly darkened the prospects for post-war socio-political relations. Study of ethnic identities prior, during and after the Bosnian War indicates that people's sense of ethnic identity changed due to the wartime atrocities and fights. Emotions as fear, hate and love seem to have affected people in the sense that it forced them to select sides and so contribute to the rapidly spreading polarization within Bosnian society.

Violence and identity

On the eve of the war, in 1992, society in BiH was characterized by a very complex ethnical structure (see Map 5). Though nationalist political rhetoric had firmly rooted for some time now, the different ethnic groups were still living rather intermixed. When the war began, Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks were instigated against each other. The outbreak of violence resulted in the finalization of the change of frames which determined people's thought about ethnic categories. During the rise of nationalist rhetoric in the 1980s, people began moving from their normal frame into their crisis frame. As argued in the previous chapter nationalist politicians exerted their power to activate and amplify the crisis frame. People became more and more aware and convinced of the distinctiveness of their ethnic group from other ethnic groups. It left Bosnian society extremely polarized at the outbreak of the war.

Obviously, the course of the war had an even more polarizing effect among the different ethnic groups. Inter-ethnic cooperation faltered as people started to stick only to their own ethnic group. Old ethnic tensions, such as World War II events, may not have been forgotten, but still people lived together in relative harmony for 45 years. Though Tito's suppression of ethnic-nationalist sentiments must be kept in mind, the fact that only very few incidents concerning ethnic violence occurred, indicates that people must have been satisfied with the way of life in BiH (Mazower, 1997). How then did the Bosnian War change people's sense of ethnic identity so drastically that the whole society became hostilely divided along ethnic lines?



Map 5. Ethnical composition of BiH just before the war in 1992.

(Source: Wikimedia Commons Atlas of the World: Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Benedict Anderson, who maintains a constructivist view, sees nations such as BiH as artificial and imagined communities. He holds on to the theory that through the printed communication, people can artificially share cultural homogeneity, shared psychological space and a sense of posterity (Benedict Anderson, 1991). Thus, the communication between members of an ethnic group creates an collective self-consciousness or, in other words, a shared ethnic identity. Anderson's opinion of the importance of media is supported by Oberschall's theory of a normal and a crisis frame.

Oberschall states that nationalist leaders amplified the crisis frame by dehumanizing and demonizing the other group, the threat. To awake and spread fear, they altered the education programs, and made extensive use of popular culture, history, literature, arts, but above all, politics and news media. Fear is a key concept in the case of BiH, and most ethnic conflicts for that matter. Oberschall's research shows that the emotion fear has the most damaging effect on ethnic relations. During the Bosnian War, people feared that they would be exterminated as a group, they feared domination by another group, and they feared assimilation. Besides, they feared more individual misery: fear for one's life and property and the fear of becoming a victim of violence once again. From these fears, Oberschall claims, hate emerges (Oberschall, 2000)

Media tried to spread enough fear to mobilize the population against other ethnic groups. Milosevic began this campaign by using Serbian media to spread the fear for Serbian extinction. Serbian media released highly exaggerated figures on the murders that were committed during World War II. Oberschall argues that, during this war, in the Jasenovac concentration camp, 50.000 Serbs were killed. However, Serbian media claimed that a staggering 700.000 Serbs were murdered in this camp alone. All sides made similar claims to prove victimhood and to justify pre-emptive actions. People of all ethnic groups became traumatized by widespread recollection of memories of atrocities committed in World War II (Oberschall, 2000).

Like Anderson, Majstorovic also recognizes the importance of the media as the means of transportation for the imaging of ethnic identity. He claims that already before the Bosnian War, as the result of wide media coverage, Bosniaks were rapidly transforming from Yugoslavs into Bosnian Muslims. In small villages and even cities such as Sarajevo, women starting wearing veils in public. The first signs of flirtation with Islamic influence from Middle Eastern nations (Iran in particular) became manifest (Majstorovic, 2001).

However, as argued in the previous chapter, Bosniak identity was somewhat more flexible and adaptable than that of the Croats and the Serbs. To stress this point, it is interesting to look at the 1991 population census of BiH. This census was executed on the eve of the outbreak of war and can therefore demonstrate if people felt Muslim, Croatian or Serbian - or more Yugoslavian. Especially when compared to other censuses, pursued in Tito's Yugoslavia, it sheds light on the development of Bosniak identity, the majority of Bosnia's population. However, it is too bad that after the war no new census was initiated, for that could have revealed how people defined themselves ethnically after the war.

In the census of 1991, 43.47 per cent of the Bosnian population perceived of themselves as Muslim in terms of nationality. 31.21 per cent of the Bosnian population saw their nationality as Serbian, and 17.38 per cent as Croatian. Only 5.54 per cent considered themselves to be Yugoslavs before any other nationality. However, the census of 1953 still showed 44.4 per cent of the population as Serbian, 23 per cent as Croatian and 31,3 per cent as Yugoslav. Since the Muslim identity had then not yet been recognized by Tito's regime, the Bosniaks indicated that they felt Yugoslav. One might think this was just because they were not given the option to feel more Muslim than anything else, however, this is not true. In 1961, Muslims were still not recognized as a nation of people, though in the census of that year 25.7 per cent of the Bosnian population indicated to feel Muslim by nationality, against 42.9 per cent and 21.7 per cent Serbs and Croats respectively. This time only 8.4 per cent felt

Yugoslav. These shifts in the censuses reveal the increase of Bosnian Muslim nationality over time. Ten years later, the 1971 census showed that the Bosniaks formed, for the first time, the majority of the Bosnian population with 39.6 per cent. The 1981 census shows that this remained practically the same (Census Data, www.fzs.ba, site last checked 16-05-2012).

However, those who were not sure about their ethno-national identity, often (rapidly) became so after the start of the war. The ethnic warfare during the Bosnian War was horrifying and fear-provoking. During the war, forces such as those of the Serbs Željko Ražnatović (more widely known as Arkan) and Vojislav Šešelj terrorized whole areas. Often only a mere rumour that they were on their way was enough to make all non-Serbs flee the area. Such bands of thugs were recruited and encouraged by the leading politicians. And though these militias existed on all sides of the conflict, the Serbian ones were more frequent (Cohen, March 1995). According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report on BiH by Cohen (1995), 90 per cent of the war crimes committed during the war can be blamed on such Serbian militias. Political scientist John Mueller argues that they operated in the framework provided by the army and consisted mainly of common criminals and soccer hooligans. When civil order ceased to exist in certain areas, or when the police were actually supporting their actions, they would appear. Especially at the start of the war, these militias were the only ones who were really willing to use violence, and they swiftly took control of an area. There was no police-force to protect the non-Serb villagers, and, thus, they became victims to violent intimidation and atrocities, such as the systematic use of rape and murder. The villager's best option, Mueller concludes, was to flee the area (John Mueller, 2000).

The fact that people could not oppose the behaviour of the militias of their own ethnic group was important with regard to people's changing sense of ethnic identity. When one did, he or she would be forced out of the place at best, and raped, beaten or killed at worst. Mueller discusses a Croatian ex-militiaman who argues that his militia not only killed Serbian civilians on a large scale, but also unsympathetic Croats. Such actions resulted in a somewhat logical development. Wherever the militia's arrived, the social situation in the village or town changed. Where Serbs, Croats and Muslims had been relatively friendly to each other despite of the war, they now ostracized the other ethnic group and assumed a hostile attitude. Regularly this resulted in long-time-neighbours killing each other (Mueller, 2000).

A remarkable example of such control by a militia, was that of the town of Visegrad. In this town a native Serbian citizen managed to keep total control over the town. By means of sadistic and violent intimidation, his militia of only fifteen (!) well-armed men (which included some of his family members) forced 14.500 Bosniaks out of Visegrad and scared the

local Serbs enough to suppress any dissent. Though, it must be said that the local Serbs could benefit from the Muslim flight, mainly in terms of looting much needed supplies. Besides, that paramilitary or army units did not have to be substantial to dominate, becomes clear when one looks at the violence that took place at Srebrenica in 1992, often the best remembered by the international community as the signature atrocity of the Bosnian War. No more than thirty extremist Bosnian Serbs and Muslims were responsible for this violence which terrorized the 35.000 inhabitants of the city (Cigar, 1995).

Ordinary people were caught up in a circle of violence which often originated locally with a handful of armed, ruthless, nationalist criminals. Cheryl Benard, who interviewed 250 Muslim refugees, discusses the emotions ordinary people felt during this war. She claims that people felt bewilderment before rage. According to her, the people could not explain where the Serbian hostility came from. All of her interviewees claimed that they lived and worked with Serbs, and that they had been close friends before. Contrasting to the theory of ancient hatreds, Benard states: ‘one could argue that Bosnia shows how weak and how fluid political identity really is’. (Quoted in: Zalmay Khalilzad, 1993)

During the war, paramilitaries and army soldiers ruled by means of, often, extreme violence in villages and town all over BiH. While psychopathic behaviour was not the norm before the war, it seems, by looking at the many locally committed atrocities, that it might have been the new norm during the war. The abovementioned militias were habitually roaring drunk and indulged themselves in sadistic violence, pillaging, murders and orgies of rape. Journalist Peter Maass writes in his book *Love Thy Neighbor* about the weird enthusiasm of the killers and torturers: ‘[They] laughed, sang, and got drunk while inflicting their crimes. They weren’t just doing a job, they were doing something they enjoyed. There were plenty of Serbs who enjoyed killing civilians and eagerly sought the opportunity to do so[...]. These killers never had so much fun.’ (Peter Maass, 1996)

Mueller claims this sort of carnage was often supported by local co-ethnics (Mueller, 2000). After all, – apart from fear for repercussions – if the property of the local Muslim is plundered and set ablaze, it may seem sensible or even rational to some local Serbs to join the criminals. The killed or fled owner cannot be helped anymore, so why have moral restraints? Such thinking was the result of the war in BiH and it forced people to think in terms of ethnic differences.

Logically, some of those victimized by the ethnic violence wished to seek their revenge. However, as mentioned above the violence was so extreme and common, that local resistance was actually discouraged at its best and outright suicide at its worst. Therefore a

significant number of people who fled the actions of a devastating militia, joined like-minded militias in areas controlled by their own ethnic group. This proved especially the case for young Muslim men. The most notorious Muslim paramilitary units, the Black Swans and the Seventeenth Krajina, consisted for a large part of men aged between twenty and twenty-two who were orphans as a result of Croatian and Serbian violence. Needless to say, these armed militias were even more motivated to commit violence on the other ethnic groups.

The result of this development was that ordinary people were confronted with an almost impossible dilemma: they could be dominated by vicious thugs of their own ethnic group or by vicious thugs of the other ethnic group. At least the murdering criminals on their own side were willing to fight to protect them from the murdering criminals on the other side (Mueller, 2000).

Though the choice between two sides of thugs may have been easy, it did not necessarily mean that daily life improved. Mueller, for instance, argues that more than often the dominating unit began quarrelling among themselves when most of their original victims fled (Mueller, 2000). Subsequently, they started looking for more prey to kill, rape and rob among those who remained, whether ethnically related or not.

It was at this stage, that the burgeoning ethnic violence, corruption and profiteering that at the local level, began affecting the war aims at the political level. Especially in the Serbian-controlled areas of Bosnia, the systemic nepotism and corruption severely hindered the war effort which was organised from the top. However, as becomes clear both from Kofi Annan's and NIOD's report on Srebrenica, this was also true for the Bosniak-controlled Srebrenica area (Kofi Annan, 1999. NIOD, 2002, Maass, 1996). Here, Bosniak leader Nasar Oric controlled all the jobs and his men enjoyed the most food and the largest homes of the city. He and his men committed fraud by over-counting the population to get access to more humanitarian aid. With the extra aid, they drove up prices and then sold it on the black market for personal profit. Naturally, ordinary Bosniaks were not allowed to leave because their count provided Oric and his men with their income. Maass (1996) argues that the case of Sarajevo was similar. Here Jusuf Prazina, better known as Juka, defended Sarajevo against the Serbs in 1992, but afterwards pillaged the city and its inhabitants regardless of their ethnicity. His gang of criminals, fanatics, extremists, drunks and revenge-seekers raped, killed and abducted, and Luka sold most of their loot on the black market (Kofi Annan, 1999. NIOD, 2002, Maass, 1996).

People who held the right positions could make fortunes by illegal selling. To indicate the depravity of the time, Mueller gives the example of Serbs leaders who sold to the enemy in order to gain personally (Mueller, 2000). Much of the weapons the Bosnian Serb army inherited from the JNA was sold to Croats and Bosniaks. Naturally, these weapons were then used on Serbs troops elsewhere. Another example are the millions-worth of oil sold by Croatia to Bosnian Serbs, later to be used against Croats in BiH. However, the most salient example is the tanks Serbian military commanders rented (!) to their Croatian adversaries (Mueller, 2000).

The Bosnian War, thus, was a complex and chaotic war. The terms ‘ethnicity’ and ‘nationalism’ became an excuse for common criminals to resort to their most ruthless and cruel behaviour. It left ordinary people with rather bleak options. Often to their own aversion, they were forced to support their own ethnic group because it provided the minimal form of protection that could not be expected from the other ethnic group. Some of them revelled in the new socio-political structure and killed, raped and thieved out of revenge, cruelty, greed or desperation. Prior to the war, ethnic diversity was manifest but not obstructing. People knew the ethnicity of their neighbours, colleagues and friends, yet on a grassroots level, as argued in chapter two, not much ethnic tension was clearly noticeable. If people were not happily living their lives together, they at least were cooperating and living in harmony. Author Gregory Kent argues that pre-war Bosnian society was actually so cohesive that many Bosnians ‘did not flee their villages, believing, even while the neighbouring village burned, that such things could simply never happen where they lived’ (Gregory Kent, 2006). However, soon, ethnic hatreds became entrenched in Bosnian society. In certain situations during the war, their ethnicity was the reason they lived or died. Since they were unable to change the situation as it was, it was often in their best interest to join the mayhem. Ethnic groups no longer cooperated and became increasingly isolated from each other. Atrocities on both sides incited the complete vaporization of trust across ethnic lines. People were forced into their crisis frame and this time there was no Tito working to get them out of it.

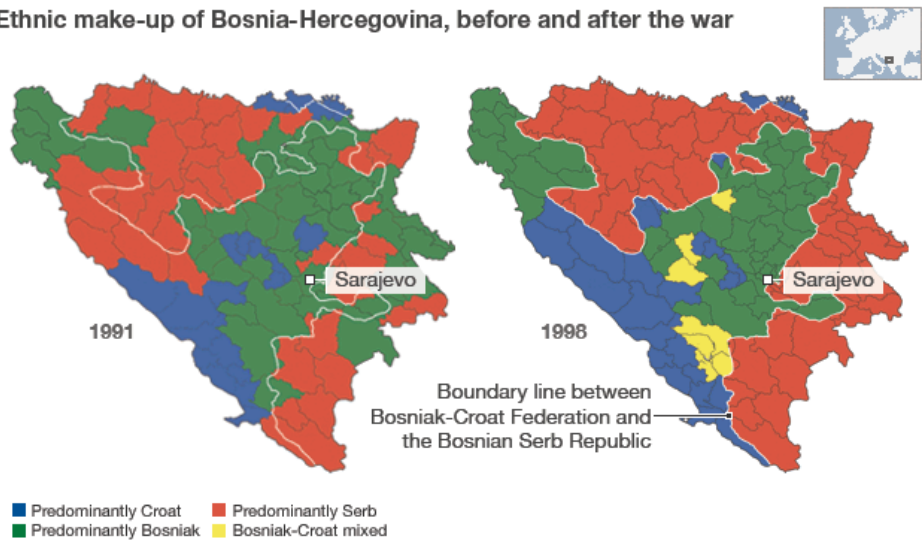
Truce and identity

The Bosnian War led to heightened segregation between the Bosniak, Serb and Croat ethnic groups. However, like after every war, people had to try to reconcile and restore ethnic relations. This seemed an impossible goal directly after the fighting stopped in 1995. Indeed, to many it may even seem an impossible goal today (2012). The war, that was characterized by brutal war crimes, left 2.2 million people displaced and 100.000 to 200.000 dead. An additional 10.000 people are still missing today. Bosnian society was ripped apart. How then, was people's sense of identity directly affected by the end of the fighting in 1995?

In Mostar, the second largest city in BiH with 100.000 inhabitants, Stari Most, an old Ottoman bridge (1566) in the central part of the city, was destroyed by Croatian soldiers in late 1993. The bridge had been Mostar's pride and symbolized the ethnic unity in the city for ages. The attack on the bridge was a symbolic attack on Bosnian society as a whole, and an assault on its pre-war identity as well. After the war, steps were taken to rebuild this bridge and thereby restore Mostar's ethnic harmony. It proved difficult, but in 2004 the reconstructed Stari Most opened for the people. However, the bridge could not restore ethnic relations on its own. Even today, most of the Croatian population live on the west bank of the river, while the Bosniak population live on the east bank. The river forms a physical boundary for ethnic reconciliation (Carl Grodach, 2002).

Like in Mostar, everywhere in BiH the social structure was broken and changed as a result of the war. When the fighting broke out in Mostar, in 1991, many Mostarians fled the city. However, Mostar became a place of refuge for people who fled even worse violence. Such demographic developments were common throughout the whole of BiH and the changes were significant. Of today's inhabitants, only 20 per cent originated from Mostar, the rest moved there during or directly after the war. Originally, Croats, Bosniaks and Serbs lived together, though Serbs formed a minority in this particular city. The Serbs fled the city after a joint Croat-Bosniak army (that would later dissolve in two armies fighting each other) defeated the Serbian army attacking the town. Almost no Serbs have returned since the war (Grodach, 2002).

Ethnic make-up of Bosnia-Herzegovina, before and after the war



Map 6. Ethnic make-up of BiH, before and after the war.

(Source: Wikimedia Commons Atlas of the World: Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Like the Serbs from Mostar, many in BiH could not return home directly after the war (many still cannot). Often these people had been the victim of organized ethnic cleansing. Moreover, the politics that dominated after the war, those of partition, was actually solidifying the results of that (sub-chapter 4.2 will elaborate on this). Besides, the victims were likely to never see the offenders prosecuted. It seems questionable such individual and social trauma would provide for the right conditions for reconciliation..

Trust between the different ethnic groups was destroyed during the war and when the war ended, most people chose to live separate from the other group. In bigger towns, where many people of different ethnic groups lived, separate daily life was more difficult since they lived in close proximity to each other. Starting immediately after the war, people in BiH sent their children to separate schools, they maintained separate police forces, separate fire brigades, separate shops, even separate telephone companies. Divisions remained sharp, especially at schools. As the New York Times journalist Matthew Brunwasser correctly puts it: ‘In many Bosnian schools children who were not even born fifteen years ago when the Dayton Agreement brought an end to the war, provide an gloomy prospect for the future.’ (Brunwasser, July 1, 2011)

The Bosnian national identity did not depend primarily on ethnicity prior to the war. Instead, it depended on a lifestyle that was multi-ethnic. However, the war left the people with the realization that they always needed to keep in mind that their friends could be their enemies tomorrow. The atrocities of the war will be remembered and passed on to future generations. The multi-ethnic aspect of Bosnian society permanently changed after the war,

historian Stevan Weine argues (1995). How could it not? Though the Bosniaks fought back vigorously and committed their share of atrocities, they, the clear majority in BiH, had mainly been the victims of incredible Croatian and Serbian aggression. Now that ethnic tensions and even hatreds were entrenched in Bosnian society, its future would depend on political leadership once again. These leaders immediately began developing a post-war Muslim nationalism. The language, Serbo-Croatian, was now called Bosnian, and Islam began playing a more important and central role in Bosnian society. Different human rights organizations have reported the oppression of Serbs, Croats and mixed people in BiH. Besides, Bosnian leaders adopted a nationalist way of thinking which was more extreme than pre-war nationalism, advocating even more ethnic exclusion and division. So, the risks for renewed violence remained eminent directly after the war - and indeed, they remain so today (Stevan Weine, 1997).

Chapter conclusion

Due to the nationalist politics during the 1980s, BiH was left extremely polarized at the outbreak of the Bosnian War. People started to really notice and emphasize the distinctiveness of their own ethnic group from to another. The war in itself contributed to this development of polarization.

The Bosnian society became hostilely divided along ethnic lines as a result of a change in people's sense of ethnic identity during the war. Anderson and Majstorovic, who hold a constructivist and a primordialist perspective respectively, both agree on the large role media played in influencing people's sense of identity. Media, and its manipulation, served as a means of transportation for the imaging of ethnic identity. It spread the fear needed to mobilize people. It accelerated the development of Serbian, Croatian, but especially Bosniak identity creation.

The course of the war quickly took away any doubt about one's ethnic-national identity. Para-military bands of criminals (though also formal military units) of all ethnic groups terrorized the country, but also formed people's only form of protection. The units violently kept control over villages and towns. Co-ethnics were forced to tolerate or join in daily atrocities. Due to hate or fear, they adopted a hostile attitude towards their former neighbours, friends and colleagues of the other ethnic group. Resistance, regardless of ethnicity, was met with extreme and sadistic violence. The criminals that ruled territories seemed to enjoy the orgies of violence they inflicted on the people, and they combined this with extensive robbery and corruption. BiH plunged into a world of murder, torture, rape, pillage, corruption and revenge, in which warlords supported by armed thugs wielded absolute power.

Ethnic hatreds became entrenched in Bosnian society, and by the end of the war trust across ethnic lines had vanished completely. All social structure was ruptured and changed during the war. People were traumatized and demographic changes due to refugees and ethnic cleansing were significant. People began living separately from each other, further contributing to the division of BiH along ethnic lines. The multi-ethnic aspect of the Bosnian identity was gone. Extreme nationalist post-war politics contributed to the instability of the newly brokered peace.

The extent to which the war impacted ethnic identities and the extent to which these became entrenched in Bosnian society because of it, is central to our understanding of the current ethno-political tensions.

Chapter 4: How the war enflamed Bosnia's ethnic-political situation

The previous chapter discussed the Bosnian War and how ethnic identities were affected by it. It concludes with the finding that the trauma of the war had greatly impacted the social structure in BiH, a development that would have substantial consequences for Bosnia's future.

This chapter will build upon chapter three by focussing on how the Bosnian War resulted in the current unstable ethnic-political situation in BiH. It takes a closer look upon the shaping of post-war political and social relations. BiH shows clear signs of ethnically based problems in which find their origins in the war of the early 1990s, indicating that the Bosnian War was indeed responsible for the current ethnic-political tensions in BiH. As this chapter will explain, social and political life was disrupted to such an extent that the following ethnic tensions are currently obstructing political, social and economic development in BiH.

War, ethnic division and post-war politics

The previous chapter argues that the ethno-political divisions and even hatreds have been entrenched in Bosnian society since the start of the Bosnian War. The Dayton Agreement only contributed to this, as will be further discussed in the next chapter. Society in BiH is completely dominated by ethno-political dynamics which find expression in political, social and economic discrimination. Political scientist Bedrudin Brljavac, who writes extensively on the subject of ethnicity, states that 'everything – from the greeting you use to the dialect you speak and the newspaper in your coat pocket – is judged, commented upon and categorized in terms of an omnipresent, mythicized 'ethnicity'. To see oneself as a Bosnian citizen instead of Bosniak, Serb or Croat is sometimes even considered a treachery against one's ethno-national group identity (Bedrudin Brljavac, 2012).

The same distrust and ethnic segregation is evident at the political level. BiH remained divided in the territorial sense of the word. It split up in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS), of which the first had a Bosniak majority and a sizeable Croatian minority, and the latter a predominantly Serbian population. Overarching these entities, is a central Bosnian government and a rotating presidency in which a Muslim, a Serb and a Croat each fulfil two terms as president. However, as the previous chapter has already mentioned, post-war politics in BiH have been dominated by ethno-nationalist politicians. Moreover, the economic hardship which the country inherited from the war also contributes to ethnic tensions. It remains dependent on external aid, and

struggles to complete the transition from a centrally-planned communist economy to a modern market-economy (Dan Bilefski, 2008). It is clear that more than sixteen years after the war, BiH is still very much recovering.

The entrenchment of ethnic diversity in Bosnian society resulted in ever sharpening socio-political notions of Serbian, Croatian and Muslim identity. Serbian identity is tied to their view of history. Their heroic defeat at Kosovo Polje in 1389, forms the foundation of their primordialization process. However, as Majstorovic argues, they seem not to be able to escape their 'apocalyptic destiny', which is the product of 'national paranoia' and a sense of a 'messianic mission to defend Christianity from the mounting forces of Islam' combined. To exemplify how shackled the Serbs are by their view of history, one can point to the mystification of the 250.000 Serbs from the Croatian Krajina region during the war, that has already started. Or one can point to the Serbian focus on massacres of Serbs in the Srebrenica area just before their own atrocities of July 1995 (Majstorovic, 2001). Majstorovic's argument about Serbia's paranoia and defensive character, made in 2001, is supported by journalist Dan Bilefski in 2008. Bilefski sees Serbia as the protector of Serbs, within or outside Serbia, and he argues that a secession by RS will most probably be supported by Serbia (Bilefski, 2008).

While the Serbian identity, based on heroic defiance and regional dominance, has already been in a process of primordialization for a long time, the Croatian identity is still very much going through that process, which is devoted to reinforce the nation by referring to a thousand year history. After the Bosnian War, Tudjman fervently tried to hold onto the power and privileges Croatia had enjoyed during the communist period. Already in 1994, this notion was amplified by the introduction of a new Croatian currency, which name, 'Kuna', goes back to the currency used by the Ustasha regime during World War II. Moreover, the Croats declared that their language is in fact a separate language from Serbian. However, Majstorovic, reciting most linguists, argues that the differences between the Croatian and Serbian dialects are probably less pronounced than between British and American English. Nevertheless, the Croatian identity's process of primordialization thus continues in high gear.

Characteristic for the region's ethno-national relations, Serbs and Bosniaks have reacted to the Croatian linguistic question by expressing the distinctiveness of their own dialect. Indeed, while Serbs and Croats continue their visions of historically based martyrdom and autonomy, the Bosniaks are capable to pursue their idea of ethnic identity more freely. They have no alleged thousand year state or an heroic defeat in Kosovo, and the consequence is that the Bosniaks are able to pick and choose rather eclectically, to imagine their place in

the world. Their primordialization process is closely watched by the international community in order to intervene when it develops into a process that undermines security (Majstorovic, 2001).

In his article, Bilefski cites senior United Nations envoy, Miroslav Lajcak, who says about the current ethno-political tensions: ‘The political situation is difficult, volatile and unstable, but it is not undermining security. Violence cannot be ruled out, but I do not see the prospect of another war’ (Bilefski, 2008). However, this was in 2008. In 2012, four years of negative developments and incidents later, Brljavac argues: ‘It is important to note that widespread ethnic and religious polarization has been proven to increase the risk of civil war. From the signing of the Dayton accords, local politicians and the media have, from time-to-time, mentioned war as a possible option’. Though full-scale war, like in the early 1990s, may seem an unreal scenario, the military option is hinted at or even brought up when necessary by local and national politicians (Brljavac, 2012). However, as we have seen on the eve of the Bosnian War, politicians are able to push ordinary people into a war rather easily once an atmosphere of fear and mistrust has been created.

It is thus safe to conclude that the Bosnian War did in fact form the basis on which the post-war ethnic politicians could continue their nationalist hegemonies. Since the war, these politicians have recurrently been using inter-ethnic fear, the political tool of the late 1980s, to win elections. Muslim, Croatian and Serbian politicians in BiH are perfectly aware of the political use of what Brljavac identifies as ‘Balkanization’ and ‘Europeanization’⁴. Indeed, post-war BiH has been subjected to a process of increased ‘Balkanization’, which is contrary to the ‘western’ norms and values associated with ‘Europeanization’. ‘Europeanization’ does not bring those politicians the votes they need from their own ethnic groups (Brljavac, 2012).

The Bosnian War has, in fact, changed the nature of ethno-nationalist politics to a certain extent. Because now, myths and the memories of the masses shape the ethno-nationalist nature of political elites in BiH. And the voters react positively to their ethnic-nationalism. However, by looking at the economic, social and political obstruction the country has experienced since the start of the war, the current policy-model, based on ethnic exclusion, clearly does not work for BiH as a model of governance.

The rather complex political structure that was put in use after the war ended in 1995, forced politicians of all ethnic backgrounds to cooperate. It has not been an easy time. Since the war, the country has suffered from several significant additional political crises, while the

⁴ These concepts were first explained in sub-chapter ‘Conceptual framework’ in the Introduction (page 9).

whole system is already based on ethnic antagonism. The constant inter-ethnic distrust Bosnia's politicians inherited from the war, make consensual political practices almost impossible. Political scientist Arabella Thorp's House of Commons report shows that BiH's political structure does not create strong government, but is designed to prevent the majority to make decisions that unfavourably affect the other groups (Thorp, 2011). Therefore, as Bilefsky argues, the country experienced one of its worst political crises when the Bosnian Serbs protested against a new voting system aimed at preventing politicians from blocking major reform attempts by simply not showing up at meetings (Bilefsky, 2008). Naturally, the Bosnian Serbs feared that they would be outvoted in the new system. The RS condemned the voting system, and its prime-minister at the time, Milorad Dodik (now president of the RS), threatened to withdraw his party's representatives from all institutions in BiH (Bilefsky, 2008). The new voting system never passed due to intervention by the EU. However, the most destabilizing political crisis since the war had yet to come, in the form of the 2011 referendum crisis, which the RS leadership used in their attempt to win support for secession of the RS from BiH (chapter five will further elaborate on this).

The squabbling by Bosnia's ethno-nationalist politicians, increases Bosnia's risk of getting behind in the process towards European integration compared to other Balkan states such as Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Croatia. In 2005, the EU started negotiations about an accession of BiH to the EU. At the time, the EU assumed that ethnic tensions eased and that the former hostile ethnic groups were cooperating at state level. However, BiH proved them wrong. In 2010, after the elections, the country was again on the verge of falling into a chaos of ethnic hostilities, when the referendum crisis began to take form and the Croats in the FBiH disputed the legitimacy of the federal entities and formed the parallel Croat National Assembly as a reaction (Thorp, 2011).

Joining the political and economic structures of EU could, in fact, offer great benefits for BiH (Brjavac, 2012). The country is supposed to engage in a process of transformation and adopt EU norms, as part of the earlier mentioned process of 'Europeanization'. However, instead it is much more focussed on pursuing large ethno-nationalist projects and preserving short-term ethnic interests, as demonstrated by attempts to establish a third federal entity in the country, in which Bosnian Croats would constitute the majority (hence the Croat National Assembly). Yet, these projects have the potential to revive the inter-ethnic conflicts from the early 1990s. Besides, as Brjavac argues, recent history shows that each political project of territorial separation after the dissolution of the Yugoslav state, has resulted in massive ethnic cleansing (Brjavac, 2012).

The post-war political relations in BiH are subjected to a self-reinforcing process. Everybody in the country, regardless of their ethnic background, has been affected by the war of the 1990s some way or another. Though Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats lived intertwined lives for 45 years in the former Yugoslavia of Tito, celebrating holidays together and with intermarriage not uncommon in the bigger towns, they now live separate lives in one country. When Bilefsky asked Dodik in 2008 about the change since the war he replied: ‘The dissolution of the old state and the war that followed had destroyed whatever optimism I once had about different ethnic groups collectively deciding one another’s fates. Bosnia is a divided country. There is not a single event or holiday except for New Year’s or the First of May, that we celebrate together. I have lost all of my illusions.’ (Bilefsky, 2008) This is a rather bleak comment by the current president of the RS but it seems to explain Bosnian politics more correctly than anybody would like to admit. Yet, ethno-nationalist politicians as Dodik, seem to attract the blame of Bosnia’s impeding political development from the international community, primarily that of the EU and the US, who brokered the peace in 1995. As Brunwasser cites US Assistant Secretary of State Philip H. Gordon, who blamed leaders and officials for the recent disputes and lack of progress: ‘Bosnian politicians have been too willing to stoke ethnic fears and to privilege their own personal political interests over the needs of the people.’ (Brunwasser, June 2011)

War, ethnic division and post-war social relations

‘It’s a myth that the past is forgotten’, Brunwasser cites a Bosnian receptionist called Krizanovic in 2011. ‘Muslims and Croats are friends, only when it’s a business lunch.’ (Brunwasser, 2011) The previous chapters of this thesis demonstrate that, indeed, the past is not easily forgotten in BiH, not even when it seems to be. However, post-war BiH is not guilty of false pretences. Ethnic divisions are the common theme at Bosnia’s social level, and it has been so since the war started. The relative flexibility or even cohesiveness, as Kent argues⁵, within socio-ethnic relations, which characterized Bosnian society prior to the war, was demolished during the war. The war has entrenched ethnic differences in Bosnian social life to such an extent that one can hardly speak of a ‘Bosnian social life’. Rather, three major ethnic groups and some small ethnic groups are living separately within the same borders.

⁵ See Chapter 7. Here Kent argues that pre-war Bosnian society was actually so cohesive that many Bosnians ‘did not flee their villages, believing, even while the neighbouring village burned, that such things could simply never happen where they lived’.

Ethnic division remains sharp in all aspects of social life, but it is especially apparent at schools. The educational system is a good example of how people in Bosnia clench to their respective ethnic identities. Most schools in the FBiH are meant for either Muslim or Croatian children. However, there are 34 mixed schools in the FBiH, yet all of them are still very much divided. Some of them house a Muslim and a Croatian school under one roof, others let the students study in different classrooms. Brunwasser gives the example of the local grade school in Vitez, in the FBiH. Here children say that fights among them are common. Usually they are caused by differences of language or religion. Because the school is divided into a Muslim and a Croatian school but operates on the same schedule, teachers have to make big efforts to maintain order during breaks. Brunwasser quotes Rijad Pedljak, an 11 year old Muslim boy: 'They can stop the fights, but they can't stop the war.' (Brunwasser, July 2011)

When Damir Masic, Minister of Education and Science, is asked by Brunwasser to explain the educational problem, he reacts by saying that unification is, in fact, 'his priority'. However, it is difficult because the education policy is almost completely run by the Bosnian Federation's ten cantons and its local politicians. His limited influence on the cantons is heavily resisted by these local politicians who care only about practicing ethnic politics (Brunwasser, July 2011).

Problems at schools are subjects of discussions in their own right. People of different ethnic backgrounds squabble about motives for sending children to certain schools. They accuse each other's political parties of pressuring people to send their children to mixed schools to prevent the other group from filling-up the school and taking it over. This is especially evident among the Croatian population. They fear losing their voice amidst the Muslim majority of BiH (which today consist of 70 per cent Bosniaks, 25 per cent Croats, and 5 per cent Serbs) (Thorp, 2011). Because of the war, ethnic identity has become the most important aspect of social life in BiH. Brunwasser quotes Armin Imamovic, principal of the Bosniak part of the school in Vitez: 'people are afraid of losing their language and their identity. They are afraid they will disappear if they study together.' (Brunwasser, July 2011)

Since the war ended, but especially since the last ten years, BiH has been going through a transformation and modernization process described as the process of 'Europeanization' (first mentioned in the first section of this chapter). 'Europeanization' is best explained as the influence and impact of the EU on the domestic political, legal and economic structures of aspiring members (Brljavac, 2012). It should, according to political scientist Claudio Radaelli, '...consist of processes of a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways

of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies.' (Claudio Radaelli, 2004) The goal of this process, as it is envisaged by the EU, is to lead BiH into a democratic transition, which is thought to create social cohesion and economic well-being in the country (Bruno Coppieters et al., 2004). However, the process is severely obstructed, as argued before, by a rising emphasis on legal, political and social policies based fundamentally on ethno-nationalist divisions. Yet, apparently and paradoxically, a majority of the Bosnian population supports integration into the EU, while, at the same time, still preferring ethno-nationalist political programmes (Brljavac, 2012). A closer look upon the social and political situation in BiH demonstrates that this way of life, this process of 'Balkanization', based on ethno-nationalist values and norms of ethnic exclusion, does not go hand-in-hand with 'Europeanization'.

On the contrary Brljavac argues that ethno-nationalist segregation in BiH can only lead to further marginalisation of the 'universal values of tolerance, dialogue and trust, whilst increasing ethnic homogenization is swiftly dissolving the very idea of state citizenship itself' (Brljavac, 2012). Social relations in post-war BiH are, according to political scientists Peter Vermeersch and Heleen Touquet, characterized by the fact that the majority of citizens are in a position of homo duplex, or a divided humanity, since they are in a struggle between being a 'genuine human being' and a 'loyal ethnic being'. In other words, people make decisions that go against the compassion of human nature, just to remain loyal to their respective ethnic groups. In fact, Touquet and Vermeersch argue, 'political space has become limited and ever more unwelcome for groups such as those who see themselves as Yugoslav, Bosnian and so forth' (Heleen Touquet and Peter Vermeersch, 2011). People who do see themselves as Yugoslav or Bosnian are excluded from the typical interpretations of the outcomes of the Bosnian War. In a situation where nationalism has exceeded everything else, and in which there are many localised variations in ethnic identity and national sentiments, it is not really possible to see yourself as Yugoslav or Bosnian.

Brljavac agrees with Touquet and Vermeersch's statement. Collectivity, he claims, transcends individuality in BiH's social relations because a democratic model based on freedoms and individual rights is transcended by the notion of nationalist collectivity. He adds that group collectivity results in an increasing isolation of the three ethnic groups. They live side by side, but they are increasingly estranged from each other. Ethnic segregation is obvious in all aspects of life in BiH, for instance in education, languages, government and living areas. Sub-chapter 3.2 gave the example of the city of Mostar; it represents a

development widely spread through BiH that resulted from the war and the ethnic segregation: the development of ethnically pure and separated territories. These 'ghettos' are undermining the notion of unity in diversity, something that characterized social relations in pre-war BiH (Brljavac, 2012).

Also, the important aspect of the prosecution of war criminals in the evaluation of social relations since the war should be kept in mind. Even though the social, economic and political situation remains problematic in BiH, many hope that the conviction of war criminals, such as Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and Bosnian Serb military commander Ratko Mladic, may contribute to stability and peace in BiH. Karadzic was indicted by the International Court Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (hereinafter ICTY) in July 2008 on accusations of ordering the Srebrenica massacre and the mass murder of thousands of other Bosniaks. Mladic was indicted in May 2011.

The ICTY has only indicted a small fraction of all the war criminals currently walking around in BiH (probably around 9000). The ICTY primarily aims at the prosecution of the highest in command during the Bosnian War (Monika Nalepa, 2004). Many of these people still hold governmental or other important positions in BiH. To find these people, lower ranked perpetrators of war crimes are interrogated and offered sentence reduction in exchange for crucial information that can reveal the chain of command. However, as sub-chapter 3.2 has already mentioned, this results in the fact that many people will never see real justice for the crimes they have endured during the war. Yet again, many of the people responsible for terrible atrocities are visible in daily public life. To engage more effectively in prosecuting these war criminals as soon as possible, the Office of the Higher Representative appointed a War Crimes Chamber in the State Court of Bosnia in 2002. This court consists of former staff members of the ICTY, but being Bosnjaks, Croats and Serbs, they are better aware of the discrepancy between the expectations of victims and the administering of justice by the ICTY (Nalepa, 2007).

By going after those who are most visible in public life, the War Crimes Chamber tries to create an incentive mechanism to shy away war crime perpetrators from public office. Holding offices thus increases their chances of being prosecuted. Socially, this strategy has positive effects. Victims do not have to look at the faces of the perpetrators every day and people become less obsessed with the past. Though this may be considered a more just method of prosecution for victims, political scientist Monika Napela concludes that although justice seems the goal of the ICTY, it in fact produces truth by plea bargaining. By

exchanging reduced sentencing for truth, they contribute to a fundament on which better reconciliation is possible. More importantly, she demonstrates that refugee-returns (the number of people that return home after they fled the violence during the war) en post-war social relations react more positively to the truth-revealing methods than to 'pure' sentencing methods (in which convicts do more jail time) (Napela, 2007).

Chapter conclusion

The question of what impact the Bosnian War had on ethnic divisions and how these shaped post-war political and social relations, is inevitable, and central to gaining understanding of the current ethno-political tensions. Currently, such tensions in BiH are characterized by distrust and constant misgiving in the minds of people of the different ethnic groups. The result of the war was that ethnic divisions became entrenched in Bosnian society, in political and social relations.

Since the war, political relations have been characterized again by ethno-nationalist politics. The post-war political structure forced ethno-nationalist politicians to cooperate. However, nothing of that sort seems to happen. Instead, politicians engaged in ethnic politics dangerously similar to pre-war politicians like, for instance, Milosevic. They increasingly use inter-ethnic fear, the political tool which was so crucial to the outbreak of war, as a means to win elections. Besides, it seems to work. People are predominantly voting for co-ethnic politicians who promise ethno-centred programmes of governance, while the whole political system is already completely based on ethnic antagonism.

BiH is moving towards a process of 'Balkanization', resulting in increased nationalism. Consequently it diverged from a process of 'Europeanization', which aims at integration into the EU. By focussing on the pursuit of large ethno-nationalist projects and the preservation of short-term ethnic interests, Bosnia is risking to lose the political and economic benefits of EU integration. Besides, such projects have the potential to revive the inter-ethnic conflicts from the early nineties, because the ethnic impact of the previous war paved the road for another.

Ethnic divisions are evident in all aspects of social life in BiH. Mistrust, inherited from the war, resulted in the complete ethnic segregation of current daily life. Co-ethnics cluster together to, seemingly, prevent the other ethnic group of 'gaining the upper hand'. A closer look at schools learns that ethnic mistrust, or even hatred, is passed on to the children of the next generation, who study in separate schools or classrooms. This process of 'gettho-ization' is undermining the notion of unity in diversity, something that characterized social relations in pre-war BiH. However, prosecution of war crime criminals by the ICTY and the War Crimes Chamber, using different methods, has positive effects on post-war reconciliation and social relations.

Chapter 5: After War's End

The previous chapter discussed how the Bosnian War shaped post-war socio-political relations by creating and reinforcing ethnic divisions. This chapter will proceed from chapter four's subject of post-war socio-political relations and it will focus on the foreign involvement in the conflict and its aftermath.

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, more commonly known as the Dayton Agreement was signed on 14 December 1995 in Paris. In November 1995, the agreement had been negotiated under the leadership of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio. This agreement was signed by the Croatian president Tudjman, the Serbian president Milosevic and by Bosnian President Izetbegovic, and it ended the Bosnian War. Before the Dayton Agreement was signed there had been less successful peace talks. The foreign intervention by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), predominantly by the U.S. and the EU, had a profound effect on the war but especially on the aftermath of the war. As the previous chapters thoroughly demonstrate, ethnic divisions are currently entrenched in Bosnian society as a direct result of the Bosnian War. Though, the NATO-led peace effort, finalized in the Dayton Agreement, has accomplished its goal of ending the devastating three-and-a-half-year war, it seems that it also engineered a decentralized and divided political system that further entrenched, instead of erased, ethnic divisions. This final chapter examines how the NATO intervention and its aftermath contributed to the current unstable ethnic-political situation in BiH. To find an explanation, this chapter will investigate to what extent the foreign involvement during the war, particularly in terms of peace talks, were responsible for worsening the conflict. Secondly, this chapter will look at the institutional structure, as it was created by the Dayton Agreement, and how it can be held responsible for the current unstable ethnic-political situation in BiH.

Paving the road to Dayton: failed attempts for peace

The breakup of Yugoslavia, and later the course of the Bosnian War, was closely watched by the international community. They saw the Yugoslav state fall apart into smaller independent republics, but above all, they saw animosities grow rapidly. Slovenia and Croatia declared independence on 25 June 1991. Immediately after, Serbia ordered the JNA to take control of Slovenia in an attempt to avoid its secession. It failed. Slovenia had a well-trained national guard that was able to contest the JNA for the ten days it was needed. The JNA left

and Slovenia was undoubtedly wielding control within their own territory. However, Croatia was the next place where fighting broke out. It became clear for the international community that the situation in Yugoslavia was worsening. But it was unclear what should be done about it.

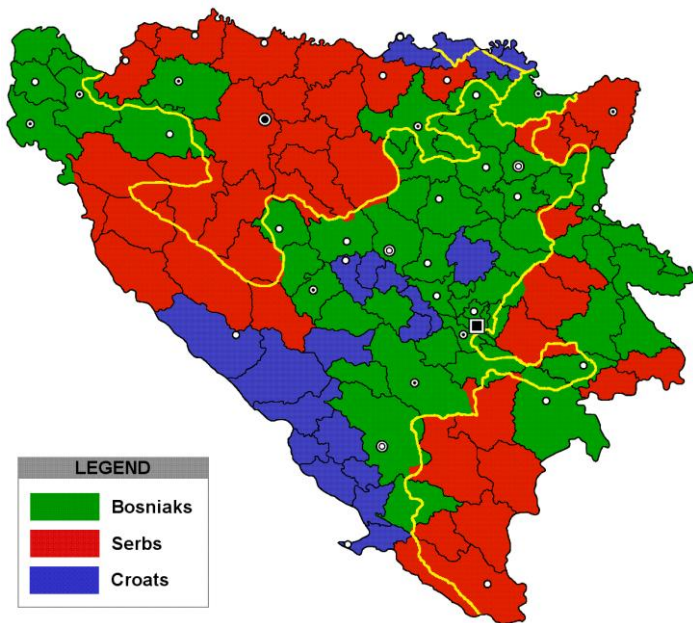
During the violent breakup of Yugoslavia, the international community, in the form of the EU, the UN, NATO and individual countries, constantly tried to end the bloodshed and help the fighting parties to reach some sort of peaceful solution. The Dayton Agreement of late 1995 brought a long-awaited end to the most devastating Yugoslav war, the Bosnian War. It seemingly ended the Balkan violence at that time, however, many efforts by the international community failed in their goals. Moreover, some actions had great intent, but simultaneously they entailed consequences that worsened the political situation in the region.

By the end of 1991, the regional conflict widened. The Serbo-Croat war left ten thousand people dead and hundreds of thousands displaced in Croatia. The UN appointed a special envoy, former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, to get the fighting leaders to negotiate. He managed to get them to sign a truce in January 1992. Subsequently, a UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was sent to the region to monitor the ceasefire. The fighting stopped, but signals pointing at future violence were still very much visible. The Croatian Serbs had gained much territory during the war, and by agreeing to Owen's ceasefire they were allowed to keep it. In many eyes this legitimized their attacks (Centre for European Studies, 2004).

The international community was relieved. Germany was the first to strongly support Croatian and Slovenian independence. It had not been long since the Iron Curtain fell and Germany intended to display unity of a 'new' Germany, one that supported its traditional allies in seeking new national identities. However, Germany's unilateral actions caused tensions among other European countries and the US, who favoured a go-slow approach to the conflict region, in which more attention was paid to the consequences of the breakup (Centre for European Studies, 2004). However, the EC also recognized Croatia and Slovenia as independent nations in early 1992. This development led BiH to realize that with Slovenia and Croatia gone, BiH would be completely subjected to Serbian dominion in the federation. So, in 1992 BiH won the recognition of the international community but simultaneously BiH shattered the pacifist hopes of the EC, because this way it ensured the international community that war in BiH was now inevitable.

When the Bosnian War broke out, the UN Security Council placed an arms embargo on the region. Again, the intent was good. This way, they tried to limit the destructiveness of the war by reducing the amount of weapons brought into the conflict. Additionally, it could prevent other nations from having unjustified influence in the war and prevent profiteering from arms sales. However, in reality the methods would only worsen the conflict because by placing an arm embargo, the UN Security Council, unintendedly, gave the Serbian-dominated JNA the advantage in the conflict, because the JNA already had the weapons, but the Croatian and Bosniak forces did not. It strongly unequalled the whole war in favour of the Serbs, enabling many of the war's atrocities (Centre for European Studies, 2004).

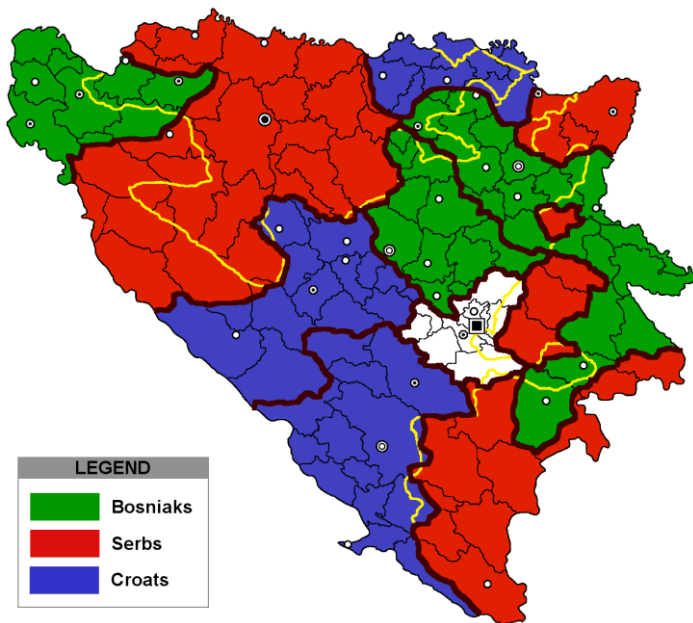
Before and during the Bosnian War, four major peace plans, developed by EC and UN diplomats, were offered to the conflicting parties. Most of these plans continuously failed to reach the desired effect until the Dayton Agreement ended the fighting. The Carrington-Cutileiro peace plan was named after its creators Lord Carrington and Portuguese ambassador José Cutileiro. It resulted from the EC Peace Conference held in February 1992, in which the EC tried to prevent Bosnia-Herzegovina from plunging into violent conflict. The plan proposed a very weak central government whose was increasingly transferred to local ethnic communities (district level). All districts would be classified as Serbian, Croatian or Muslim, even if no ethnic group formed the majority in the district (see Map 8). The peace plan received mixed reactions. Many authorities in the international community were concerned about the ethnic divisions the plan proposed, since many believed, it would only increase ethnic polarization. However, for the nationalists it was not even enough polarization. The Bosnian government, dominated by Muslims, was not happy with the decentralization of power in the proposed political structure. Central government was already weak and further decentralization would diminish central government completely. Yet, in the end, not only the Bosnian government, but also the Serbian nationalists rejected the plan and war began (Partition conflicts & Peace Processes, site visited 29-05-2012).



Map 7. Proposed ethno-geographical arrangement of the Cutileiro peace plan.

(Source: Wikimedia Commons Atlas of the World: Bosnia and Herzegovina)

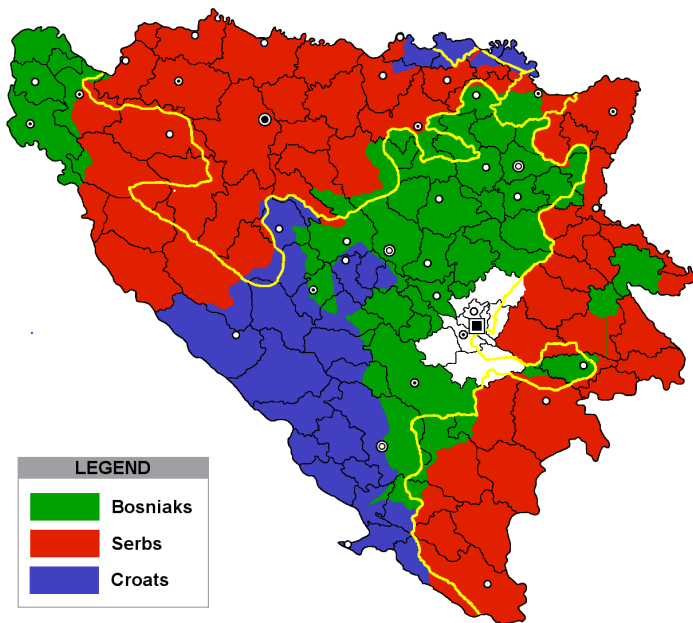
Eleven months later, Vance, together with EU diplomat Lord Owen, restarted peace negotiations with the leaders of the fighting parties. Their peace proposal, the Vance-Owen peace plan (hereinafter VOPP) was backed by the UN and separated BiH into ten semi-autonomous regions. It proceeded from the same principal as the Carrington-Cutileiro peace plan (devolution of central government), but with larger provincial units (see Map 7). Just like the Carrington-Cutileiro plan, it aimed for a mixed and united BiH. Partition could, in their eyes, be forestalled by spreading the provinces so that BiH could not be divided into three ethnic regions (Partition conflicts & Peace Processes, site visited 29-05-2012). However, the plan was rejected. By this time, spring 1992, territory had changed hands several times. Those who won lands wanted more and those who lost lands needed the option to get it back. So, nobody felt like signing the VOPP and the conflict became even more violent (Joyce Kaufman, 2002). According to Mazower, ‘the basic flaw in the negotiations strategy of, first, Carrington-Cutileiro and, later, Vance-Owen, was that to believe that an equitable political settlement was achievable by negotiations between the warring parties themselves. Their approach ignored the fact that the main cause of the war was the Serbian military machine run from Belgrade by Slobodan Milosevic.’ (Mark Mazower, 1992)



Map 8. Proposed ethno-geographical arrangement of the VOPP.

(Source: Wikimedia Commons Atlas of the World: Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Yet, looking at the pace at which territory was divided, fragmented and ethnically cleansed, the plan might already have been outdated when it was proposed in May 1992. Five years after his 1992 article, Mazower even argues that the VOPP, and its ethnically distinct cantons, was directly responsible for the fighting which broke out between Croatian and Muslim forces in central BiH in the spring of 1993. He argues that not ancient hatreds or past atrocities radicalized villages along ethnic lines, but that it was the result of ‘power-struggles induced by UN/EC peace proposals’. (Mazower, 1997) Joyce Kaufman also hints at this development. Renewed competition for territory (induced by the peace plan), she argues, broke down the Croat-Muslim alliance and worsened the war because it had been the only remaining barrier for the Serbian military advance (Kaufman, 2002). However, Mazower notes that some Bosniak and Croatian forces were still cooperating against Serbian forces in north-eastern BiH, while this Croat-Bosniak split occurred in central BiH (Mazower, 1997).



Map 9. Proposed ethno-geographical arrangement of the Owen-Stoltenberg peace plan.

(Source: Wikimedia Commons Atlas of the World: Bosnia and Herzegovina)

In the third attempt to end the conflict in July 1993, Owen teamed up with UN mediator and former Norwegian Minister of Defence and of Foreign Affairs, Thorvald Stoltenberg. They proposed a map that divided BiH into three ethnic mini-states. Bosnian Serbs would receive 52 per cent of Bosnia's territory, the Bosniaks, 30 per cent, and the Croats 18 per cent. However, the Owen-Stoltenberg peace plan failed due to Bosniak rejection. The next (fourth) attempt was made by the Contact Group between February and October 1994. The Contact Group was an informal group of influential countries which had a substantial interest in policy developments in the Balkans. The Contact Group consisted of the United Kingdom, France, the US, Germany, Italy, and Russia. In 1994, the Contact Group plan made significant progress towards a negotiated settlement of the Bosnian War. Due to US president Bill Clinton's pro-active attitude in the Contact Group plan, it became the start of increased US engagement in the conflict. The Contact Group put great pressure on, especially, the Serbs to accept the plan. However, the Bosnian Serbs, under Karadzic's leadership, rejected the peace offer.

The constant failures of the proposed peace plans should not be contributed to the Western mediators and diplomats, even though there was discussion about the political and social structures the plans proposed. Besides, there are some visible signs that the failure of the peace plans indeed worsened the conflict. Nevertheless, it seems that the pre-Dayton mediation attempts and the continuity of the brutal partition war must be attributed to constant conflicting interests of the fighting parties. Yet, it must also be noted that in all the proposed

plans, the Bosniaks were the main sufferers. Their republic would be fragmented and landlocked, and therefore depended on Croatia and Serbia for access to the sea. The Bosniak government long kept striving for ethnic unity in BiH, and on those grounds it had good reasons to reject several of the peace plans.

Closer study of the foreign involvement in the Bosnian conflict, and particularly of foreign attempts to end the bloodshed as fast as possible, shows that Bosnia was, and is, a place in which diplomats and leaders had to face difficult problems. These problems had no easy answers and they often had to evaluate the trade-off between what they hoped to achieve and the possible negative consequences of their decisions. Those negative consequences could be very unpredictable (Centre for European Studies, 2004). Therefore, it seems unfair to doubt the humanitarian impulses of the Western diplomats and leaders, even though they had damaging outcomes. Yet, vital decisions are always criticized, and often this is considered to enhance policy-making. This section discussed several proposed peace plans and none of them were considered perfect by the people who created them. It were crisis plans meant to produce a ceasefire, and in some cases nothing more.

However, the international community was facing more critical decisions when peace talks failed and the war seemed to take a turn for the worse. The US increased its involvement in the conflict and supported an expansion of NATO's role. They proposed, with Holbrooke in front, that NATO went from enforcing a no-fly-zone and other protective actions to a more aggressive air campaign that attacked Serbian forces who refused to respect and retreat from UN designated safe areas. The more aggressive bombing campaign, 'Operation Deliberate Force', was carried out between 30 August and 20 September 1995 and involved 400 aircraft and 5,000 personnel from 15 nations (Kaufman, 2002). Its goal was to prevent the Serbs from achieving military dominion in the region and to end the extensive ethnic cleansing that was going on in BiH. Though again its intent (ending the war) was humanitarian, it must be noted that the bombing campaign did claim many civilian lives and contributed to the thorough destruction of infrastructure and civilian facilities (as well as military targets) in the region. Additionally, there are known cases in which the refugee crisis was visibly worsened by the NATO bombardment, because before it brought the Serbs to their knees it actually intensified the conflict, causing more people to flee their homes (Centre for European Studies, 2004). Roughly at the same time as the NATO air campaign was intensified, Croatian forces initiated 'Operation Mistral', two linked military offensives of the Croatian Army, Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Croatian Defence Council launched in Western BiH. The latter operation was the result of a diplomatic agreement with Croatia, after which

UN forces moved to the official Croatian border, instead of holding the truce lines where the Croat-Bosniak War had ended, in February 1994. This way, Croatian forces were enabled to win back the territory they had lost to the Serbs. ‘Operation Mistral’ restored the Croat-Muslim alliance and, combined with NATO bombardment, delivered hard blows to Serbian military efforts.

So, foreign involvement in the Bosnian conflict factually worsened the conflicts in some respects. Peace plans which were developed, and offered by UN and EC representatives, sometimes caused extra tensions among the warring ethnic parties. Direct military involvement by NATO and UN forces also directly affected the course of the war, at some point intensifying it. However, all those efforts by the international community were based on humanitarian impulses. Besides, all those efforts, and in particular the aggressive bombing campaign by NATO in the summer of 1995 eventually forced the conflicting parties to come to the negotiation table and end the bloodshed, as indeed would happen in Dayton, Ohio in the winter of 1995.

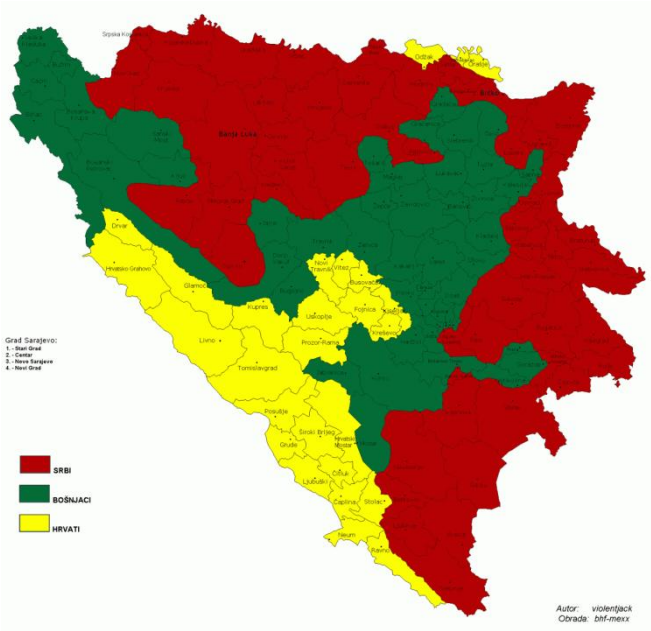
Dayton: success or curse?

The Dayton Agreement brought an end to a terribly violent three-and-a-half-year war which left BiH in ruins. The Dayton Agreement was brokered by US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke (Clinton administration official) in approximately three weeks, which is a rather short period of time for such a decisive treaty. However, it is understandable when one keeps in mind that its main goal was to end the violence as soon as possible. However, in order to prevent new open conflict, the peace agreement created a rather complex web of offices and institutions. This decentralized institutional structure created a tense political situation, and BiH has been under international administration ever since.

The Dayton Agreement consolidated the negotiated agreements of the leaders of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) (the Serbia-Montenegro federation) to recognize each other’s borders and sovereignty, withdraw their armed forces, and allow humanitarian aid to reach the inhabitants and displaced refugees of the region (Centre for European Studies, 2004). Dayton created the political divisions of BiH. It recognized a government that comprised two separate decentralized entities: the RS and the FBiH. The Bosnian Serb republic, the RS, consists almost entirely of Serbs while the Bosniak-Croat federation, the FBiH has a Bosniak majority with a substantial Croatian minority. As the direct result of the divisions by Dayton, both the

entities have their own president, government, parliament, police force, and education, health and judicial authorities. All these are spread over the ten regional authorities. The result of the split of BiH into two republics is a devious government led by 160 ministers and a political structure that absorbs almost 50 per cent of the BiH gross domestic product of \$15 billion, as Bilefsky has derived from World Bank information (Bilefsky, 2008).

Overarching the two entities is a central Bosnian government led by a rotating presidency in which a Muslim, a Croat and a Serb president each serve two terms. In addition, the Dayton accord created a neutral area, the district of Brcko, in which Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks have equal authority. Brunwasser concludes that the Bosnian government is ‘a complex and highly decentralized mesh of overlapping cantonal, entity and state bodies’, meant to artificially balance the power among the three major ethnic groups (Brunwasser, June 27, 2011).



Map 10. Post-Dayton ethnic division of BiH in 1996. Yellow for Croats, green for Bosniaks, and red for Serbs. (Source: Wikimedia Commons Atlas of the World: Bosnia and Herzegovina)

At the heart of the Dayton Agreement, lies the Office of the High Representative (OHR). This office was created to oversee the implementation of the Dayton Agreement and its internationally chosen representative is the state’s highest authority. The office is supported by the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), a broad umbrella group of 55 countries and agencies. The High Representative has the power to force the entity governments to concord with the terms of the Dayton accord and the state constitution. The office is given to a foreign envoy whose task it is to act as some sort of kindhearted dictator

who has, and should use, the power to overcome the constant squabbles of distrustful local politicians. The High Representative can dismiss local politicians who are obstructing social, economic or political development in the country. Its special powers have, since 1997, been used 900 times; it stroke down hundreds of laws (it has the right to adopt essential binding decisions if parties are not able to find a compromise) and removed 190 politicians, among who three state presidents (Brunwasser, June 27, 2011).

The power-sharing agreement between the former enemies, as created by Dayton, has always been tense. Accordingly, the deep divisions (as discussed in the previous chapters) remain evident between the ethnic communities and in politics. Haris Silajdzic, present at the Dayton negotiations as Bosnia's wartime foreign minister, argued that the institutional structure that was created at Dayton had 'served to legitimize the genocidal policy of the Serbs during the war'. The Muslim politician called for a new constitution that would create a unified state based on economic regions, which would pack off the RS. His problem with Dayton is that it created ethnocracy instead of democracy, and that it became the smoke behind which Milosevic's project of ethnic cleansing is hidden (Bilefsky, 2008). For the earlier mentioned nationalist Milorad Dodik, the Bosnian Serb politician, talk such as that of Solajdzic only proves that Bosniak leadership is predominantly aimed at domination of BiH. While BiH was going through another political crisis as the result of squabbles between Croatian and Bosniak politicians, Dodik threatened to secede. He called a referendum to decide on this intent. However, at 'the last minute' he called it off after intervention by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton (Brunwasser, June 27, 2011). Bosnian Serb leadership is particularly resentful about the Dayton Agreement, but primarily about having to accept the OHR's authority. By repeatedly expressing this bitterness, the Bosnian Serb leaders continuously create political tensions by giving rise to suspicions that the goal of the RS is to secede from BiH.

However, representatives from the OHR argue that the international community is allowing the increasing challenges by nationalist politicians such as Dodik and that it should develop a new strategy to re-engage in BiH. A report by the International Crisis Group (ICG), from 6 May 2011, shows that virtually all international institutions in Bosnia have lost authority. Many, including the Office of the High Representative (OHR), are seen as favoring one side or party. Local leaders demand support from OHR and state institutions alike, and they ignore rulings that allegedly go against them. There is no broadly respected authority in the country, only regional or partisan champions (ICG report, 2011). After the Dayton Agreement, the international community assumed that the High Representative would ensure

that parties in BiH would stick to their commitments. Indeed, developments in the country indicated that this might be true. In the early 2000s, High Representative Paddy Ashdown fervently strove to move the Bosnian politicians away from ethno-nationalist politics. Meanwhile the political deadlock in the country began to loosen, the militaries of the FBiH and the RS united and the economy began to recover. These can be interpreted as positive signs for the future. NATO's peacekeeping force of 60.000, that had arrived to implement the military aspects of the agreement, called IFOR (the Implementation Force), felt it could end its mission of bringing an end to the hostilities, and maintaining a close watch on the armies after separating them. A much smaller EU force of 1,500 soldiers (EUFOR) took over. Unfortunately, in 2006, a number of developments conspired to, again, heightened ethnic tensions and put an end to this progress. Now, the OHR representatives argue, there are not enough foreign troops to make the OHR's ability to enforce decisions credible, allowing and provoking challenges by Dodik and others who wish to diminish the power of the OHR (Cristopher Chivvis and Harun Dogo, 2010).

The current High Representative, Valentin Inzko, states that his office was designed to fill in the legal gaps in the Dayton Agreement. It was certainly not a perfect peace agreement. Many hard compromises had to be made between nationalist leaders who mistrusted each other. However, as argued before, Dayton's goal was to end the war, and that it did. Yet, on the other hand, the ICG report argues that the conflicting views of the three major ethnic groups about their shared Bosnian state, have been evident since Yugoslavia broke up. The report quotes former Slovene president Milan Kucan: 'The Croat, Muslim and Serb concepts of the Bosnian state have never really met, let alone reconciled. These three concepts were turned into war aims, but the war itself never really ended; it was only interrupted by the Dayton peace agreement' (ICG report, 2011). The Dayton Agreement is often criticized for creating the two entities of BiH too close to being states in their own right. Therefore, it reinforced separatism and nationalism at the expense of matters such as integration. Yet while the Dayton Agreement remains the consensual basis of Bosnia's peace, the political structures it created are troublesome and impede Bosnia's ability to reform itself.

Negotiations to alter the current constitution which Dayton established, in order to strengthen the state's institutions and to transform the country into a non-ethnic parliamentary democracy, have so far failed to make an impact, Chivis and Dogo argue (2010). Besides, the ICG report shows that already soon after its creation, Dayton's political system encountered obstruction from nationalist politicians. Since the international community reacted by increasing the powers of the High Representative, it has supported further centralisation and

less consensual decisions. They were hoping to make the state more functional, but in fact they did not accomplish much positive political development (ICG report, 2011).

So, the current unstable ethnic-political situation in BiH is very much a direct result of the institutional structure created by the peace accord that was brokered in Dayton, Ohio in November 1995. Its initial goal was not to create an institutional framework that would bring long-term stability to BiH and therefore to the whole of former Yugoslavia. Its initial goal was to end the savage war which had been ripping the country apart since April 1992. The institutional structure that was agreed upon during the Dayton negotiations split the country into two entities, and its institutions have proved to be too cumbersome to provide for the country's long-term stability, prosperity, and ability to integrate into Euro-Atlantic institutions, such as the EU and NATO. Some successes have been established in this area, for instance, the merger of the armed forces and the creation of central government institutions (such as border and customs services, and a state prosecutors' office and ministry of justice). Besides, hundreds of thousands of refugees have returned to their homes after the Dayton Agreement. However, these successes have required tremendous pressure on local politicians or even direct intervention by the High Representative. All of the international institutions in BiH, and the OHR in particular, have become increasingly ineffective, because the international community has proved unwilling in recent years to back the High Representative in using these powers confidently, fearing a hostile response among, especially, Bosnian Serb leaders. Dayton's complex balance between three ethnic groups has confirmed rather than solved ethnic divisions.

Chapter conclusion

The breakup of the Yugoslav state was watched closely by the international community. After the outbreak of violence, the international community sought to bring an end to the conflict. Their instruments were international diplomacy, NATO forces, a UN Security Council arm embargo, four major peace plans and, ultimately, the Dayton Agreement. Foreign involvement in the conflict significantly affected the course of the war, but more importantly it affected the post-war ethnic-political situation.

The failed Carrington-Cutileiro peace plan of 1992 created ethnic divisions by classifying all districts as Serbian, Croatian or Muslim, even if no ethnic group formed the majority in the district. The Vance-Owen peace plan of 1992 built on the same principal: a mixed and united BiH. By spreading the districts the country could not split into three ethnic regions. Nonetheless, territorial changes due to the war resulted in an all-out rejection of the peace plan. Some scholars, like Mazower (1997), even argue that the proposal worsened the war by inducing power struggles among the warring parties. The third attempt in 1993, the Owen-Stoltenberg peace plan, failed because of Bosniak rejection, who felt that they gained too little territorially. The Contact Group peace proposal of 1994 made significant progress towards a negotiated settlement of the Bosnian War and marked the beginning of US engagement in the conflict. However, despite great pressures, the Bosnian Serbs rejected the peace plan.

The failed peace plans show that the fighting parties were not ready to negotiate and compromise. Subsequently, the Bosnian War seemed to aggravate. NATO intensified its air campaigns and forced the parties in 1995 to adopt an attitude more fit for effective negotiations. The result was the Dayton Agreement, signed in December 1995.

The Dayton Agreement accomplished its task of ending the war and led to some improvements. On the other hand, it also created the institutional structure which characterizes Bosnia's tense ethnic-political situation today. The agreement split the country into two entities, the FBiH and the RS, and forced politicians, who mistrusted each other, to work together. The OHR oversees the implementation of the peace plan and has special powers. However, its special powers seem to increase centralisation and decrease consensual decisions. All of Dayton's institutions, but the OHR in particular, are impeding Bosnia's ability to reform itself, yet it constantly prevents ethnic animosities from escalating. Moreover, they are increasingly losing authority, mainly due to Bosnian Serb opposition and weak support by its creator: the international community.

Final Conclusions

Central to this thesis is the socio-political history of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) from the early twentieth century onwards, and its present (2012) situation. Bosnia's history is a complex story of ethnic differences, and its many political and social problems throughout the century were more than once accompanied by severe ethnic violence. Today, ethnic-political tensions still characterize the country. Politics in BiH are branded by inflammatory, ethnic-nationalist rhetoric that is affecting the functioning of Bosnia's political, social and economic institutions, and obstructing reforms. The country is completely divided along ethnic lines.. This thesis focuses on the question of how we can understand these ethnic-political tensions, using the Bosnian War (April 1992-December 1995) as a case study. In other words, this thesis gives an historical explanation of the current ethnic-political tensions, hypothesizing that the rather recent experiences of the Bosnian War are key to the situation as it unfolds today. It is clear that any form of reconciliation did not occur in BiH and the effects of the Bosnian War have permeated many domains of daily life. Indeed, concerns for renewed ethnic violence remain topical and evident in BiH.

Two Yugoslavia's

From the start, the major actors within the first all-Yugoslav state (founded in 1918) conflicted over ethnic nationalities. The conflict between Serbian centralism and Croatian regionalism hindered state-building processes to a large extent. Yet in BiH, where the three major ethnic groups, the Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs, lived ethnically intermixed, life across ethnic lines seemed relatively peaceful and harmonious. People were aware of ethnic differences but, especially on social grassroots levels, people cooperated. Children went to school together, neighbours helped each other in daily life and inter-ethnic trade was common practice. The outbreak of World War II changed this constellation dramatically. The many atrocities committed by the Croatian nationalist Ustasha regime provoked the emergence of the Chetnik and Partisan resistance movements. The war, from then on, was characterized by massive ethnic violence. The massacres, usually aimed at one particular ethnic group, left a stain on Bosnia's future politics and social life. People became traumatized by the ethnic nature of the war and this resulted in increased mistrust across ethnic lines. However, after the war, Tito established the second all-Yugoslav state: the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. He imposed strict centralization from Belgrade and, recognizing the dangers of nationalism, he actively suppressed nationalist sentiments by means of top-down enforced

amnesia with regard to the recent wartime past. Though people remained perfectly aware of ethnic differences and the recent violence of World War II, Tito managed, through charisma and political tactics, to reinstate the pre-war level of cooperation.

Path to war

After Tito's death in 1980, nationalist ideology revived as an important political tool. Under the leadership of nationalist politicians the political structure of Yugoslavia began to deteriorate and ethnicity assumed a central role in the struggle for power. In BiH, ethno-political polarization increasingly spread to villages and cities around 1990, and ultimately, in 1992, the Bosnian War broke out. As the thesis has shown, a couple of factors can help explain the outbreak of violence which would put the country's immediate future under serious constraints. However, the Bosnian War cannot be explained by political manipulation or ancient hatreds alone. The war was the result of the deliberate blend of both. There is, in fact, a legitimate basis to believe in the significance of ancient hatreds as a cause for the Bosnian War. People were divided along ethnic lines before, most recently during World War II, and the experiences and memories of the ethnic violence were suppressed, yet not erased. Besides, even collective memories of early historical developments proved important for people's notion of ethnic identity. Perfect ethnic harmony in BiH, even under Tito, in fact, is a myth. Political leaders played into those sentiments with aggressive nationalist rhetoric which they spread widely by use of modern media. They managed to pull people out of their normal frames and into their crisis frames, forging a basis for ethnic violence. It was a reinforcing process: ethnic identity was embedded in Bosnia's history, but it was activated by nationalists such as Milosevic, Tudjman and Izetbegovic.

Ethnic warfare

The war in itself contributed to the development of ethnic polarization. Media served as a vehicle to disseminate the imaging of ethnic identity and influenced people's sense of ethnic identity before, during, and after the war. Yet, media probably was the second most influential factor after fear for violence. All sides, but the Serbs in particular, terrorized BiH by means of armed militias that consisted of – and were led by – violent criminal thugs with, often, psychotic and sadistic tendencies. Fear for the enemy as well as for co-ethnic militias, resulted in the entrenchment of ethnic differences and hatreds in Bosnian society. The war thoroughly destroyed the existing social structure and replaced it with a social structure that was based upon hate, fear and ethnic exclusion. The fact that people were forced to participate

in the ferocity, was a development BiH has yet to overcome, because the trauma of the violent separation affects the daily lives of the Bosnians and obstructs political, social and economic reforms.

After the war

Post-war political and social relations in BiH are to a large extent shaped by the war and its aftermath. It is evident that people from different ethnic groups have trouble cooperating at political- and social levels. Like on the eve of the Bosnian War, the then current political relations were also characterized by ethnic-nationalist politics. Though the post-war political structure should force ethnic-nationalist politicians to cooperate, nothing of that sort seems to happen nowadays. The same politics that led BiH into the war in 1992, is leading the country today. Local politicians, playing ethnic cards, deliberately block reforms and stimulate political and social polarization – again along ethnic lines.. Instead of moving towards EU and NATO membership, developments which would directly enhance the economic, political and security situation it is widely believed, BiH is introverting and increasingly building upon a political and social system based on ethnic exclusion. This negative development becomes dangerously manifest in the country's school system and youth. The mistrust and hatreds of the parents is passed on to the next generation. Children who were not even born when the war broke out, are indoctrinated by its history and outcomes. It is hoped, as political scientist Monika Nalepa argues, that the capture and persecution of war criminals in joint UN-Bosnian efforts will relieve some of the trauma that still holds a firm grip over Bosnia's ethnically segregated society, as well as give a positive sign of Bosnia's willingness to work on its future.

Fragile peace

After four major peace proposals by the international community failed to end the war, it was the Dayton Agreement, brokered in Dayton, Ohio, that finally silenced the guns in BiH, now more than sixteen years ago. However, what matters now is the nature of the political system which emerged from the Dayton negotiations. The Dayton Agreement provided for two sovereign states: the FBiH and the RS. It also provided for a central government and rotating presidency, but each entity had its own army, parliament, tax system and police force. The result is an completely over-governed state structure that consists of a staggering 160 ministers which absorb 50 per cent of Bosnia's gross national product (GDP). All this is supervised by the OHR, who has special powers to intervene in politics to implement the

resolutions of the Dayton Agreement. In short, it is thus a very complicated system, but, at the time it was brokered, it seemed the best solution for ending the war; a war which cost more than 200.000 people their lives and displaced two million more.

Significance of the Bosnian War

By answering and explaining five core questions, this thesis has provided an answer to the overarching research question: how we can understand the ethnic-political tensions, using the Bosnian War (April 1992-December 1995) as a case study? The Bosnian War played a significant role in the emergence of the current constellation. In fact, it was decisive in creating the ethnic-political tensions that currently trouble the nation. The Bosnian War triggered a number of lingering juxtapositions within the Bosnian society. Harking back to alleged ancient conflicts between different religious and ethnic groups, wartime rhetoric and propaganda reignited an essentialist vision on a perceived immanent socio-political segregation in Bosnia. As such, the Bosnian war was essential to the definite destruction of Tito's inclusive Yugoslav outlook. Subsequently, the blend of ethno-centric propaganda and wartime violence spurred a new constellation, in the form of a crisis frame, in which ethnic divisions were the guiding principle. Thus, allegedly ancient hatred and myths building upon ethnic oppositions, provided for a series of narratives and identity constructs, which, in the context of the Bosnian war, buoyed up the ethno-political agendas of the warring parties (used to amplify the crisis frame) and eventually led to Bosnia's current ethnic-political tensions.

Epilogue

From the historical findings of this thesis one could form different opinions about Bosnia's future. Personally, I believe that, as the direct result of the Bosnian War, Dayton is still at the root of what is wrong with BiH. Yet, right now it is also the exclusive safeguard for peace, even though it is not a sustainable foundation for BiH as a nation-state. It certainly was a foundation for ending the war, but it is not a foundation for any country aspiring security, prosperity and inclusion into the Euro-Atlantic family. It matters less that Europe and the US want Bosnia to become a full member of the Euro-Atlantic political and security system, as Chivvis and Dogo agree with. The Bosnian's will have to reach the usual requirements themselves, yet Dayton's legacy in BiH is failing in the long run because it embeds ethnic politics which have intensified so much due to the trauma of the war, resulting in an ever greater appeal to chauvinism.

It is thus important to consider reversing some of the negative consequences of Dayton today. BiH is constantly facing challenges. The current challenge for BiH does not come from its genetics but it originates in what is imposed by the Dayton Agreement. As Derek Chollet and Bennett Freeman argue, for some (especially in the US) Dayton is one of the greatest diplomatic successes in history (Derek Chollet and Bennett Freeman, 2005). Understandable, as the US led the Dayton peace talks. And indeed, Dayton is not a false solution, because it did, effectively, end the war as well as spearheaded some other improvements. But on the other hand, it is not a lasting basis for BiH to prosper. Dayton means status quo: no moving backwards, but no moving forwards either.

Today, there are three legitimate perceptions of Bosnia's future: the Bosniak, the Croatian and the Serbian perception. They derive from - and are enforced by - the Bosnian War and the war memories. The different perceptions, originating with the three major ethnic groups, are totally incompatible. It creates the ethnic-political tensions we can see holding BiH in a deadlock. However, permanent segregation of the FBiH and the RS cannot go down peacefully and to prevent a reviving of the violence that marked the 1990s, it should be avoided at all costs. Yet, the international control over BiH is to last until the country is deemed politically and democratically stable and self-sustainable. Since this development has slowed down in recent years, Radaelli's but also the Centre for European Studies's central opinion is, that increased and continued engagement by the international community, primarily the EU, is paramount. According to Brunwasser, this is also Valentin Inzko's (the current High Representative in BiH) opinion. Brunwasser quotes him saying that 'he would like to put himself out of a job' by steering BiH towards the EU and NATO integration and free it of international administration.

Thus, whatever the future of BiH is going to be, it must be one of consensus between the different ethnic groups. None of them can get exactly what they want, but they can all gain a lot more if BiH would enter the European Union. However, in order to do that, Bosnia's people must adhere to European values, at least to some extent. We must hope that BiH will soon take the necessary steps towards EU integration, and find the incentive to end the ethnic divisions that continues to haunt Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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Maps:

- All the maps used in this thesis are found in the 'Wikimedia Commons Atlas of the World: Bosnia and Herzegovina' (Online collection of relevant maps)
(http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas_of_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina#History_maps).