SARAJEVO: CITY BESIEGED BY MEMORY

Cultural trauma among adolescent Bosnian Muslims and Serbs in Sarajevo

Tristan Koper & Julicke van Doorn

Photo above taken by Julicke. All photos by Tristan or Julicke were taken between the 5th of February and the 13th of April 2018.

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Wordcount: 21.895

Date: June 27th, 2018

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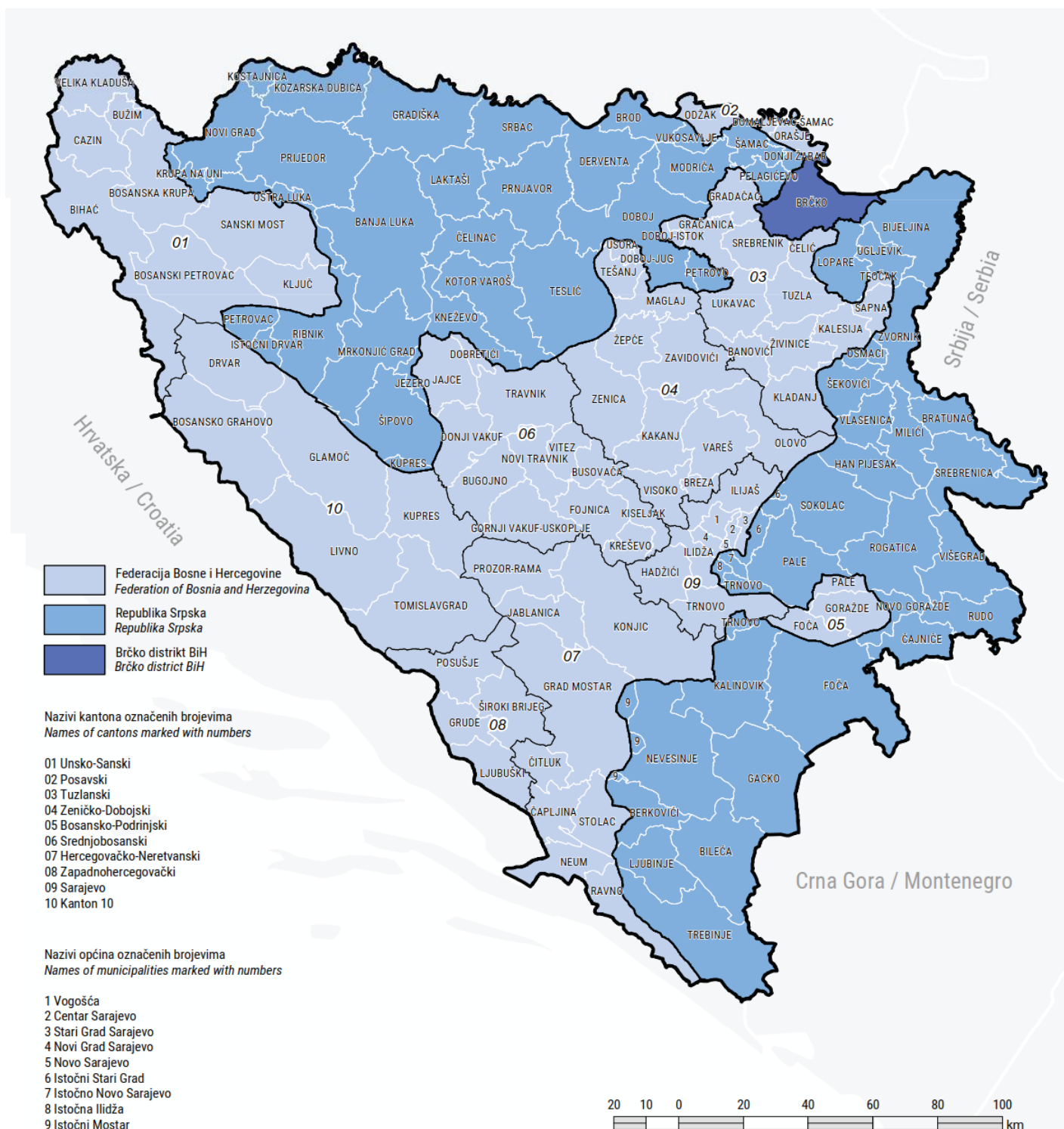
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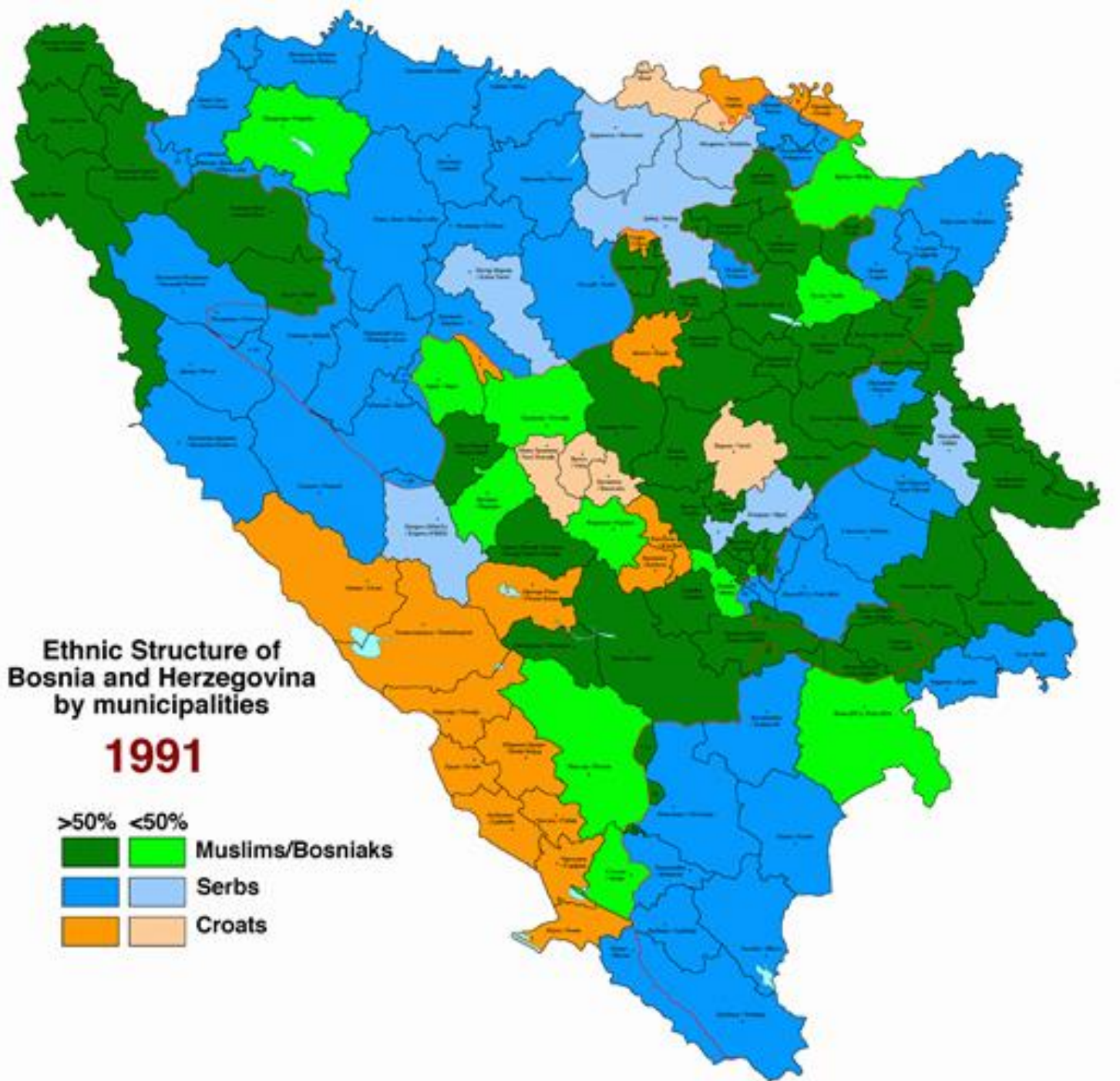
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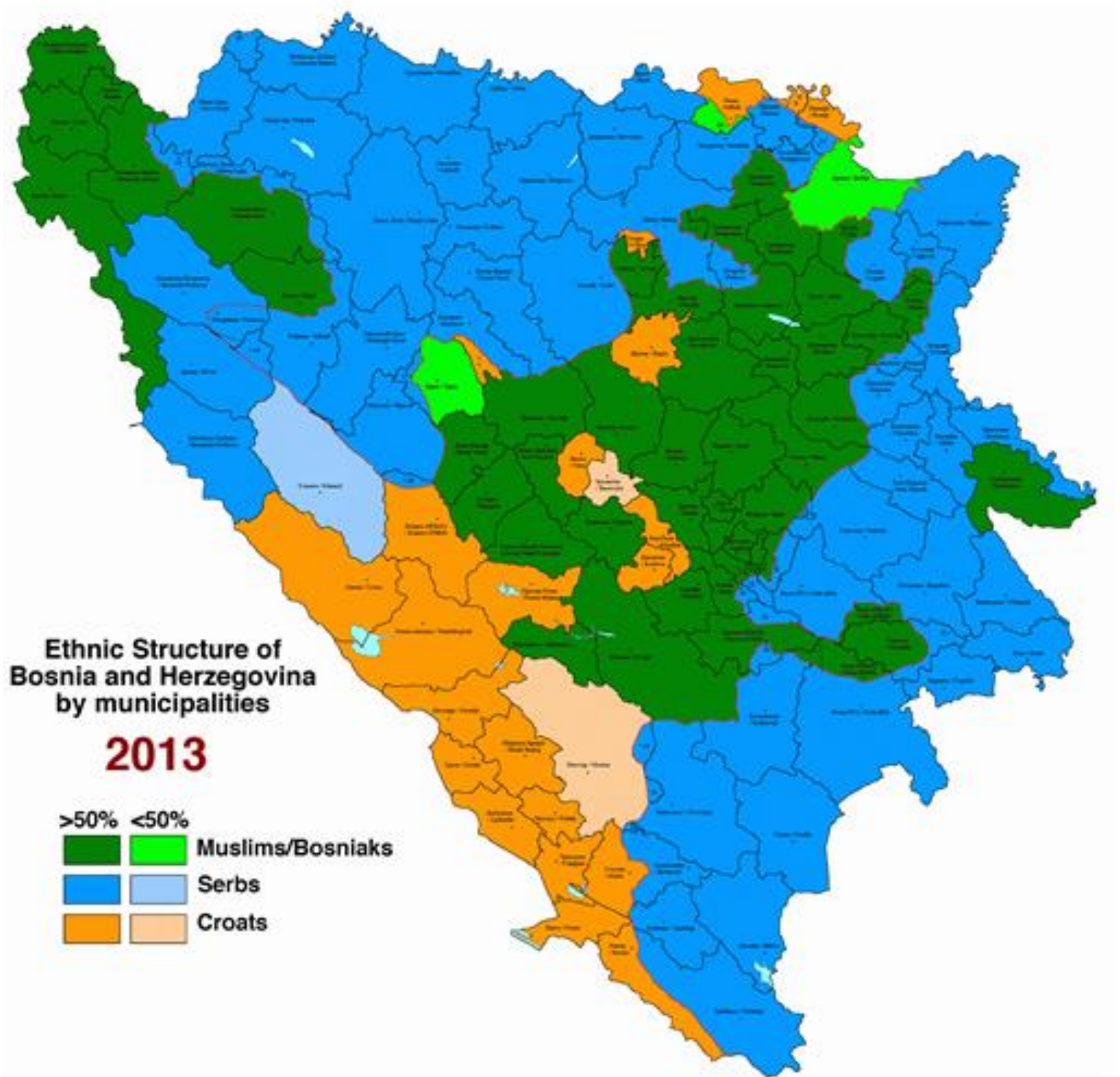
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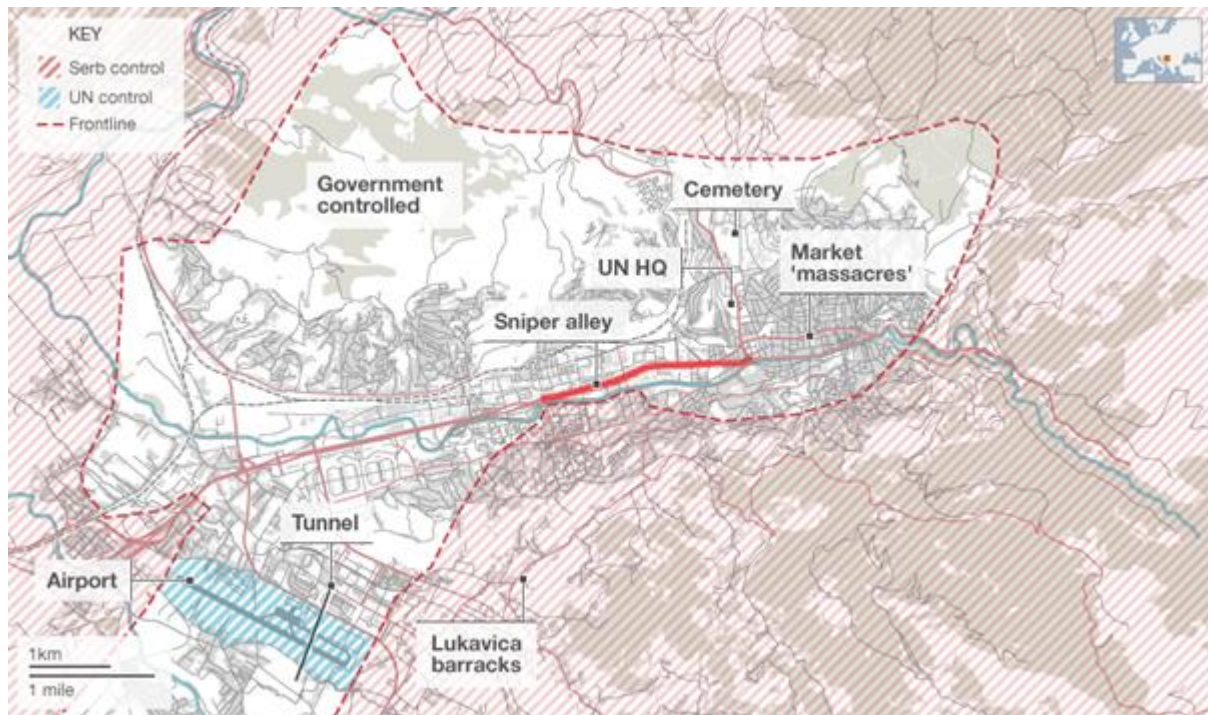
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Acknowledgements

From the 5th of February until the 13th of April we have conducted fieldwork in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. During this period and in the preparatory phase we have been assisted by some extraordinary people who have helped us to make the most of our research.

First and foremost, our informants deserve our utmost gratitude. We have found that the people in Bosnia are extremely hospitable and helpful. The amount of time and effort they gave us to help us with our research was truly heart-warming. They have inspired us to do our utmost best for this thesis, since they have done their best in turn to help two strangers. We also want to thank the various organizations that helped us in our journey, particularly in the beginning. The advice and practical assistance of PAX, the Dutch Embassy in Sarajevo, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and other organizations were very helpful for getting us started in the field.

Lastly, we want to express our gratitude to our supervisor Marije Luitjens. Her feedback and advice was invaluable, particularly in the writing process of our research proposal as well as this thesis.

Introduction

Bosnia is a complicated country: three religions, three nations and those 'others'. Nationalism is strong in all three nations; in two of them there are a lot of racism, chauvinism, separatism; and now we are supposed to make a state out of that. - Alija Izetbegovic[12]

More than two decades after the Dayton accords, the memory of the Yugoslav wars (1991-2001) still resonates in the former Yugoslavia. This is especially the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH for short), where the Bosnian War raged between 1992 and 1996. To this day it remains the most ethnically diverse state of the former Yugoslavia (see figures 2 to 4). Croatian, Bosnian Muslim[3], and Serbian ethnic identities and their associated collective memories about the war play a large role in both contemporary politics and social relations (Moll 2013; Šehagić 2016, 21-22). Public debate is characterized by disagreements about exactly what happened during the war and what should be done now. These contentious narratives have motivated the erection of abundant monuments and museums all over the country as well as the performance of commemorations. Furthermore, the country remains politically and spatially divided along ethnic lines. Taken together, the political, social and spatial situation in BiH raises questions about the persistence cultural trauma in society, particularly within the post-war generation, which is the main subject of our research.

Arguably, Bosnia and Herzegovina was hit hardest in the period of the Yugoslav wars, which can mostly be attributed to its aforementioned diverse ethnic composition. Between 1953 and 1980 president Josip Broz Tito led Yugoslavia with a strong emphasis on 'brotherhood and unity' (*bratstvo i jedinstvo*) (Šehagić 2016, 135). His death left a power vacuum that enabled the rise of nationalism. Ethnic identities were mobilized by powerful political leaders to raise support for the subsequent independence of some of the constituent

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[1] Gale, Thomson . "Izetbegovic, Alija." Accessed on June 22, 2018. https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/izetbegovic-alija.

[2] First president of the independent Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

[3] Also often referred to as Bosniaks.

republics. When both Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence in 1991, Serbia retaliated by sending in the Yugoslav Army to respective countries and war broke out in earnest. When BiH was recognized by the EC and the US in early 1992 as an independent state, Serb paramilitary forces opened fire in the country. Mobilizing local forces as well as the Yugoslav army, Serbian forces conquered up to 70% of the territory. Croatian forces formed the strongest opposition to the Serbs, because they received support from Croatia. Bosnian Muslims on the other hand had no external support. The Serbs also surrounded and besieged the capital of Sarajevo in what became one of the longest continual sieges ever, lasting from April 1992 to February 1996 (Maček 2009, vii-xii). During the siege Sarajevo was a gruesome place to live, as mobility away from and within the city was restricted, the supply of food and other necessities fluctuated, and the threat of death was a daily reality. As trust became a matter of survival, people turned inwards towards their previously unimportant ethnic groups, thereby transforming previously minor cultural differences into significant boundary markers of identity (Ignatieff 1998; Maček 2009, 86-119). Eventually, NATO air strikes and a large-scale Bosniak-Croat offensive in 1995 pushed the Serbs to the negotiating table. The resulting Dayton Accords divided of Bosnia and Herzegovina in two Entities, the Croatian and Bosnian Muslim Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Serbian Republika Srpska, which were loosely governed by an overarching Bosnian government (Glenny 1996; Lampe 2017; Leonard et al. 2016) (see figure 1). When the siege was lifted Sarajevo and its inhabitants had undergone a transformation characterized by a ruined cityscape, distrust towards one's neighbours, and a division created by the newly established Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) between Sarajevo proper and what became known as East-Sarajevo (see figure 6). The latter of these is primarily inhabited by Serbs and the former by Bosnian Muslims and Croats (Schear 1996; Güll and Dee 2014).

After reconstruction, Sarajevo grew into a vibrant and multicultural city and the centre of economic and political activity in BiH. Aside from attracting people looking for employment, many students migrate to the city in order to attend one of its universities. Cultural life is centred in the city as well, which is apparent in the annual Sarajevo Film Festival for example (Güll and Dee, 2014). This combination of generally progressive forces (economic, educational and cultural activity) and the regressive memory of the war that is all too present in the cityscape (monuments, the IEBL, etcetera) and the minds of its people make Sarajevo an exceptionally interesting research site. Especially the young people belonging to the post-war generation, who are naturally more acquainted with the

aforementioned progressive forces and have not lived through the war are especially interesting in this regard.

Considering the importance of ethno-national divisions in BiH and the limitations of our research, we have decided to each focus on adolescents from a particular ethnic group. Our research was thus comparative in nature. Of the three constituent peoples of BiH, the relationship between Bosniaks and Serbs is particularly interesting, especially in the Sarajevan context. Whilst Serbs are often labelled as the instigators and main perpetrators of the war, Bosniaks or Bosnian Muslims are perceived as the main defenders and victims. This idea is founded on atrocities like the Markale massacre in Sarajevo and the Srebrenica genocide, which sparked outrage worldwide. In light of these contradicting narratives and our assumption that these are unresolved as of yet, we chose adolescent Bosnian Muslims and Serbs as our research populations. It is important to consider that ethnic identity is not self-evident and that young Sarajevans could very well decide not to regard themselves as belonging to these groups. We have therefore only selected informants that self-identify as such. Thus, in more formal terms, our research populations consisted of self-identifying Bosnian Muslims or Bosnian Serbs between 16 and 23 years old and currently living in Sarajevo.

To shed light on the experiences of these adolescents, we have used cultural trauma as our central theoretical concept. Cultural trauma, which can be briefly defined as "...the culturally interpreted wound to cultural tissue itself" (Sztompka, 2000: 458), occurs after a traumatic event such as a the Bosnian War. Afterwards, commonly held ideas, identities, memories, and the like are disrupted and need to be reconstructed. This requires a meaningful interpretation of the traumatic experience (Alexander *in* Alexander et al. 2004, 62) on the level of a collectivity, such as an ethnic group or an entire society. This interpretation becomes part of the collective memory of the respective collectivity and thereby influences the corresponding collective identity (Halbwachs 1991). This collective memory can be expressed through various media, such as monuments, commemorations and stories, which can help to cope with the cultural trauma and strengthen the collective identity. Thus, in order to fully understand cultural trauma, we have also employed the concepts of collective identity, collective memory, and expression of cultural trauma. Again, considering the importance of the ethno-national divisions in BiH, we expected different cultural traumas to exist among the three main ethnic groups and have therefore chosen to study cultural trauma

among Bosnian Muslims and Serbs respectively. All this has led to the following research question:

What are the differences between the experience of cultural trauma as a result of the 1991-1995 war between Bosnian Muslim and Serb adolescents (born after 1995) living in Sarajevo?

By answering this research question, we aim to add to the theoretical debate on cultural trauma, which is still a relatively new concept. In addition, we want to go beyond both the traditional psycho-analytical understanding of trauma and the dominant sociological understanding of cultural trauma (Alexander et al 2004: Sztompka 2000) by studying cultural trauma from the perspective of anthropology, which is a relative newcomer in this debate. Anthropology's emphasis on long-term participant observation and in-depth interviewing can be of great value when studying cultural trauma, because these methods reveal much about people's experiences and innermost motivations. Moreover, anthropology's emphasis on studying phenomena holistically is crucial for understanding the multifaceted phenomenon of cultural trauma and how it is shaped by collective memory, collective identity and the expression of cultural trauma. We also aim to expand the current understanding of the Bosnian case study, particularly the perspective of adolescents, which has been rarely studied up until now.

We hope that our findings can be of societal importance as well. Our emphasis on the local experience of cultural trauma among adolescents can generate insights into appropriate measures that should be taken based on their expressed needs by relevant organizations. We sincerely hope that these organizations can help them in ways we were unable to do ourselves.

In order to collect our data, we have conducted fieldwork in the city of Sarajevo from the 5th of February until the 16th of April 2018. We have used the methods of participant observation, hanging out, informal and formal conversations, and (semi-) structured interviewing. We have used these methods to varying degrees depending on the possibilities that presented themselves in the field. Julicke mostly used interviews, because she couldn't informants 'organically' (in café's or other public places), but mainly via the internet and through the snowball effect. As a result, she was forced to be to the point about why she wanted to meet with people and she chose to focus on interviews in order to get as much data

as possible in the limited time that informants had. After a few weeks, she also chose to look for informants in Pale, a town near Sarajevo, because she couldn't find enough informants in Sarajevo. Tristan was better able to employ the more traditional fieldwork method of participant observation. He was able to establish rapport with a group of Bosnian Muslims from the beginning, with whom he hung out in a café on a weekly basis. He was also able to participate in numerous informal conversations and interviews with them and others.

We acknowledge our own limitations as researchers. Since the research period was only ten weeks, both the quality and the quantity of our findings is limited. Because of this time constraint and difficulties in the field, we were only able to establish limited rapport with our informants. As a result, we were perceived as outsiders most of the time, which may have influenced our data. During the research, we were moreover confronted with some ethical dilemmas. One of these occurred when Julicke was interviewing someone who became emotional, because of the painful memories that a question unearthed. Although she quickly changed the subject, she may have caused unnecessary harm. Another dilemma occurred when Tristan was asked to talk about his findings in an interview for a youth magazine. Regrettably, he couldn't provide definite answers to the questions he was asked, because no definite findings existed at the time. Another issue concerns unintentionally raised false hopes about the large impact that our research would have on the work of organizations in BiH. We have done our best to resolve such issues, but were not always able to do so.

The following thesis is divided in several sections. Firstly, we provide a theoretical framework in which we elaborate on the concepts of collective identity, collective memory, cultural trauma and the expression of cultural trauma. Subsequently, we briefly discuss the context of Sarajevo and BiH, with particular emphasis on the Bosnian Muslim and Serbian populations. Next, we present our empirical findings by first discussing collective identity and memory among both populations and subsequently cultural trauma and the expression thereof. Finally, we will answer the research question by discussing the most significant similarities and differences between the experience of cultural trauma between our research populations in the discussion and conclusion. The appendix includes a summary of the thesis and a personal reflection of both authors.

Theoretical Framework
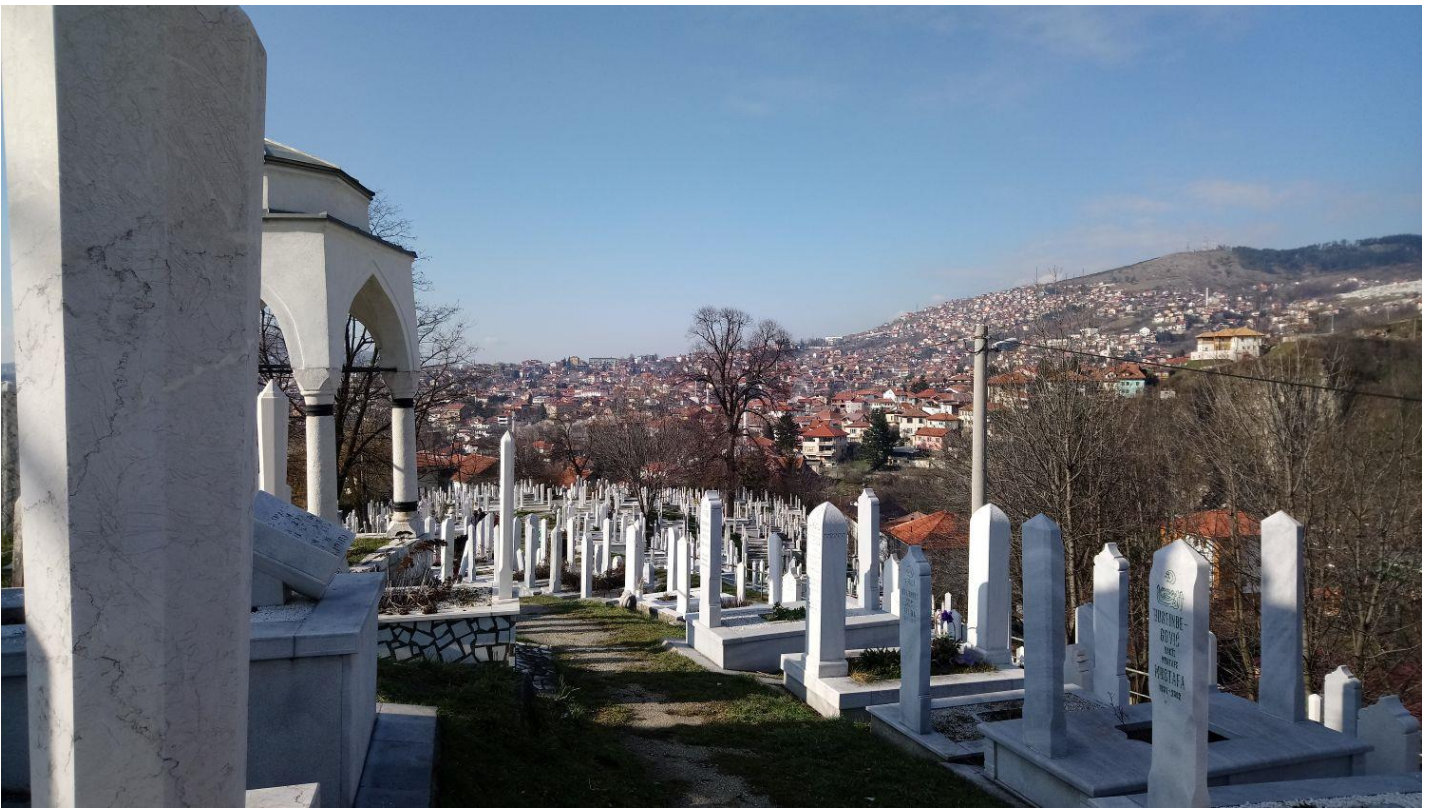
Photo taken in Sarajevo by Julicke.

1. Identity - Julicke

Collective identity

The concept of identity gained prominence in the social sciences from the 1960's onward. Since within our research we are mainly interested in the ways in which individuals constitute themselves within larger collectivities, we disregard personal identity in this section and focus on collective or social identity defined as:

...that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership. (Tajfel and Turner 1986, 63).

This definition merits some clarification and nuance. In the first place, it does not mention the fact that social identities are socially constructed, or imagined as Anderson (2006) calls it. Secondly, it does not acknowledge the relational nature of social identities. That is, the perceived sameness of individuals who share a social identity must be contrasted with a perceived difference towards other social identities in order for it to make sense (Demmers 2012, 22; Ignatieff 1998, 37). Thirdly, the designation of "social groups" is problematic. Brubaker (2004) argues that there has been a tendency in writing about social identities for 'groupism', which involves taking groups as the main constituents of social life. This is dangerous, because membership and levels of social cohesion are never constant. It is better to think of social identities as belonging to social categories, which can gain distinctive social identities when they are perceived as unchangeable and socially consequential (Brubaker 2004, 39-40; Demmers 2012, 24). In short, we understand collective identity as that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from the sense of belonging to and membership of a social category, which is perceived to be meaningful and socially consequential due to its opposition to other social identities.

Ethnic, religious and national identity

A specific type of collective identity has received much scholarly attention, namely ethnic identity. Ethnic identities are based on perceived shared cultural characteristics and/or common ancestry (Demmers 2012, 26). Early scholarship on ethnicity was dominated by primordialism, which saw cultural differences as natural and unchangeable an equated

ethnicity with race. In this vein, Huntington (1993) famously predicted a 'clash of civilizations' as a result of conflict along 'cultural fault lines'. Many scholars have criticized this view for its disregard for cultural change and human agency. The shortcomings of the primordialist paradigm have given rise to constructivism, which is mainly interested in the ways *boundaries* are drawn between ethnic identities, rather than the "cultural stuff" they encompass (Barth 1998, 15). Thus, the nature of ethnic identities is mostly dependent on what people themselves recognize as ethnic (Baumann 1999, 59).

This begs the question how ethnic identities come to be. Constructed ethnic boundaries are social ones (with possible spatial counterparts), which means that ethnic identities arise and are maintained through inter-ethnic interaction (Barth 1998, 15-17; Eriksen 2010, 16). As stated before, social identities are first and foremost applied to social categories rather than groups. When particular social conditions of people within these categories acquire meaning, an ethnic identity can arise (Brubaker 2004, 39-40). A common example of this is when a characteristic of a social category becomes the basis for significant advantage or oppression within a society, which imbues this characteristic with new meaning. With these new social identities there is often a tendency towards standardization of behaviour and interaction in order to construct visible social boundaries (Barth 1998, 24-25). It is important to stress that pre-existing cultural differences are no prerequisite for ethnic identities to emerge. Ignatieff (1998) argues convincingly that even minor differences between social categories can be transformed into significant boundary markers of ethnic identities.

Ethnic identities, or ethnic boundaries to be more accurate, need to be carefully maintained in order to remain socially relevant (Barth 1998). Several mechanisms can be used for this. Firstly, the construction of dominant narratives about the contents of ethnic identities can create a sense of a continuation of history as well as justifications of certain practices or traditions. Secondly, stereotypes are often used as a guide to behaviour and discourse. These contain stable and simple images that explain and justify social relations between ethnic categories (Dervin 2012, 186; Eriksen 2010, 28-31). A closely related mechanism is reification, defined as "the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things." (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 63). Through this mechanism, ethnic identities, traditions, practices and such are presented as unchangeable and natural. Othering is a specific type of reification, because it only concerns the identity of other groups. It is employed to reinforce and protect the self or the in-group and to differentiate from the

'Other' (Dervin 2012, 91-92). In sum: "Categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail *social processes of exclusion and incorporation* whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories." (Barth 1998, 9-10, italics mine). Precisely these processes of in- and exclusion are of primary interest, since the idea of a "them" needs to exist for an "us" to be possible. As the quote shows, ethnic identities prevail despite changes in membership. Becoming and remaining a member of a certain ethnic identity depends to a large degree on the performance of this identity (Barth 1998, 24-25) and the process of ascription, which include self-ascription as well as external ascription (Eriksen 2010, 16).

Religious identities are another common type of collective identity. Religious identity arises from a sense of belonging to a group, which is first and foremost defined by a particular religion. One must look out for the pitfall of reifying religious identity (and other collective identities for that matter), since the performance and experience of religious identity changes in different socio-cultural contexts. In cases in which aspects of religion such as tradition are perceived as integral to a specific culture or people it is more accurate to speak of ethnic identities (Baumann 1999, 69-80).

A similarly ambiguous but important distinction should be made between ethnic and national identities, the latter of which involves notions of citizenship and sovereignty rather than shared culture and common ancestry (Demmers 2012, 36). National identities should be understood as the outcome of the process of ethnopolitics or identity politics (Baumann 1999). Through this process, ethnic identities are perceived as having bearing on a specific territory, namely a state. This process is often experienced as externally imposed: "Whereas before, she felt Yugoslavian, and her putative 'Croatianess' meant nothing to her, she now feels this identity is closing in on her. '" (Drakulic 1993, 52).

For the purposes of our research it is important to keep these various types of collective identity in mind in order not to assume beforehand that Bosnian Muslim and Serbian identity are only ethnic, national, or religious identities, but can be one or a mix of these according to the identification of our informants.

2. Collective Memory - Tristan

"Memory is the faculty that enables us to form an awareness of selfhood (identity), both

on the personal and on the collective level." (Assmann *in* Erll and Nünning 2008, 109)

As the quote above emphasizes, collective memory is intimately intertwined with collective identity. The sociologist Halbwachs is the most prominent founder of the concept of collective memory (Halbwachs *In* Marcel & Mucchielli, 2008; Halbwachs 1991). He argued that memory is an inherently social feature, thereby opposing the idea that memory is only an individual cognitive capacity. He speaks of the constant interplay between individual and collective memories: "One can argue that every individual memory is a specific perspective on the collective memory and this individual perspective can differ according to one's social position. This social position in turn is the consequence of the various group memberships of the individual." (Halbwachs 1991, 15). Thus, memory depends on consciousness, socialization, and communication. It should be analysed as a function of social life. In other words, collective memory is that what remains from the past in the life of a group, or what groups do with the past (Nora in Berliner 2005, 201).

Characteristics of collective memory

Other scholars (Neiger et al. 2011; Assmann 2008; Wang 2008; Berliner 2005) built on this shift from cognitive memory to collective memory by adding several arguments. Firstly, collective memory is a socio-political construct. Assmann (2008) argues that history and memory are self-reflective. History can never be fully objective, because of the effects of polarization, the ethnocentrism, and the surplus of information available (Connerton 2008: 65). Secondly, collective memory is a mediated process. The individual recollection of shared experience is strongly influenced by group dynamics and adapts to the cultural transformation of the community in a historical era (Wang 2008, 315). Thirdly, collective memory is functional. It is constructed through practices and discourses that mark social boundaries (Neiger et al. 2011, 5), and creates a sense of unity (Gongaware 2003, 486). Lastly, memory

can be expressed and materialized through various mediums (Argenti and Schramm 2010, 180-187). This will be further examined in the last chapter of the theoretical framework.

Critique on Collective memory

Substantial critique on Halbwachs' concept of collective memory has been put forth. Assmann and Czaplicka (1995) claimed that collective memory is too vague as an umbrella concept and argued for more precise terminology in the shape of a distinction between communicative and cultural memory. Whereas communicative memory refers to everyday communication pertaining to the 'lived' past, cultural memory is the connection with the faraway past, through for example monuments and rituals (Assmann *In* Erll & Nünning 2008, 110). We agree with Assmann and Czaplicka about the need of a more precise terminology, but doubt that it is always applicable. Therefore, we choose to focus on collective memory as an umbrella term in our research and only use the abovementioned distinction if and when it is applicable. We shall discuss this more thoroughly in the last chapter of the theoretical framework.

Collective memory created and externalized

Collective memory is created through a social drama (Turner 1969; 1982), which begins with a breach in the regular tenor of life and leads to a crisis of understanding in which sides are formed. People try to cope with this social drama by integrating it into the collective memory or by redefining the collective memory itself. This subsequently affects elements of the collective identity such as membership definitions. This process can be organised and used by different memory entrepreneurs (political and social stakeholders such as political parties and intellectuals) to construct and sustain a national narrative about the past that support certain political agendas (Moll 2013, 911). This is evident for example in Argentina between 1970 and 1990 (Robben 2005) and we suspect a similar process to be present in BiH.

Various media can redefine and maintain collective memory after the social drama has arisen, which can strengthen or even define a collective identity (Ruchatz *in* Erll and Nünning 2008, 393). The externalisation of collective memory through media can have various effects. For example, it can be experiential by representing the past as lived experience, as in the case of literature or film, or it can mythicize foundational events of the

faraway past, for example by showing a glimpse of the past through first or second- order observations (Erll in Erll and Nünning 2008). Examples of media are spoken narratives, commemorations (Gongaware 2003), rituals, habits, monuments and memorials (Robben 2005; Argenti and Schramm 2010). Many other media can be used to externalize and express collective memory, but we expect to find these above during fieldwork. We shall go more deeply into externalisation of cultural trauma through such mnemonic media in the last chapter.

3. Cultural Trauma - Tristan

Cultural trauma is what Ruth Ley calls the disorder of collective memory (*in* Argenti & Schramm 2010, 46). It is the inability to fully recall or forget an overwhelming experience (Alexander et al. 2004, 38), the recurrent unwanted intrusion and its effects on behaviour (Eyerman 2013, 42) and the struggle for meaning of those incomprehensible memories within a group or society (Alexander et al. 2004; Robben 2005). To understand cultural trauma, we must look at an interdisciplinary debate about the meaning of this concept. To do so shall we first examine the sociological approach and subsequently compare this to the anthropological approach.

Building a definition

Trauma in psychological literature is seen as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind (Caruth 1996 *in* Eyerman 2013, 42). In early psychoanalysis trauma was understood as an internal distortion of the mechanisms of psychological defence caused by an external shattering event and the internal traumatic response of the actor (Alexander in Alexander et al. 2004, 4). We agree with the sociologist Alexander that the psychoanalytic approach is suffering from the 'naturalistic fallacy', namely the idea that events can be inherently traumatic. Based on Anderson's notion that "...it is only through the imaginative process of representation that actors have the sense of experience", trauma should be understood as a socially and culturally mediated phenomenon (*in* Alexander et al. 2004, 8).

Based on the psychological understanding of trauma and built on Alexander's view that trauma is socially and culturally mediated, Smelsers tentatively gives a formal definition of cultural trauma: "A memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is (a) laden with negative affect, (b) represented as indelible, and (c) regarded as threatening a society's existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions." (*in* Alexander et al. 2004, 44).

Sociologists such as, Giesen, Alexander and Eyerman have built on this definition (*in* Alexander et al. 2014). Eyerman analyses cultural trauma in the formation of African American identity. He found that because of the failure to incorporate African Americans into white society, a cultural trauma based on slavery and the rejection of their racially defined ethnicity was created (2004, 86). To cope with this cultural trauma, African Americans constructed a collective memory which allowed a positive conception of African-American

identity. Another prominent case study in the field of cultural trauma is the Holocaust (Kidron *in* Argenti and Schramm 2010, 200-228). Giesen argues that cultural trauma is something without a meaning of its own, but that it is given a meaning through new narratives and related experiences (*in* Alexander et al. 2004). He discovers that Germans, even those who participated in the Holocaust, coped with this cultural trauma by constructing narratives of victimization. Based on these cases, Eyerman and Giesen conclude that cultural trauma concerns the interpretation of experience. Alexander similarly argues that cultural trauma is subject to a "meaning struggle" (*in* Alexander et al. 2004, 62).

Influence of Anthropology

As the aforementioned case studies demonstrate, cultural trauma manifests itself in many levels of society such as politics, social relations and religion. One should therefore study it from the perspective of different disciplines. Hence, we build onto the sociological understanding of cultural trauma by turning to anthropology, which began studying the concept later. We will argue in the following section that sociologist lean too much towards the psychological effects of traumatic events on individuals and often underestimate the complex ways cultural trauma surfaces in a society.

From the perspective of anthropology, we find similar ideas to the 'meaning struggle' of Alexander (*In* Alexander et al 2004). Robben, a prominent anthropologist within the discourse on cultural trauma, states that "...ongoing conflicts of memory construction are surface manifestations of unresolved traumas about past atrocities in the bosom of Argentine society" (2005, 122). In other words, a search rather than a repression of meaning is the lynchpin of traumatic memory. Whereas Alexander et al. (2004) argue that the "meaning struggle" is connected to the event itself and the interpretation, Robben argues that this struggle is connected to the construction of memory by contesting social groups with their own political agendas (2005, 155). Research on cultural trauma should not view traumatic experience as disconnected from daily life, but rather as part of it. We agree with Argenti and Schramm (2010), and Lexter (2013) who argue that the so called PTSD-paradigm is too dominant in the trauma discourse: "Trauma is, as it were, carved out of the flow of everyday existence and is bracketed as a "thing" that is discernible against the backdrop of a person's life" (Lexter 2013, 755). We detect that sociologists such as Alexander lean too much towards the PTSD paradigm. We argue for a shift in focus from the psychological effects of

trauma to the social and cultural ramifications of trauma by means of an anthropological approach.

Another critique towards the aforementioned definition of cultural trauma is that sociologists tend to focus mainly on a singular traumatic event. We refute this limited perspective by arguing that cultural trauma is not based on a specific moment, but is better characterized as a process. Robben demonstrates this convincingly in his book 'Political Violence and Trauma in Argentina', in which he shows that Argentinian society was not suddenly hit by a traceable and momentary event, but that trauma percolates through various levels of society (2005, 345). Cultural trauma is thus not reducible to a specific moment in time and can be experienced differently in various levels of society and different social strata. In the case of Argentina these were the military, the guerrilla's, the captives, and the families (Idem, 350). This is the case when a cultural trauma is manifested in the society as a whole, which was the case with the Argentinian war (Robben 2005). The different social strata experienced the trauma in distinct ways as a result of different experiences and interpretations of the trauma. This results in different social traumas within the cultural trauma of one society. These social groups might contest each other's social traumas by arguing that their traumatic experience is more important or legitimate. We expect this to be the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as there are different ethnic groups within one society, who probably experienced and interpreted the war and its aftermath in different ways.

4. Trauma and collective memory - Julicke

Collective traumatic memory

Memory is crucial for cultural trauma, because it allows trauma to be externalized and worked through. The mediums used for this change over time: "It evolves from the relatively unorganized exchange of stories among contemporaries and eyewitnesses to the increasingly selective focus on "canonical" sites, which work as points of reference across generations." (Rigney 2008, 346). Thus, this development can be characterized as moving from group to public memory, from the construction to the selection and maintenance of memory (Eyerman *in* Alexander 2004, 75; Assmann 1995), and from communicative to cultural memory (Assmann 2008). As has been explained before, Assmann (2008, 109) identifies communicative and cultural memory as subcategories of collective memory (see table below). We agree with this distinction and argue that collective traumatic memory is characterized by communicative memory at first and cultural memory later.

	Communicative Memory	Cultural Memory
Content	history in the frame of autobiographical memory, recent past	mythical history, events in absolute past ("in illo tempore")
Forms	informal traditions and genres of everyday communication	high degree of formation, ceremonial communication;
Media	living, embodied memory, communication in vernacular language	mediated in texts, icons, dances, rituals, and performances of various kinds; "classical" or otherwise formalized language(s)
Time Structure	80-100 years, a moving horizon of 3-4 interacting generations	absolute past, mythical primordial time, "3000 years"
Participation Structure	diffuse	specialized carriers of memory, hierarchically structured

Figure 7: Differences between communicative and cultural memory (Assmann 2008, 117)

Mnemonic mediums

Within the phases of communicative and cultural memory, various mnemonic media (vehicles for the expression of certain memories) can be used. Which media are used and how long depends on the cultural context. A first medium for the expression of traumatic memory is verbal speech. In communicative memory, this often takes the shape of fragmentary verbal references to traumatic experiences ('you don't know what hunger is!') and occasionally longer narratives. (Kidron *in* Argenti and Schramm 2010, 200-228). In the case of cultural memory, verbal expression of traumatic memory takes the shape of standardized narratives that are part of the larger cultural canon, or non-verbal expression to try to silence it (Argenti and Schramm 2010). Secondly, nonverbal transmission can occur, which includes person-object interaction (looking at old photos together), facial expressions and silence (Kidron *in* Argenti and Schramm 2010, 200-228). Thirdly, artistic expressions such as literature, theatre, art and the like can be used as mediums for traumatic memory. Beronja and Vervaet (2016) note that literature in particular is often used to oppose dominant narratives (cultural memory), which places the medium more often within communicative memory. Fourthly, traumatic memory can be embodied. This often involves somatization, which is the externalization of psychological or social ills to the body. Physical pain can for example be interpreted as caused by angry spirits of people who suffered violent deaths (Kirstensen *in* Argenti and Schramm 2010, 63-81). A fifth medium is spatial memory, which is often employed for cultural memory. Gravesites, battlegrounds, monuments and the like are often erected by states in order to keep the memory of specific traumatic events alive and strengthen national identities (Giesen *in* Alexander 2004, 112-154). A sixth medium involves rituals and practices. Annual commemorations in particular are significant for cultural memory and are crucial for the intergenerational transmission of traumatic memory (Eyerman *in* Alexander et al. 2004, 60-111). Within communicative memory, rituals and practices like hoarding food are common among traumatized families (Kidron *in* Argenti and Schramm 2010, 200-228).

Commemorations, the erection of monuments and other mediums of cultural memory facilitate the routinization and objectification of trauma, which enables people to externalize and distance themselves from the traumatic events (Giesen *in* Alexander et al. 2004, 143). This does not mean however, that cultural memory becomes fixed. Communicative memory continues to play a role. Furthermore, they are not always easy to differentiate. In the Israeli example, personal accounts of Holocaust survivors were used as representations of a wider

cultural narrative for example (Feldman *in* Argenti and Schramm 2010, 103-134). Because of this overlap, we choose to focus on collective memory as an umbrella term in our research and identify communicative or cultural memory only when these concepts are applicable. We also focus particularly on the ways mnemonic practices can strengthen collective identities. The mentioned literature suggests that cultural memory is particularly useful for this, as this involves public and widely accepted narratives. Volkan (2001) argues moreover, that cultural traumas can be reactivated in order to strengthen a collective identity when this is perceived to be under threat, leading to a new cycle of traumatic memory. He uses the example of Serbian reactivation of the memory of the Battle of Kosovo of 1389 in the 20th century to justify claims to the land and strengthen a growing national identity (Volkan 2001, 89-95). Thus, the collective memory of trauma can remain relevant for the strengthening of collective identities many years after the event itself.

Context

Panel in the Historical Museum depicting the reconstruction of Sarajevo. Photo taken in Sarajevo by Julicke.

1. Short overview - Tristan and Julicke

As we already briefly shed light on the Bosnian war in the introduction, in this chapter we go into the current situation in BiH and Sarajevo in particular. The Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) ended the war in 1995, but at the same time institutionalised a societal structure upholding ethnic separation, both in politics and society at large. The state BiH was divided in two ethnically-based entities; the Serbian Republika Srpska (RS), and the Bosniak and Croat Federation of BiH. Nowadays, the entities are still largely politically, administratively, and fiscally autonomous and have their own constitutions, political leaders and armies (Visser and Bakker 2016, 466). BiH is further divided in Cantons and municipalities, each with their own governing bodies. The DPA only allowed three ethnic groups to become politically active, namely Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats (Güll and Dee 2014). The three so called 'constituent peoples' are each represented by their respective president, who is part of the tripartite rotating presidency. The presidential voting system restrict people to vote only for the representatives of their canton. Thus, in practice people in the Federation are only allowed to vote for either the Croatian or Bosniak president, as the Serbian one is exclusively chosen in the RS (Sarajlic 2012 *in* Visser and Bakker 2016, 470).

TABLE 1
SARAJEVO: ETHNIC COMPOSITION, 1991–2002

Total	Muslims	Serbs	Croats	Others	Yugoslavs
1991: Ethnic composition of Sarajevo, Yugoslavia					
527,049	259,470	157,143	34,873	19,093	56,470
100%	49.2%	29.8%	6.6%	3.6%	10.7%

Total	Bosniak or Bosnian Muslims	Serbs	Croats	Others	
2002: Ethnic composition of Sarajevo, Federation of Bosnia & Hercegovina (not in the Serbian part of Sarajevo)					
401,118	319,245	44,865	26,890	10,118	
100%	76.5%	13.1%	7.0%	3.4%	

Source: Adapted from Markowitz (2010, p. 83); *original sources:* Republika Bosne i Hercegovine (1993, p. 7), Federacija Bosne i Herzegovine (2003).

Figure 8: (Visser and Bakker 2016, 469)

Sarajevo is sometimes called the Jerusalem of Europe (Gull and Dee 2014) and the bridge between East and West, signifying a multicultural city in which different ethnic groups live together harmoniously. This view has become subject of debate after the division of Sarajevo in "Federation" Sarajevo and East-Sarajevo (Visser and Bakker 2016, 470-483; Jansen

2013). The populations in each part seemed to focus on their own respective ethnically based communities and crossing to the other side was experienced as uncomfortable (Stefansson 2010, 31; Leonard et al. 2016,18-23). People are constantly confronted with nationalistic symbols such as flags, street names, and signs, which cause them to be reminded of their own Otherness (Jansen 2013, 31). The primary focus in the post-war years was on rebuilding the city as well as building new facilities such as shopping centres, apartment blocks, tramlines and universities (Güll and Dee 2014). These projects have not fully alleviated Sarajevo's problems, notably the corruption, low living standards, and excessive unemployment. The latter is particularly problematic among adolescents, as the unemployment rate rose from 44 percent in 2014 to 62 percent a year later (Visser and Bakker 2016, 471). The economy of BiH had collapsed after the war and is currently still in a deadlock: "Bosnia & Hercegovina's economy, in this sense, might be said to have suffered from a polarised political system that gives too much weight to the matter of ethnicity in its decision-making." (Visser and Bakker 2016, 481). The following infographic represents the results of a research done by Prism research for the EU about adolescents' the perception of the country. Especially the statistics about the perception on the political, social and economic situation and about the stagnation of the development in BiH are insightful.
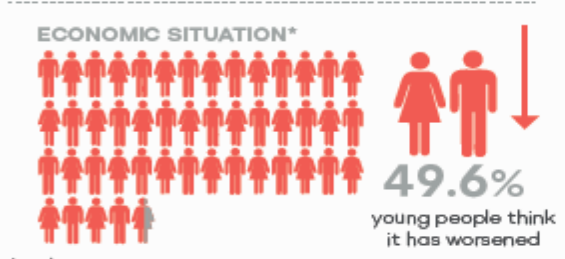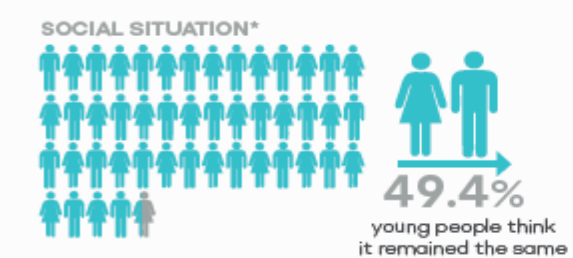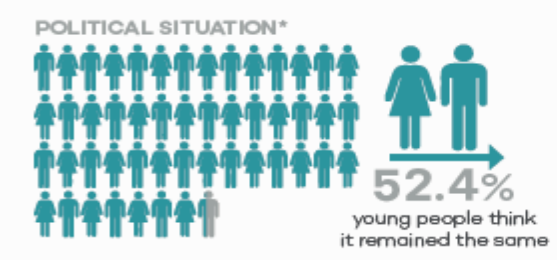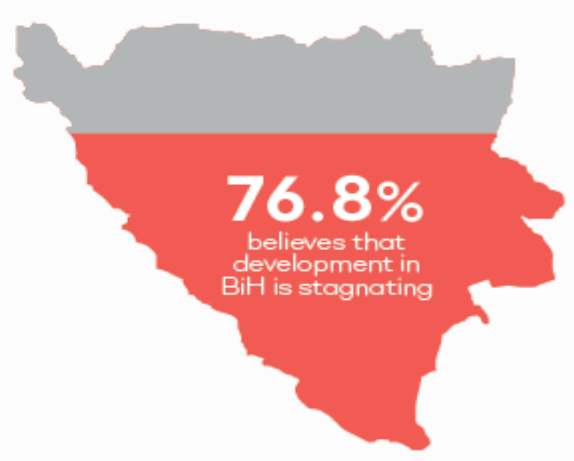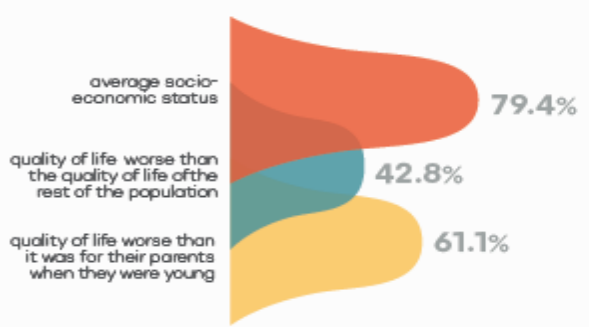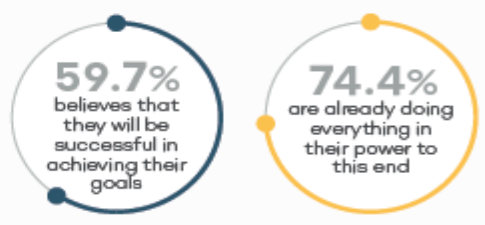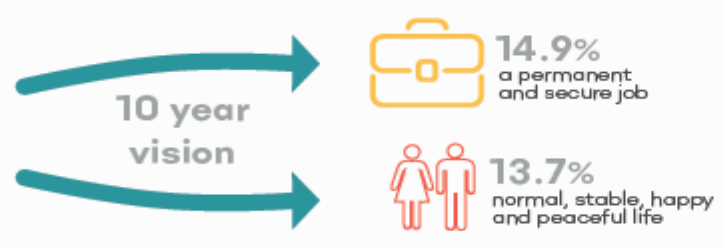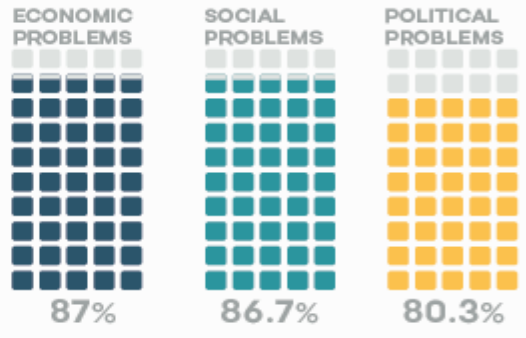
Figure 9: Infographic of Socio-economic perceptions of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Prisma Research 2017, 8)

2. Serbs - Julicke

Serbs are an ancient people, whose history is a central aspect of their identity. Shortly after the medieval golden age of the Serbian kingdom under the Nemanjić dynasty (ca. 1166-1371), the kingdom was defeated in Kosovo in 1389 and became a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire (Judah, 2009, 1-28). The Battle of Kosovo became a symbol of the lost greatness of Serbia that inaugurated a period in Serbian history characterized by oppression under foreign occupations (Ottomans, Austrians, Ustashas, and Bosniaks) (Volkan 2001, 89-95). Especially the persecution by the Croatian Ustashas during World War II is remembered in Serbian collective memory. Six hundred years after the battle it was commemorated throughout Serbia, reflecting the rise in nationalist sentiments of the late 1980's and 90's in Yugoslavia. President Milosevic used nationalist rhetoric to raise support for his aspirations to draw power in Yugoslavia towards himself and effectively realize the ancient dream of 'Greater Serbia'. Recognizing the Serbian threat and influenced by their own respective nationalisms, Croatia and Slovenia declared independence in 1992 and thereby provoked military action by Serbia (Glenny 1996, 16-33). At the Bosnian front that emerged later during the Yugoslav wars, the Serbian-controlled Yugoslav army conquered up to around 70% of the land, but was unable to hold on to it (Kostovicova 2003, 274). Some of these primarily Serbian areas within BiH first gained a formal status as Serb Autonomous Regions (SAO; see figure 10 and 11). These regions were the precursor of Republika Srpska, which was founded on the 9th of January 1992 and declared independence three months later. The concessions that were made in terms of land and limited sovereignty by Milosevic as formalized in the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) left Bosnian Serbs with a sense of betrayal and prevented the unification of RS with Serbia proper. Although relations with Serbia later improved, nationalist loyalty and identity of Bosnian Serbs remained oriented towards RS (Armakolas, 2007; Kostovicova, 2003). As Kostovicova notes: "Promoting the entity into a state and thus confirming the achievement of the Bosnian Serb national goal, albeit short of unification of all Serbs in one state, was crucial in winning over the critics who saw the DPA as national humiliation." (Kostovicova, 2003: 277).
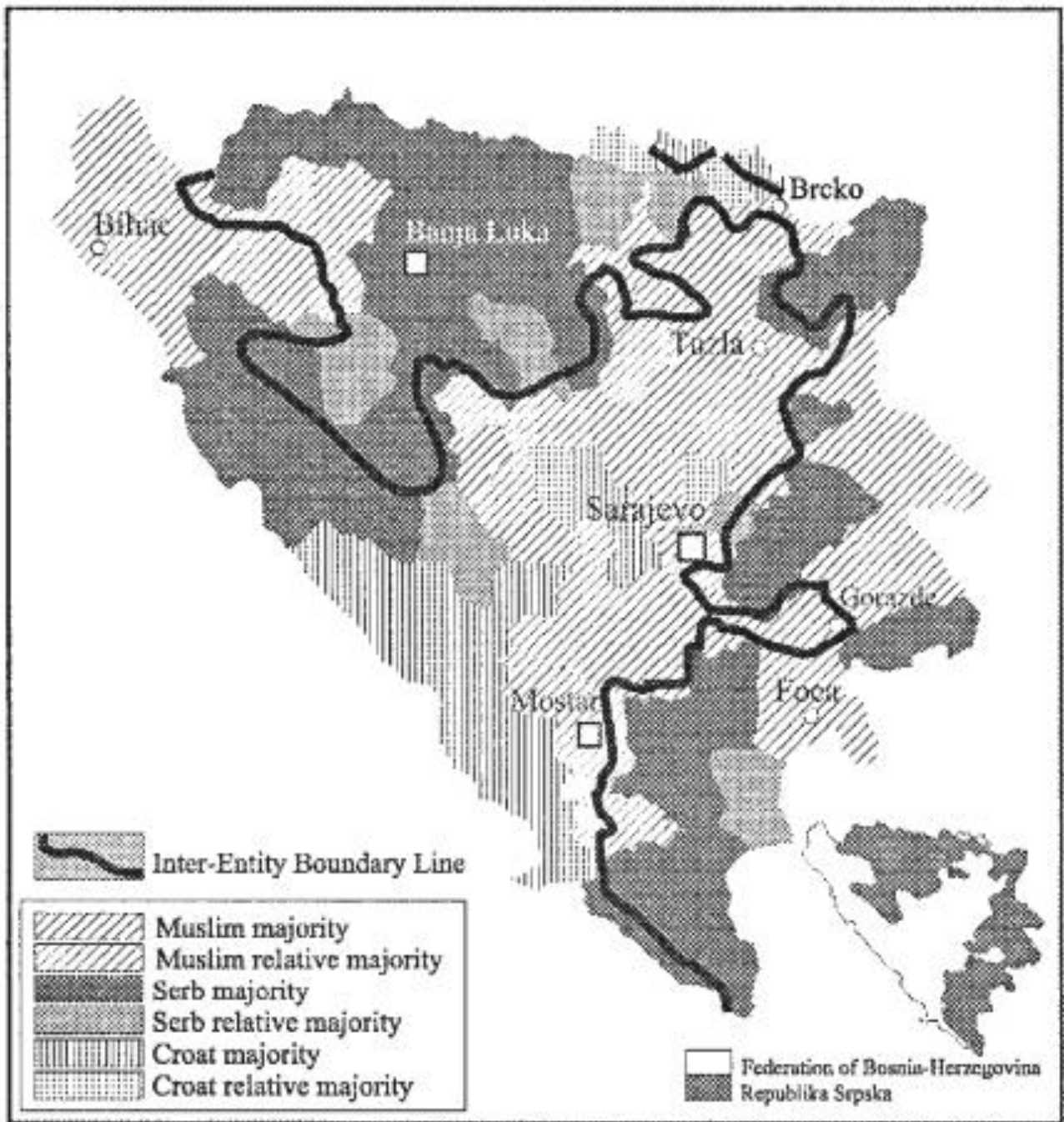
Figure 10: The pre-war ethnic map of Bosnia-Hercegovina based on the 1991 census with the IEBL instated by the DPA in 1995 superimposed on it (Kostavicova 2004: 274)
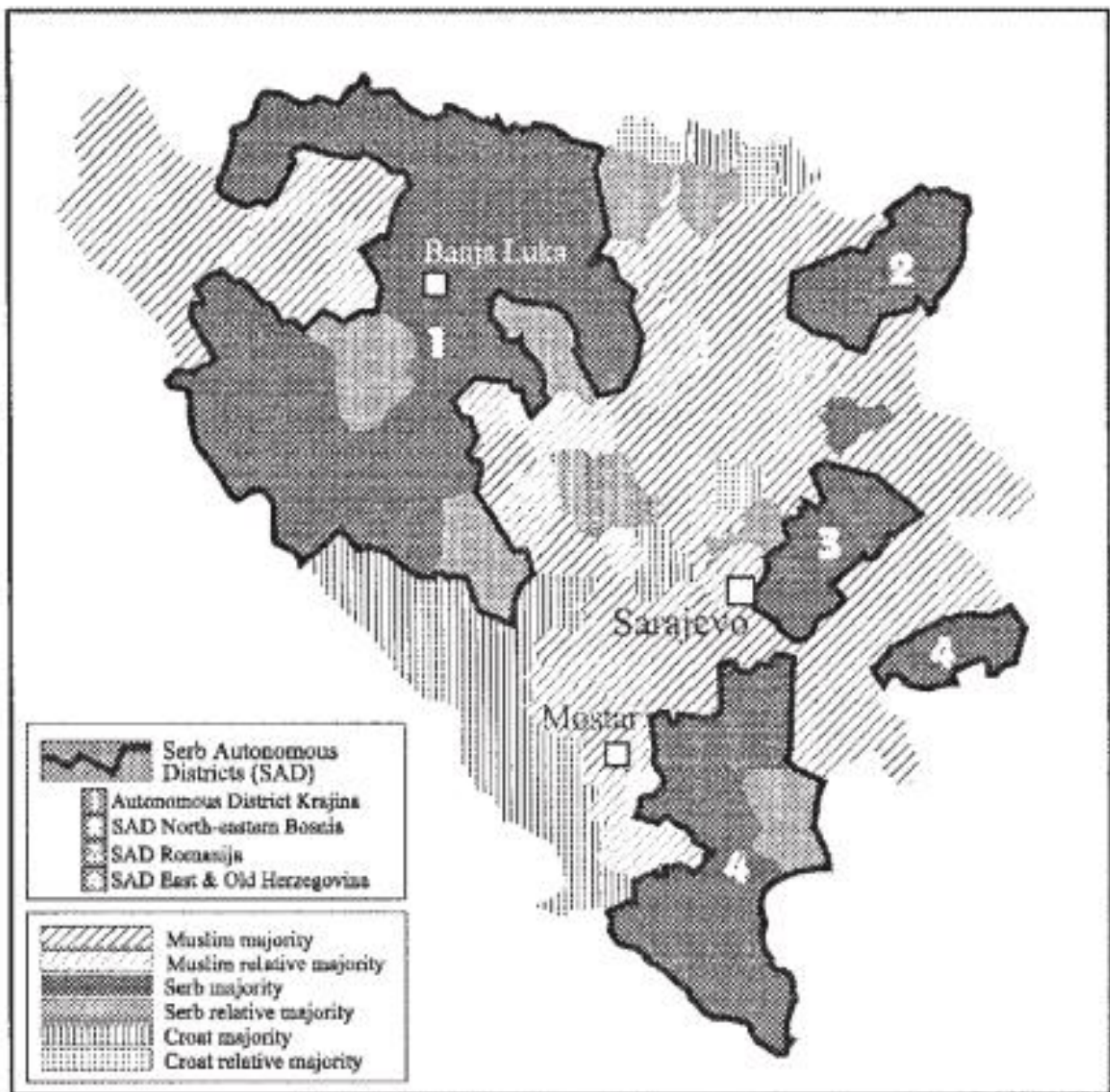
Figure 11: Serb Autonomous Districts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991 (Kostovicova 2004: 273)

With the weight of blame for the war placed on their shoulders by Bosniaks, Croats and the international community, Bosnian Serbs invoked the past to create a narrative of victimization in which the Bosniaks and Croats were cast as the reincarnations of the Ottomans and the Ustashas respectively. This history-centred narrative, the grief over the loss of Yugoslavia, and the dream of 'Greater Serbia' form the core of Serbian cultural trauma after the war (Boose 2002). These post-war narratives went hand in hand with a renewed importance of (Bosnian) Serbian identity with a particular emphasis on history and the Orthodox religion. The Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) between the two Entities has provided a spatial dimension to the new Bosnian Serb ethno-national identity. This is particularly evident in Sarajevo, which has been divided into a Croat and Bosniak Sarajevo and a Serbian Sarajevo dubbed 'East Sarajevo'. The border, although invisible, is rarely crossed (Jansen 2014). Another important aspect of the post-war Bosnian Serb identity is the building of monuments and organization of annual commemorations. At least twenty annual commemorations are organized by the RS, which remember events in the nineteenth century, both World Wars and the Bosnian war (Moll 2013). These commemorative events, discourse in media, ethnically based and pro-Serbian education (Torsti, 2007) and spatial segregation have strengthened Bosnian Serb identity over the years.

3. Bosnians Muslims - Tristan

The history of the Bosnian community is best recognized as a search for their own identity (Moll 2013, 911). The first mentioning of the Bosnian identity starts with the kingdom of Bosnia (1130- 1453). After the death of king Tvrtko, the kingdom fell apart and was taken by foreign powers. First by the Ottomans (1463-1878), which sold them to the Austro-Hungarians (1878-1918), thereafter the Bosnian region became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-41). The Germans ruled them during the second world war at the end of the second world war, Bosnia became part of the federation of Yugoslavia (Visser and Bakker 2016, 469; Domini 2001).

The Bosnian Identity among the respective lineage survived during the ages, although it took some major changes. In the 1940's, Croats and Serbs didn't recognize Bosniak as a national group, which was evident in the census of the Bosnian Republic in 1948, where the 'Muslim Bosnian' nationality was not an option on the form (Sehagic 2016, 136). But still an overwhelming majority of the Bosnian Muslim community identified themselves being different than Serbs and Croatian. When in 1980's and 90's nationalism was on the rise, the Bosnian Muslim community came to crystallize their nationality out of necessity of the opposition of Croats and Serbs nationalities, basing it mostly on being from the territory of current BiH and the Islamic religion.

The Bosnian war of 1992-95, the genocide of Srebrenica combined with the battle of Sarajevo became a chosen trauma on the foreground of the collective identity of Bosnian Muslims (Sehagic 2016, 141; Volkan 2001). Nationalism and thereby identification with the Federation of BiH grew as a national narrative gained dominance, in which the Serbs were seen as the perpetrators of the Srebrenica genocide. This became part of their collective identity and is commemorated annually on July 11 (Moll 2013). Bosnian collective memory is often associated with genocide of Srebrenica (Vervaet 2016). They, themselves, were the victims, but also defenders and liberators of their own country after the Bosnian war (Moll 2013).

The term Bosniak is controversial. After Bosnia and Herzegovina became independent, most people who used to define themselves as Muslims began to declare themselves as Bosniaks (Dimitrovova 2001, 97). There is however no precisely defined concept of the term Bosniak, the term has deep-rooted historical tradition as is usage and definition changed through historical periods (Idem). Bosnian, a fourth category arose in

recent years, it can be considered as a national term for all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, it can imply a new association brought forward by the adolescents, resisting the ethnic categories and rebelling against the memory narratives (Visser and Bakker 2016, 476-480).

Being a victim of the Serbs aggressors is not what contemporary youth always identify with. Although stuck in the defensive nationalism and ethnonational victimization, some Bosnians they cope with this massive trauma by focussing on rebuilding of their life and the attempts to live in peaceful co-existence (Sheftel 2011; Stefansson 2010, 71). The latter was made possible by the development of strategic repression and strategic chosen amnesia. By silencing sensitive themes related to the war, particularly moral and political issues, they realise everyday coexistence. This silence about the ethnic conflict, though, also can also marks the differences between the ethnic groups as it can contain in their minds (Steffanson 2010, 70). There still is a strong ingroup identification and focus, which sustains the ethnic division according to (Leonard et al. 2016). This sustains the division in ethnic relations, because the issues are not debated.

Sarajevo: a multicultural riddle

Photo taken in Sarajevo by Julicke.

1. Collective identity and memory among Bosnian Muslims - Tristan

When one strolls in downtown Sarajevo the different cultural influences are evident in the cityscape, particularly when one encounters the popular sign on the street that separates the Ottoman from the Austro-Hungarian section (see figure 12).

Figure 12: (Destination Sarajevo, "Sarajevo, Meeting of Cultures" 2017)

What and who am I? is one of the questions every Bosnian struggles with. [4]

Identity is difficult for young Bosnian Muslims to decipher. As discussed in the Context, through the ages different names have been given for what my informants seen as their social groups. When one looks closer to how they classify and represent themselves today, one can see three different identities come to the fore, namely a religious Muslim identity, an ethnic Bosniak identity, and a national Bosnian identity. In Bosnian society, opposition to other social identities (Demmers 2012, 22; Ignatieff 1998, 37) is very influential for the creation of

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[4] Informal conversation with Damir, 15-02-2018.

one's own identity, because the geographical area of BiH has mostly been under control of a foreign power. Self- ascription and external ascription is also important for this identity construction of Bosnian Muslims (Eriksen 2010, 26).

Ascription
Politics
Societal life for Bosnian Muslims is characterised by the ethnic division, which was created after the war and is sustained by politicians. This puts external pressure on the identification of my informants to perceive Serbs as different. One of my informants, Kenan, experiences society to be in a phase of stagnation, because it doesn't move out of the ethnic division created after the war:

It is just how like politics separated the people, You are Bosniak. You are a Serb. You are Croat. I do not see it like that. When something happens in society, for example two guys had a fight, the politicians immediate connect the ethnicities to it"…"And the war is also connected, they immediately go into like: oh they are doing this to us. [5]

The main characteristics of the ascribed Bosniak ethnic identity are Islam and perceived common ancestry (Demmers 2012, 26). This identity is perceived in opposition to the ethnic Serbian identity. Though this in- and exclusion the categorical ethnic distinction between Bosniaks and Serbs is sustained (Barth 1998, 9-10). By emphasizing ethnic identities and distinction in society politicians reify and externally ascribe Bosniak identity (Demmers 2012, Baumann 1999, Barth 1998). This echoes the research done in BiH by Visser and Bakker (2016), who also concluded that by placing ethnicity on the foreground in Bosnian society ethnic divisions are sustained, a process referred to as ethnomobilisation by Goran Simic[6]. For example, Hida, Kenan and Muamer, separately told me that in 2016 six million BAM[7] disappeared and that politicians blamed each other, basing their arguments on ethnic differences.

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[5] Unstructured interview with Kenan, 16-2-2018.

[6] Professor on the university of Sarajevo and specialist in ethnic relations in BiH. During my fieldwork I had the opportunity to meet him and discuss my research.

[7] Bosnian mark (currency).

Media

The second medium for external ascription is digital and written media. Some of my informants argue that these media are subjective, because they reinforce the process of Othering (Dervin 2012, 91-92) and sustain the ethnic divisions in society. Clix.be[8] is mentioned a few times as a specifically Bosniak source of news, as it focuses on their side of the story.

Societal influence in BiH

External ascription of ethnic identity takes place in society through the importance of ethnicity in the government and its administration. The Party of Democratic Action (SDA) is the biggest Bosniak party and seems to be the most important representation of the Bosniak population. This party has a lot of influence in society and even affects employment opportunities for Bosnian Muslims.

Hida: *If in one pharmaceutical company that there is one free spot and you want to enter. So you have to contact the president of your party and then you will get a job."*
I: *Is that only the case in the pharmaceutical businesses?*
Hida: *It is everywhere, even medicine. mostly economics, law.[9]*

Although it is uncommon in daily life to ask someone about their ethnicity, one's identity is assumed by others based on one's surname and other characteristics. Of course, mistakes can be made in this regard. Marija for example was born in Belgrade, but moved to Sarajevo soon after her birth. She always complains that others assume her to be a Serb, even though she identifies herself as Bosnian. Although my informants don't always see themselves as a Bosniak, they identify the other ethno-national groups as Serbs or Croats.

Self-ascription

The externally ascribed Bosniak identity is not always compatible with the self-ascribed identities of my informants (Eriksen 2010,16), as many don't accept the ethnic Bosniak identity. For example, most of my informants argue that this Bosniak identity originates from

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[8] Popular news website in BiH, is seen as being connected to the Bosniak population.

[9] Semi-structured interview with Hida, 4-04-2018

politicians and the old generation, who sustain the ethnic divisions from the war. As Gordon Simic argues, "They are reinventing the wounds every day, every year."[10] In this way this this ethnic identity is keeping them in the past.

In my opinion ethnicity, I don't mean I wouldn't even use it [the concept]. [...] Like if you want to look at the past you're going to use it [ethnic identities], if you just don't care about the past you don't use [...] I mean if I want to forget the past and want to move on. why would you use it?[11]

Additionally, as not all feel connected to the religion, not all feel ascribed to the Bosniak identity.

I: *Do you identify yourself with any of the three big ethnic groups?*
Selma: *Since I from Bosnia, I am Bosnian.*
I: *Not with Bosniak?*
Selma: *No not really. My parents are not so religious. [12]*

In the construction of their identity, my informants highlight different aspects. For example, Kenan emphasises firstly his Sarajevan origin, followed by his Bosnian nationality and being Muslim. Belmin and Muamer emphasize that they are Bosnian first and then Bosniak, because of ascription, their upbringing and Islam. Thus, their identities are both self-ascribed and socially constructed (Barth 1998, Demmers 2012, Ignatieff 1998, Baumann 1999).

National Identity

Although the term 'Bosnian' technically applies to all people living in BiH, it can also be a term of rebellion against the ascribed Bosniak ethnic identity. In this sense, Bosnian identity is based on a notion of citizenship (Demmers 2012, 36). By not accepting this ethnic Bosniak identity, my informants only identify themselves with a national and sometimes a religious identity. Some like Muamer, and Belmin do feel somewhat connected to the ethnic Bosniak

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[10] Unstructured interview with Gordon Simic, 7-03-2018

[11] Informal conversation with Kenan, 8-4-2018

[12] Semi-structured interview with Selma, 25-03-2018

identity, because of their upbringing. Nevertheless, they emphasize their national identity, because they think that their Bosniak identity focuses too much on the past. The previously mentioned quote by Kenan illuminates this. What Kenan made explicit and other informants generally agree with is that is that identifying yourself as Bosnian shows that you are open to the future, whereas if you identify as Bosniak you show that you still focus on the war. For my informants, being Bosnian stands for being a citizen of BiH, irrespective of whether you are ethnically Serb, Bosniak or Croat. Passports symbolize this.

"*Your identity is what is displayed on your passport, look here it stands* [showing his passport], *Citizen from BiH. It does not argue that I am from the federation or RS, but just a citizen.*" [13]

Most Bosnians don't feel so different from Serbs or Croats. They perceive them as brothers and friends in culture, but different in terms of religion. For example, Jelja and Muamer, both have a Serbian partner.

Since identity in BiH is such a sensitive aspect of personal and public life, most Bosnian Muslims choose to focus to the here and now. It is not common to discuss religion or ethnicity among Bosnian Muslim adolescents. Instead, they focus on commonalities by talking about music and school and by joking about the political system. They are all interested in Western culture, but also listen to old Yugoslavian music and contemporary Serbian, Bosnian and Croatians music. In this way, they hold on to the memory of Yugoslavia in their collective memory. For both Bosnian and Bosniak people, significant facets of their identity are the Bosnian language and folk music (sevdalinka). It is common to hang out all day with friends and family and drink coffee. Family and friends are very important as well.

Interestingly, national holidays like Independence Day (1st of March) and Statehood day (25th of November) are not celebrated by my informants. Some argue that they want to celebrate these national holidays, but don't want to put additional pressure on the ethnic division. After all, other ethno-national groups live around them, each with their own perception of history. Others mention that no common traditions exist about how to celebrate these holidays, which only leaves state-imposed rules such as hanging the Bosnian flag in

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[13] Interview with Ejub, 15-03-18.

front of windows(see figure 13), and not being allowed to work. Therefore, most people will go to family and friends. This is interesting to see that the national identity is in this way left aside publicly, although most informants like it become something they can be proud off.

Figure 13: photo taken in downtown Sarajevo by Tristan.

Religious identity

Religion became centrally positioned in Bosnian Muslim identity in the Ottoman era. Baumann argues that one should not speak of a religious identity when it is perceived as integrated into a specific culture (Baumann 1999, 69-80). I agree with him on that point and I have perceived that Islam and its traditions can be integrated in Bosniak as well as Bosnian identity. However, some don't want to identify themselves with these identities and for their sake, Muslim identity should be treated separately. Most of those who see themselves as Muslim practice their religion in different ways. Many of them do not hold a high regard to all the obligations of the Islam. They view these as culture dependent and perceive the Bosnian Muslim way of believing as relaxed, in the sense that it does not oppose other religions in society.

It was like that in the past. Now we modernized it, we do not believe in that anymore in Bosnia. I would rather have a wife who's going to have her own job. We're going to support our children together. When you're not home, I will cook, I will clean. When you were home, you will cook or clean.[14]

Religious holidays like Kubran Byram, which remembers the sacrifice of Ibrahim was willing to make of his son, and Ramadan Byram, which is a feast after Ramadan. Both are seen as family events and can have religious importance depending on the individual. On Kubran Byram an animal is sacrificed with the family and the meat is mostly given to friends and the poor. Muslims recognize and respect other religious celebrations of Catholics and Orthodox Christians in BiH. For example, they wish people a happy Easter. In some families like Hida's and Marija's a mixture of religions is common and both Muslim and Christian holidays are celebrated.

Collective memory

Historical narratives

Turner explains that collective memory is created after a social drama (Gongaware 2003, 496). In the case of BiH the most important recent social drama is the Bosnian war, which became the main element in Bosnian Muslim collective memory. This and other historical narratives are employed to construct Bosnian Muslim collective memory and by extension Bosnian Muslim identity. Within this collective memory, the mechanisms of reification (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 63 in Demmers 2012, 29) and Othering (Dervin 2012, 91-92) are used to portray Bosnian Muslims as being different as Croats and Serbs. One of the central ideas in Bosnian Muslim collective memory is idea is that Bosnians Muslims have an old history, thereby refuting the Serbian claim that their identity is very new. The earliest history concerns the Bosnian kingdom, which was once one of the biggest kingdoms in the Balkans. Under the command of the greatest Bosnian ruler named king Tvrtko, the Bosnians conquered the Serbian and the Croatian kingdoms. Pasic claimed that "He was the one who

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[14] Unstructured interview with Kenan, 13-3-2018.

put Bosnia on the map"[15]. This kingdom is where they got their name and the borders, which the current ones are roughly based on. By emphasizing this narrative in cultural memory (Assmann *In* Erll & Nünning 2008, 110) Bosnian Muslims mark social boundaries (Neiger et al. 2011, 5) and create a sense of unity (Gongaware 2003, 486). Some try to do the opposite however by emphasizing a cultural memory in which Serbs and Croats are positioned as brothers with whom Bosnian Muslims co-exist. Several informants mentioned a famous Bosnian leader named Hussein kapetan Gradaščević, who saw Croats and Serbs as brothers in language and culture and united all three ethnic groups against the Ottomans. He is seen as a great hero in BiH and the national football team, the Dragons (his nickname was Dragon), was named after him. This cultural memory both argues for mutual coexistence and performs as a Bosnian national identity (Barth 1998, 24-2).

Cultural memory against communicative memory

The aforementioned historical narratives about the war are transferred through both cultural and communicative memory (Assmann 2008), which are used to maintain identity (Barth 1998), Bosnian Muslim in this regard. In the cultural memory a central aspect is the idea that Serbs and Croats attacked the Bosnian Muslims, who wanted to become independent. The use of othering is particularly effective in this narrative (Dervin 2012, 91-92).

Communicative memory about the war exists through the ongoing discussions in society and stories about first-hand experiences of parents and other family members. In the cultural memory about the war the Serbs and Croats are the central antagonists of the victimized Bosnian Muslims, whilst the communicative memory focuses less on this victimization and more on how people survived during the war. Another important narrative in the collective memory of the war is the Srebrenica genocide.

It [Srebrenica genocide] *is just part of me and I don't know how exactly how to explain it, it is part of every Bosnian. We cannot go around it, and we shall always remember it. Just how it is.*[16]

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[15] Informal conversation with Pasic, 31-3-2018.

[16] Informal conversation with Muamer, 29-3-2018.

My informants feel like there is no escape from this narrative and that it defines Bosnian Muslim identity. In this way this element in their collective identity is reified (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 63). Nevertheless, it is controversial, as the discourse regarding the genocide in the media and from politicians is different than the stories I hear from my informants. The cultural memory about Srebrenica is experienced as a socio-political construct by my informants (Assman 2008), because it is used as an identity marker by political entrepreneurs (Moll 2013). In this way the collective memory is part of a mediated process (Wang 2008, 315), as most of my informants contest the cultural memory of victimization of Srebrenica by means of communicative memory (more on this later). Nonetheless, nobody challenges the idea that it was a genocide.

Figure 14: Graffiti on a wall in Sarajevo. Photo by Tristan.

The siege of Sarajevo is as another dominant narrative within Bosnian Muslim cultural memory. Again, victimization is important, which is emphasized by citing the number of casualties, which was around 10.000. Communicative memory is most important for this narrative as most informants. Most informants focus on the memories of friends and family who survived the siege and defended against the Serbian forces. Muamer for example

explained how his father and uncle defended Sarajevo by making their own weapons. I went with Pasic to the tunnels of Sarajevo, where he told me how his parents fled to Sarajevo and survived there with all the Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats in the city. This memory strengthens the emotional connection to the Bosnian Muslim identity, it focuses on mutual coexistence with other ethnic groups.

As explained, collective memory is a mediated process and changes over time to adapt to cultural transformation of the community (Wang 2008, 315). I perceive this is also done by my informants, Bosnians and Bosniaks, as they use communicative memory can construct or deconstruct social boundaries (Neiger et al. 2011, 5) and create a sense of unity (Gongaware 2003, 486). Bosnian informants perceive the Yugoslavian time as 'the good old days' and Tito as a great leader based on stories they hear from family.

The one who holds everything together. People were free, there was no poverty. Nationality was not a problem and we lived all among each other.[17]

They have a strategically chosen amnesia (Stefansson 2010, 71), as they 'forget' the repression of religion and the Bosniak identity. Bosniaks perceive Yugoslavia in terms of this repression, which occurred for example through the disallowance of the Bosniak identity since religion was forbidden and their Bosniak identity was not recognized. This might also explain why many Bosnian adolescents hang out often in café Tito, where I have done most of my fieldwork. By going to this café, they try to connect to the 'good old days' of Yugoslavia.

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[17] Informal conversation/unstructured interview with Sara, 5-3-2018.

2. Collective identity and memory among Serbs - Julicke

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, a collective identity arises when one considers oneself as a member of a certain social category and when this membership is deemed meaningful and socially consequential (Tajfel 1978, 63 in Demmers 2012, 22). For adolescent Serbs in Sarajevo, this is certainly the case regarding their Serbian identity, which plays a prominent role in their lives. In the following chapter the ways young Serbs actually construct and maintain this identity will be discussed.

Ascription

Community and family

The question whether one is a member of a specific social identity group depends on the process of ascription (Eriksen 2010, 16). My research has found that for adolescent Serbs their Serbian identity is to a large degree externally ascribed in various social contexts. Importantly, Serbian identity is an ethnic identity, because it is based on common ancestry and perceived common cultural characteristics (Demmers 2012: 26). Lorena and Hana, two girls living in Sarajevo both have only one Serbian parent and identify as only "technically Serbian", signifying that ancestry is an important factor for Serbian identity. In this they differ markedly from my other informants who identify strongly as Serbian, live in primarily Serbian communities, and usually have two Serbian parents. They experience the ascription of their Serbian identity much more strongly, as both in the family as in the community they are constantly surrounded with Serbian culture. The present research has focused on two such communities, namely East-Sarajevo and in Pale. Here external ascription of Serbian identity takes place through a constant pressure to conform to standardized behavioural norms meant to characterize Serbs (Barth 1998, 24-25). Petra, a girl from Pale who described herself as a rebel told me outright that one shouldn't deviate from community opinion. Another local from East-Sarajevo, Malina, said that she had been at an extravagant eighteenth birthday party, on which more than 100 people were invited. When I asked why this was, she explained that one is considered an adult at 18 years old. Her friend Aleksandra added that local Serbs care a lot about what their neighbours think. The influence of Serbian cultural norms and social control is reinforced by the relative isolation of these communities. Pale and East-Sarajevo are both socially and spatially separated from "West-" Sarajevo and the

Federation for that matter, a fact that was supported by my findings as well as the literature (Stefansson 2010, 31; Leonard et al. 2016, 18-23). Few Muslims and Croats live in these areas, which is evident by the absence of mosques and Catholic Churches. The bus from Sarajevo stops 200 meters short of the border with East-Sarajevo. When one crosses this invisible line, the first thing one notices is the separate East-Sarajevo bus station, from where busses leave to popular destinations in the RS and Serbia. Children go to Serbian primary and high schools and hang out with Serbian friends. Everyone knows everyone here. This was the case to the extent that David, a high-school student who had only moved to East-Sarajevo a few months earlier and who had said he didn't know that many people in the neighbourhood yet, came across a friend or acquaintance four times while we were talking in a café for little more than an hour.

Federation

Outside of such communities in the RS, external ascription of Serbian identity is evident as well. Even though the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) running through Sarajevo is virtually invisible (see figure 15), crossing the border can be a genuinely unnerving experience for Serbs, because they suddenly become part of a minority rather than a majority in society. Malina and Aleksandra explained that it is very dangerous for Serbs to go to Dobrinja (the neighbourhood right across the EIBL adjacent to East-Sarajevo), because they are sometimes bullied and beaten there. When I asked them why, Aleksandra shrugged her shoulders and her eyes widened in complete incomprehension. "Something about hate,"[18] she said. Other informants testified that some people comment in a negative way on their Serbian identity while they were in Sarajevo. Ivo, who lived in Sarajevo for most of his life, told me he was sometimes assaulted and bullied in primary school.

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[18] Informal conversation with Aleksandra and Malina, 05-04-2018.

Figure 15: The border between Sarajevo and East-Sarajevo. Note the pink letters on the pharmacy. Photo by Julicke.

Through this process of Othering (Dervin 2012, 91-92) Serbs effectively felt excluded in the Federation and their Serbian identity was forcefully ascribed to them. This is also reinforced through the political system itself that was put in place after the Dayton Accords. This system, which normalized ethnically-based political parties, three presidents that each represent one of the "constituent peoples", and a separate status of the RS as a specifically Serbian Entity upholds ethno-national identity as the most important identifier in BiH (Güll and Dee 2014). Thus, it can be argued that this system itself is a form of external ascription of Serbian identity as well.

Media

External ascription of Serbian identity also occurs through media. Aside from news reports and political discussions on TV that normalize the ethnically-based political system mentioned before, Bosnian and Western media were often cited as propagating a decidedly

negative image of Serbs. In documentaries, articles, movies, books and other media Serbs (in this case often meaning both Serbs in BiH and in Serbia) were vilified according to my informants, particularly in media concerning the Bosnian war. This shows how after the social drama of the war (Turner in Gongaware 2003, 496), media was used to re-define Bosniak and even Western collective memory about Serbs.

I: *Well you said before that you didn't want to watch the Angelina Jolie [*The land of Blood and Honey] *movie, right?*
Katarina: *Yeah, well Serbs were projected like rapists, killers.*
Andrej: *Yes, we were Satanized.*
Katarina: *Yes, Satanized. Like she took only Muslim side in that uhm-*
Andrej: *Like we are blamed for everything.*[19]

Much like many such media, this movie specifically portrays Serbs in the context of the Bosnian war. Thus, by means of such media, Serbs are painfully reminded of the label that is placed on them by the outside world.

Self-ascription

Nearly all of my informants decidedly identify themselves as Serbian as well. This self-ascription of Serbian identity goes hand in hand with a profound appreciation for Serbian culture and people. The way certain cultural characteristics are used to construct a distinct Serbian identity will be explained below.

Constructing identities

For a collective identity to be meaningful, it needs to be actively constructed or imagined (Anderson 2006) and maintained (Barth 1998). Since most Serbs are born with the Serbian label so to speak, this identity merely needs to be maintained rather than constructed from scratch. Several mechanisms can be used for this, which often overlap in practice.

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[19] Focus group interview with Katarina, Andrej, and Matija, 16-03-2018.

Traditions

Firstly, dominant narratives (Barth 1998) about the contents of Serbian identity are used to create a seemingly homogenous identity that differs from other ones. As these narratives mainly concern shared cultural characteristics (particularly traditions) and national Serbian history that is passed on through the generations, they apply to both an ethnic and a national Serbian identity (Demmers 2012, 26; Baumann 1999). In terms of traditions, the focal point of Serbian culture lies in the family more so than in the community according to my informants, because of the importance of family-centred Orthodox traditions, particularly the celebration of Easter, Christmas and Slava. Actual religiosity is unimportant for these traditions and many of my informants and their families are in fact not religious. This suggests that Serbian identity should not be understood as a religious identity, but that religious customs were used instrumentally to strengthen ethnic Serbian identity. I was surprised for example when Katarina crossed herself in front of an icon in a church in Pale (see figure 16) and even kissed the glass covering of the icon after having claimed that she was not religious at all a few minutes before! The celebration of Christmas, Easter and Slava themselves mostly involves eating a lot of traditional food and a lot of talking and exchanging stories, particularly among the adults. Going to church is not an essential part of the celebrations, although a prayer for health and prosperity is commonly articulated by the male head of the family. Traditions such as Slava (celebrating the patron saint of the family) and Bandjak (burning a log from an oak tree on Christmas) are pagan in origin and are unique to Serbs. Slava in particular is often mentioned as a defining feature of Serbs.

Slava is very important to Serbian people, to our tradition. Because they think that's um, I won't speak in my name, but for Serbian peoples they think that Slava is something that uhm that puts Serbian people on bigger level than Muslims.[20]

Every family has a patron saint, which are usually Biblical figures or Christian martyrs, but also include saintly figures from Serbian history such as saint Sava, who established the celebrated medieval Nemanja dynasty. Slava is experienced as a unique Serbian tradition that

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[20] Semi-structured interview with Katarina, 08-03-2018.

brings families closer together. Other traditions are viewed in a more negative light, notably conservative norms about the role of girls and women in society.

Figure 16: Orthodox church in Pale. The building on the left is the church itself and the smaller one is used for lighting candles for the souls of the dead. Photo by Julicke.

Cultural memory and historical narratives

Historical narratives are also employed to construct Serbian identity. Here we also see the mechanism of reification at work (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 63 in Demmers 2012, 29), as Serbian identity is perceived as unchangeable and unavoidable because of its deep historical roots. Most of these narratives fall under Serbian cultural memory, since they concern commonly accepted ideas about the ancient past of the Serbian people (Assmann 2008). Several common threads can be identified. One of these is the idea that Serbs are an ancient people, which is often cited as proof that Serbian identity is more legitimate than the much younger Bosniak identity. The opposition of Serbs and Muslims is a common trope in Serbian cultural memory. This trope reveals the use of Othering within Serbian cultural

memory (Dervin 2012, 91-92). In terms of early history, emphasis is primarily laid on the medieval Serbian kingdom and its roots in Kosovo, which is perceived as the bedrock of Serbia. Another important theme is the occupation of Serbian land, the persecution of Serbs, and the associated duty to protect their country and people. This theme most prominently features in the narrative about the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, in which the Ottomans defeated the Serbian kingdom and subsequently conquered it (Volkan 2001, 89-95).

Aleksandra: *Because I saw- I watched documentaries and I saw people living in tents and it's so sad, it breaks my heart, because I know they're mostly Albanians, but it really is the heart of Serbia. That's where the famous fight*
I: *The battle of Kosovo, right?*
Both: *Yeah.*
Aleksandra: *And I think it sad, because they're trying to take it from us.*
Teodora: *They are taking from us.*[21]

Here we can already see how the historical narratives take on more political significance rather than cultural. Collective memories about the struggle of Serbs during the Ottoman and Austrian occupations, both World Wars, the glory days of Yugoslavia and its descent into war are all inherently connected to the idea of the threatened Serbian state and by extension, national Serbian identity. As noted in the theoretical framework, national identities arise through the process of identity politics or ethnopolitics (Baumann 1999), which was obviously at work right before and during Bosnian war and still holds sway today as Serbian identity remains tied to territory. Opinions about whether it would be better to unite with Serbia or become independent as the Republika Srpska diverged among my informants. A common sentiment however was an uncomfortable union with the Federation and the historic right to an independent state.

In Sarajevo also, so it would be maybe better to be independent, we could agree in some other things, in politics or economy or other things we could agree, but you know if we lose territories, we lose our culture, we lose our identity and everything.[22]

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[21] Semi-structured interview with Aleksandra and Teodora, 14-03-2018.

[22] Focus group interview with Katarina, Andrej, and Matija, 16-03-2018.

The territory referred to here is the RS. Many informants didn't include Serbia in their perception of the territory belonging to their national Serbian identity, because they believe that the Serbian leadership betrayed RS by giving over too much land and sovereignty during the negotiations for peace in the last war. Nevertheless, they perceive Serbs in Serbia and Bosnian Serbs to belong to the same people. The only Serbs they don't feel loyal to are politicians. When asked whether they view themselves as Bosnian, many informants answered that they see themselves as Serbs living in Bosnia. They call Bosnians and Croats in BiH Bosnians.

Recent collective memory and national identity

Serbian national identity is particularly fuelled by the collective memory concerning the Second World War and the Bosnian War. These historical narratives are transferred through both communicative memory (through eye-witness accounts of the older generation) and cultural memory (through the more mythicized narratives in society) (Assmann 2008). WWII is remembered mostly because of the persecution of Serbs by the Croatian Ustashas. The aforementioned theme of the eternal persecution of Serbs is continued in these narratives as well, notably though the equation of the plight of Serbs with that of the Jews in the Holocaust. Another dominant narrative is the idea that this persecution has largely been ignored by the world even though Serbs always fought on the 'right' side.

Every war in modern history we were Allies, we were say on the right side. WWII we fight against Germans, against Nazi's. Because of that we are frustrated, because today some media says that we are fascists, that we are racists, that we don't like Muslims and something like that.[23]

The memory of the last Bosnian war is particularly vivid in Serbian collective memory. Most collective memory surrounding the war consists of counter-narratives to Muslim narratives. The Muslim narrative that the war was 'Serbian aggression' is countered by stating that it was in fact a civil war with a defensive motivation. The accusation that Serbs committed various atrocities is countered in three ways. Firstly, it is countered through

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[23] Focus group interview with Katarina, Andrej, and Matija, 16-03-2018.

the simple statement that "it was war", meaning that it was normal that people died and that atrocities were committed by all three parties. Military leaders such as Ratko Mladic are perceived as war heroes, because they were simply protecting their homeland. Politicians, on the other hand, are despised universally, because in the opinion of my informants they only started the war in order to secure their own (economic) interests. Contemporary politicians are viewed in the same way.

Matija: *[...] You probably noticed that we don't like politicians, so we don't like Karadzic so much, but Mladic was general of army of RS and he defended our people. He is one of the reasons we are alive today. He's sentenced, but if he wasn't there it would be genocide for us. [...] He's the representative of all-*
Andrej: *He's the symbol of our fight for life, bare life.*
Matija: *So we are all demonized*
Andrej: *Yes.*[24]

Secondly, the blame levelled against Serbs is countered by claiming that Bosniaks simply used propaganda to twist stories in their favour. A common example of this was the idea that Srebrenica was deliberately orchestrated in order to provoke Western interventions. A third type of counternarrative is the juxtaposition of atrocities against Muslims with atrocities against Serbs such as the Jasenovac concentration camp as opposed to Srebrenica. Nevertheless, many young Serbs feel the weight of blame on their shoulders and lament the vilification of Serbs by both Muslims and the Western world as a whole.

Matija: *We are frustrated, because of the not real truth, everything curved.*
Katarina: *We don't get opportunity-*
Matija: *Yeah, we don't have opportunity-*
Katarina: *To tell our side of the story.*
Matija: *Because of that we are frustrated. We have some feeling of collective-*
Katarina: *Hate.*
Matija: *Responsibility.*
Katarina: *Oh. [laughs]*

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[24] Focus group interview with Katarina, Andrej, and Matija, 16-03-2018.

Matija: *No, no, no responsibility. We didn't do anything, but we are guilty for something.*

Katarina: *For everything.*[25]

       Despite the immense weight of blame that young Serbs experience, they feel strengthened in their solidarity towards each other and to the idea of the Serbian nation. Importantly, they do not think that their ethnic and national Serbian identity are separate identities, but one and the same. Because of the strong identification of young Serbs as ethno-national Serbs, it is not surprise that they experience and express the cultural trauma stemming from the war through the logic of this identity. How this occurs will be explored below.

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[25] Focus group interview with Katarina, Andrej, and Matija, 22-03-2018.

How to remember a violent past?

Sarajevo rose (location where a mortar hit filled with red wax) on the street in front of St. Joseph's Catholic church (Crkva svetog Josipa) in downtown Sarajevo. Photo taken by Tristan Koper.

1. Experience and expression of cultural trauma among Bosnian Muslims - Tristan

In chapter 1.a we discussed how complex the question "what and who am I?" is for contemporary Bosnian Muslim adolescents in Sarajevo and that victimization is a central element of this identity. The experience of cultural trauma for Bosnian Muslims can be analysed by dividing it in two elements. Firstly, the victimization narrative is a major element, especially concerning the genocide in Srebrenica. Secondly, the current political and economic situation of BiH is an important element, which are direct results of the war. This chapter discusses these two elements as well as how the cultural trauma is transmitted, expressed and coped with.

Victimization

The Bosnian war is a disorder of collective memory for the Bosnian Muslims adolescents, as they did not experience it themselves and must deal with this overwhelming experience (Alexander et al. 2004, 38; Nora *in* Argenti & Schramm 2010, 46). Most of my informants don't understand why the war happened. Some ask the same question as Belmin did: "I just don't understand it, why would they attack us?"[26]. As they themselves did not attack and the fighting happened inside their country, they understand themselves to be the victim of this war under the terror of the expansion drift of others. This narrative in the collective memory of being the defender in and victim of the Bosnian war is a commonly accepted cultural memory among Bosnian Muslims. Serbs and Croats are both seen as the perpetrators, although Serbs over time took up a central place in the collective memory. This can be explained by the fact that Croats live in the Federation in mutual coexistence with Bosnian Muslims. Serbs on the other hand isolate themselves in the RS. In addition, Serbs are perceived as the main perpetrators, because they have committed the most atrocities and conquered most of the territory of BiH. After all, cultural trauma is a process that changes over time within social groups with their own agendas (Robben 2005, 345). In the collective memory about the cultural trauma two events are especially highlighted that reflect the central victimization narrative, namely the siege of Sarajevo and the genocide of Srebrenica.

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[26] Semi-structured interview with Belmin, 13-3-2018

Sarajevo as one of the longest sieges in modern history is closely connected to my informants. The constant struggle for survival and fear of being shot down by snipers or mortars are central in the narratives of the older generation. This causes them to feel emotionally connected with the people in the city. It has different effects on their collective identity, depending on what they choose to emphasize. It can increase the process of othering against the Serbs and thereby reinforce their collective identity (Dervin 2012, 91-92), but it can also be used to focus on the mutual coexistence of the three ethnic groups.

They believed that it will not happen to Sarajevo. [...] *At that time there was no, are you Muslim, Croat or a Serb? [...]There is no such thing on your forehead what are you? What is your religion? Just shooting everyone.*[27]

Sehagic (2016, 141) argued that the genocide of Srebrenica combined with the siege of Sarajevo became the central chosen traumas on the foreground of the collective memory of Bosnian Muslims about the war. I agree with them but add to this that Srebrenica particularly strengthens the collective Bosnian Muslim identity. For them it is undeniably a genocide and one cannot argue against it. As the Serbs still do not acknowledge this genocide to have happened by the hand of their political leaders, my informants perceive that they cannot move on with their lives. This has become part of the social process of exclusion of "them" as opposed to "us" (Barth 1998, 9-10), which strengthened the Bosnian Muslim collective identity. They persuade others to be always aware that the Serbs committed a genocide and might do it again. The national commemoration of this genocide has a central place within this element of the cultural trauma. Bosnian Muslims adolescents do not commonly go to commemorations. However, when the commemoration of Srebrenica takes place on the 11th of July, everyone experiences it, either directly by attending it or indirectly through media or conversations. Especially the reburying of recently recovered victims is central in this commemoration.

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[27] Unstructured interview with Hida, 14-3-2018.

Here, 8000 people are murdered in cold blood by the Serb army and only 6000, so far, seem to be buried. The others are still not located, as they are still buried in unmarked mass graves, buried in unknown places.[28]

Figure 17: Gravestones of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide. The green sign is temporary. Photo by Tristan.

As it is annually commemorated and thereby heavily emphasized by media and politicians as the central event of the war, it became part of their identity.

I don't know how I can explain it, but it is just part of me and we should never forget it.[29]

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[28] Unstructured interview with Belmin, 13-3-2018

[29] Semi-structured interview with Muamer, 2-4-2018

Political, administrative and economic situation

The current society in BiH is trapped in the past.[30]

Robben (2005) argues that cultural trauma can better be understood as a process rather than a specific moment in time. It percolates through different levels in society and can be experienced differently in these levels. In the case of BiH it must be understood that the current society with its ethnic separation, its corrupt political and administrative system, and its current detrimental economic situation is part of this cultural trauma of Bosnian Muslim adolescents. They feel unable to move on because of this remnant of the war. Almost all my informants don't have a job and predict that it will be difficult to get one in the future, especially with the ethnically divided labour market. They perceive that politicians are not doing anything, but are instead focusing on the ethnic division in the country. They blame politics and the media for still focusing on the war.

If the older generation in the politics just die out, we, the younger generation, can just start over and do it right![31]

Transmission

Family and friends

For most Bosnian Muslim adolescents, the main source of their knowledge about the war comes from the stories of their parents and close relatives. The mnemonic medium of verbal stories is central for the transmission of traumatic collective memory to the younger generation. These stories are part of communicative memory specifically as they concern lived experience and sometimes actively try to nuance or even contradict the grand narratives about the war as established in the cultural memory (Kidron *in* Argenti and Schramm 2010, 200-228). The content and frequency of stories differ to between families. In the case of Belmin and Selma for example the war was commonly brought up by their fathers. As Bosnian parents are generally strict and authoritarian. For most of my other informants it was unusual to discuss this part of the past at home. Here, one can see the mnemonic medium of

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[30] Informal conversation with Muamer, 10-4-2018.

[31] Informal conversation with Hida, 3-4-2018.

nonverbal transmission at play. By silencing the subject until they come with it themselves (Idem). They started asking questions when they reached an age at which they had become acquainted with the war and its consequences through school or the cityscape. Ismail for example was provoked by the buildings in the city, as he was wondering why there were so many holes in the walls. Although the bare facts were given, they focus on personal stories, cultural trauma is nonetheless transmitted to their children.

The answers provided by their families usually only covered the basic facts of the war, which they perceived to be neutral and objective. For example, Kenan told me that he was told that the Chetniks attacked BiH, Bosnian Muslims defended themselves, and there were casualties on both sides. In this way his parents tried to avoid blaming Serbs as a population and encouraged Kenan to make up his own mind about what happened. All informants, except for Belmin and Selma, were encouraged not to hate all Serbs for the crimes of a few bad leaders who provoked the war. In this way they try not to pass on the cultural trauma of the war. This nuanced position of their parents seems to be dominant in the transmission of collective memory as most informants seem to agree with their parents that not all Serbs should be seen as the villains and have figured out what happened for themselves. Others who were raised with grand narratives about the war try to figured it out for themselves as well, because they perceive their peers doing so.

Most parents and family told their personal stories about survival and fighters to their children. For example, Edin's uncle told him about how he and his brother fought the much better equipped Serbs with weapons they had made themselves.

Among Bosnian Muslim adolescents the war is not a common topic of conversation. When they talk about it, it is mostly with family or close peers. It is not common to discuss such subjects with people from other ethnicities or nationalities.

Figuring out for themselves

When they grew older many of my informants became curious about the heavily debated subject of the war in society, especially because of their experience that "every day is Memorial Day"- Sara. All my informants mentioned and emphasized that they had done research on their own for different reasons. Some because of the unwillingness of their parents to discuss it and others because they disagreed with the stories provided by the older generation of how evil the Serbs and Croats are. As explained in the start of the chapter, the cultural trauma is experienced as incomprehensible. Most informants consult the internet in

order to make sense of it. Pasic told me that a source of information for him were memes. As a result of this research, some stick to a somewhat neutral perception of what happened, whilst others accept that there is no truth, but only political motivated stories. Both perceive the only way out is to move on.

School

In primary and secondary school, the war was not allowed to be a topic in most history curricula. Some teachers, however, did provide some basic information of the war. The informants who mention the latter, proudly emphasize that these teachers take up an objective stance by stating that not all Serbs have played a role in the war, but that bad leaders are to blame.

Monuments and museums

Going to museums is seen as important for learning about the war. Most of my informants went only to the memorial centre at Srebrenica and its museum on school trips. This is interesting, as some feel to be satisfied with information provided about the war and say that they just don't care anymore.

Monuments are quite controversial among my informants. As explained in the theoretical framework, monuments are a form of the mnemonic medium of spatial memory (Giesen *in* Alexander 2004, 112-154). All my informants perceive monuments as important. Jansen (2013) and Güll and Dee (2014) make a similar observation as my informants, as they argue that in society people are constantly confronted with nationalistic symbols, especially monuments. This causes them to be reminded to their nationality, the otherness of the respective other and the narratives about the war. Pasic argued that, "We should not forget the people who gave their lives for their country"[32], but is against the way in which they are politicized. Which can be seen in the design of the monuments. For example, a lot of monuments are green (colour associated with Bosniaks) and connected to Islam, which is done to emphasize the victimhood of the Bosniaks (see figure 18).

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[32] Semi-structured interview with Pasic, 17-04-2018.

Figure 18: Memorial in Srebrenica. Photo by Tristan.

Figure 19: Monument in Sarajevo depicting a typical can of beef provided by the UN during the siege that Muslims ironically weren't able to eat. Photo by Julicke van Doorn.

Some feel connected with their ethnic group through monuments, because they represent their collective identity. Muamer mentioned the Canned beef monument as an example of how people cope with the cultural trauma of the war through humour (see figure 19): "when I see those monuments I feel more connected as a Bosniak."[33]

Expression

Commemoration with Srebrenica

Despite disagreements about how or why, Srebrenica is part of the Bosnian Muslim identity and cultural trauma of my informants. They express this cultural trauma in in different ways. For example, Sara puts the flower of Srebrenica on her profile picture, whereas Muamer posted the text "Never forget Srebrenica." on Facebook. Pasic told me that he wears the Srebrenica flower during the days around the 11th of July.

Figure 20: Srebrenica Flower. Photo by Tristan Koper.

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[33] Semi-structured interview with Muamer, 2-4-2018.

People watch the commemoration on the television when they are home. Some of my informants participated in the commemoration, whereas some chose to participate in on one of the walks around Srebrenica such as the march of peace (Mars Mira) from Zepa and Potočari. Some of my informants participated in that walk and stated that they experienced a strong sense of connection with the Bosnians in BiH. During the walks people recite Islamic scriptures and cry because of the memory of all the horrors people have gone through. Thus, here we see how the collective memory of the war is transferred through rituals and practices (Eyerman *in* Alexander et al. 2004, 60-111). One interesting interpretation of all this is that Islam and the Arab language with it are deeply interwoven in commemorations, memorials and monuments (see figure 18).

Engaging in a meaning struggle

The genocide is represented as an indelible memory. However, my informant seems to challenge this and other narratives within the imposed collective memory, because they are tired of the constant focus on it in society. Eyerman, Giesen and Alexander argue that cultural trauma always involves a "meaning struggle" (in Alexander et al. 2004, 62). Robben adds that this struggle is connected to the construction of memory by contesting social groups with their own political agendas (2005, 155). My informants engage in this meaning struggle because they do not totally agree how this cultural trauma is imposed on them. They do so in three ways.

Firstly, some emphasize other stories from the war rather than Srebrenica or Sarajevo. Sara, for example, explains that a village her own town, Stupni Do, was attacked by Croats, an event which she had commemorated herself once. She wondered why this event is not nationally recognized as a genocide.

Secondly, most informants nuance the collective memory about the war with counternarratives. They emphasize that the whole ethnonational population of Serbs shouldn't be seen as the villain and that Serbs were killed as well. For example, Lejla told me that a Serbian and a Croat kid who gave their lives for Bosnian Muslims are buried in Srebrenica. Sara mentioned that that a Serbian general fought for them. Some also nuance the idea that it was an ethnonational based war by arguing that that it should be only understood as territorial war.

Thirdly, they challenge the political use of the collective memory, particularly when it is used as ethnomobilisation and to sustain their current political position. My informants

want to move on and end the ethnic division, whilst politicians and the older generation want to sustain it. Most of them do not want to partake anymore in the commemoration, because it is commercialized, used by politicians to separate and provoke Serbs, and used to emphasize their cultural trauma.

When I come there the people from Srebrenica are selling products to the visitors so that they can profit of it and politicians divide the society even more, pointing the fingers to whole population of Serbs. The last is not going to solve the situation.[34]

Moving on

The central element of coping with this cultural trauma seems to be that my informants want to move on. Kenan argued that if they don't do that, those responsible for the war and the current situation have "won". My informants do this by focusing on the creation of a new, less controversial national Bosnian identity. This fits with Giesen's argument that cultural trauma is made meaningful through new narratives and related experiences (*in* Alexander et al. 2004). In practice, they also move on by focusing on contemporary problems, working hard and sustaining themselves. They are ignoring the talk about the war by politicians and in the media and build a tolerance towards the endless focus on the war and the separation in society. This is in accordance with Sheftel (2011), Stefansson (2010) and Visser and Bakker (2016), who perceive them to cope with this massive trauma by building of their life and silencing political issues.

Another way of expressing their cultural trauma and move on is through humour, which is used to cope with the fear of a coming war, and the incomprehensibility of the atrocities of the previous war. This is in accordance with the research of Sheftel (2011) and Maček (2009, 51-54), who argue that dark Bosnian humour is used as counter memory to cope with their cultural trauma. Muamer sent me a meme regarding this (see figure 21). It depicts a common joke, on how Serbia claims everything and wants to be in control of the whole Balkan.

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[34] Semi-structured interview with Jelja , 13-4-18.

Figure 21: A meme send by Muamer to me.

Most of my informants often think of escaping the country and leaving the situation in order to make a life of one's own. For example, Jelja asked me to look for job offerings here in the Netherlands, so when she is finished with her education, she can come here.

Some however try to fight it. For example, Ismail has written different articles for different international news organisations about how the Serbs proclaim that they defended themselves in the war which is "ridiculous and totally unjust". For him, coping with his cultural trauma, is to get the facts straight on what happened and seek justice for what has happened. Lastly, some do try to turn the victimization around, by arguing that they should be Victors.

We should not focus on being a victim, as if we lost the war. We should be proud as we survived the war. Should we make monuments and commemorations all about how we were killed? no! We should put monuments to honour how we survived.[35]

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[35] Semi-structured interview with Pasic, 17-04-2018.

2. Experience and expression of cultural trauma among Serbs - Julicke

Experience of cultural trauma

The experience of cultural trauma among adolescent Serbs centres on a strong feeling of unjustified blame for many atrocities of the Bosnian war and the war itself, to which they respond with a strong sense of frustration. Due to their strong identification as Serbs they feel that the blame and vilification directed towards all Serbs is directed to them as well, even though they didn't experience the war itself. Aside from this sense of blame young Serbs experience cultural trauma in ways that are unique to their time. After all, cultural trauma is a process, the experience of which changes over time and among different groups, including generations (Robben 2005, 345).

The unique experience of cultural trauma of young Serbs contrary to the previous generation is largely attributable to the current detrimental economic and political situation in BiH. This is to a large degree a product of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian war and can therefore be perceived as part of the traumatic 'event'. Many young Serbs struggle to find jobs and even when they are hired struggle to make ends meet. Moreover, wartime perceptions on ethnicity and nationalism are often perceived as the cause for the corruption in the economic and political system. Vladimir for example told me that he wasn't selected for a job he was by far the best candidate for, because he was a Serb. Adolescent Serbs themselves respond to this situation with a particular contempt and distrust of politicians. They perceive them as corrupt and only concerned with their own interests or the interests of their ethnic group, an idea stemming from the common narrative that politicians instigated the war for their own agenda.

I'm probably not going to vote, because I hate politics and politicians and they're all the same for me. They're all like, they're the biggest mafia here. We don't have criminals, like the biggest criminals are politicians.[36]

Thus, the experience of the long-term negative consequences of a past traumatic event and the interpretation of current developments in light of this event demonstrates that cultural trauma concerns the interpretation of an experience (Giesen *in* Alexander et al. 2004) and that

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[36] Semi-structured interview with David, 07-04-2018.

the experience itself is not inherently traumatic (Anderson *in* Alexander et al. 2004, 8), nor necessarily momentary or singular. In this case, it is evident that adolescent Serbs interpret the current political and economic situation as the leftover mess of the previous generation.

Another aspect of the unique cultural trauma of adolescent Serbs is the ongoing uncertainty about who the perpetrators are in specific situations during the war, especially when it comes to bringing these perpetrators to justice. This is epitomized in the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia). Despite its claims on impartiality, many of my informants felt that the Tribunal is unjustly biased against Serbs. Andrej for example referred to it as an "...instrument for the Satanization of Serbs" [37].

Externalization and transmission of cultural trauma

The search for meaning after a traumatic event in a society is characterized by the construction of a new collective memory in order to externalize the trauma and work through it. In the Serbian case, this collective memory consists of several key (counter-)narratives that have been listed in chapter 1.b. These narratives are meant to make sense of the war and re-establish a positive image of the Serbian collective identity. This collective memory is externalized and transferred to the next generation by means of several mnemonic media (see theoretical framework for an overview of these media).

Post-war childhoods

The transmission of cultural trauma during childhood occurred for my informants in varying ways. Stefan, Andrej and Matija for example remembered the presence of UN soldiers in the streets and weapons at home while the demilitarization process was not yet complete. Such nonverbal transmission of cultural trauma via ones living environment and objects at home was only common for those who were born slightly before or at the end of the war. For slightly younger Serbs, nonverbal transmission was mostly experienced through the ways they were raised (Kidron *in* Argenti and Schramm 2010, 200-228). Katarina for example grew up with a strict and distant father who was suffering from PTSD, because of his time in the army. Others were explicitly encouraged to be (financially) independent, because their

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[37] Focus group interview with Katarina, Andrej, and Matija, 16-03-2018.

parents had experienced the downfall of communism and perhaps because also they distrust the government because of its role in the war.

In terms of verbal transmission (Kidron *in* Argenti and Schramm 2010: 200-228), family members sometimes told stories about the war. Often fathers or uncles had served in the army and mothers were usually fleeing to some safe area in uncertain circumstances. The stories they and other family members told were not commonly about battles or people who lost their lives, but about places they've lived and funny occurrences. This echoes the finding from the literature that humour was employed by the older generation in order to cope with traumatic memories (Maček 2009, 51-54). Although some parents and older family members of my informants did tell more serious and shocking war stories as well, they usually had to ask before they told these stories, suggesting that it is not common to tell them.

I did [ask], *but my dad doesn't like talking about it, because it's a really sad time so he like moved on. He doesn't like talking about it. Sometimes we drive to the city and he says "this is where I went to high school, this is where I would hang out with my friends, this is the best burger place." I think he loves this city, but the war kind of distanced him.*[38]

Importantly, the stories are perceived as particularly credible, because they are told by actual witnesses. The fact that these stories concern lived experience (communicative memory, see Assmann 2008) apparently makes them more credible. This statement is meant to delegitimize stories in Bosnian and Western media, which are perceived as misleading and biased.

Because we have a lot of people here, 40, 50, 60 year of age and they participated in that war so they are alive witnesses. [...] But I'm telling you all these things [media] can be manipulated or presented in another way, but these people participated in that.[39]

Schools and media
Professors in schools and university are also important conveyors of Serbian collective memory as described in the last chapter. History class is particularly significant for this.

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[38] Semi-structured interview with Teodora and Aleksandra, 14-03-2018.

[39] Focus group interview with Katarina, Andrej, and Matija, 22-03-2018.

Interestingly, the war is hardly mentioned at all in class, which leave many young Serbs with unanswered questions. In order to answer these questions, many turn to older family members and to the various media to do their own research. Unfortunately for them, most of the media coverage about the war, be it in documentaries, movies, books, articles, and the like, highlight the Bosniak narrative that Serbs were the main perpetrators. This invokes the previously mentioned sense of unjustified blame. Western media are particularly scrutinized for their apparent unflinching support for the Bosniak narrative.

Andrej: *It is important for you to know that we are not trying to you know picture us like we are saints, like we Serbs are saints and they are all and they are evil people.*
Matija: *To be frank, we are a little frustrated, because of that Western propaganda and that.*
Andrej: *Yeah, that.*
Matija: *Not telling the truth about the war. We just want to say truth, not to say, "we are the best, they are the worst" you know.*
Andrej: *Serbs also committed crimes.*
Katarina: *We want chance to tell our side of the story.*[40]

Monuments and commemorations

This inability to tell their side of the story is also evident in the absence of monuments, museums, buildings and other forms of spatial memory (Giesen *in* Alexander 2004, 112-154) in Sarajevo, including East-Sarajevo surprisingly. The many monuments in the Federation section of Sarajevo for example, often explicitly or implicitly exclude Serbs among the numbered victims in the view of my informants (see figure 22). This strengthens the sense of discomfort Serbs experience when they go to the city.

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[40] Focus group interview with Katarina, Andrej, and Matija, 22-03-2018.

Figure 22: Monument for the children who were killed during the siege of Sarajevo. Note the use of green, which is associated with Bosniaks. Photo by Julicke.
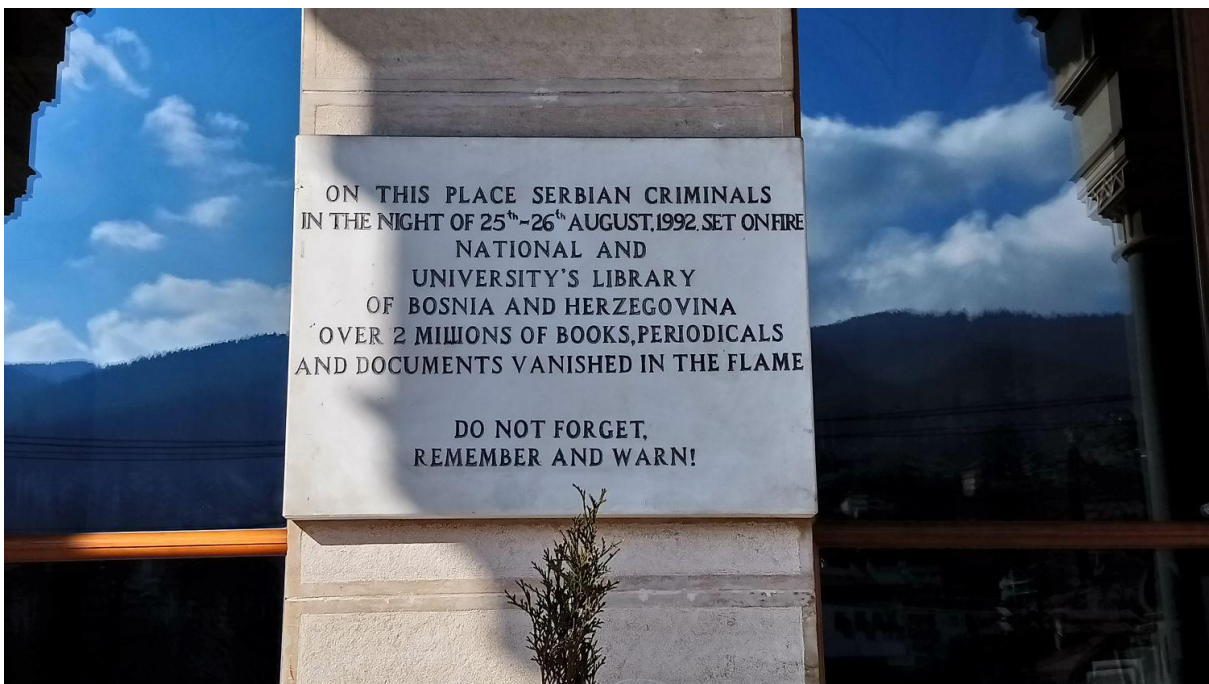

Figure 23: Stone slab in front of the City Hall. Photo by Julicke.

An illustrative example is the City Hall in Sarajevo. In front of the building, which also serves as a library, are two stone slabs, one of which is depicted below (the other depicts the same text in Bosnian). Several informants specifically mentioned this stone plaque as insulting, firstly because it insults all Serbs by specifically referring to the criminals as Serbian and secondly, because it blatantly accuses Serbian criminals without conclusive proof (allegedly). In response, they refuse to enter City Hall at all.

Contrary to Sarajevo, Pale does have a lot of monuments commemorating the struggle of Serbs during various era's, most of which feature stone slabs with the names of prominent war heroes. The most important and prominently placed of these monuments is the one that commemorates Serbs who died in the Bosnian war (see figure 24). This monument is centrally located on Republika Srpska square on an elevated stone platform. The symbolism of this monument, evident in the medieval Serbian coat of arms, the stone platform shaped like the floor plan of a church with the 'altar' in the middle, the shape of the cross cut out in the stone and possibly more, is very striking in its propagation of Serbian identity. Apart from Matija, whose father's name was written on the monument, none of my informants attached significance to this or other monuments. They are simply familiar elements of the town. This was also the case for commemorations, which none of my informants state they attend usually. A possible explanation for this was provided by Adam, a student from Pale, who explained that Serbs don't like to make a show of commemorating the war like the Muslims do. He explained that once a year, candles are lit for the victims of Kravice and that's it. National holidays such as Statehood Day on the 9t of January, which commemorates the Serbian uprisings against the Ottomans and the writing of the first Serbian constitution, are regarded with a similar seeming indifference. They are perceived as convenient days off work or school, nothing more.

Figure 24: Monument for the fallen soldiers of the Bosnian war in Republika Srpska Square, Pale. Photo by Julicke.

Mnemonic media

Taken together, these findings suggest that communicative memory in the shape of the stories of witnesses of the war is used in order to challenge Bosniak cultural memory by young Serbs (Assmann 2008). Monuments, commemorations, and stories in media belonging to the general cultural memory in BiH about the war are perceived as presenting a biased and misguided view, because these mnemonic media, particularly digital and written media, most often propagate decidedly Bosniak narratives that place Serbs in a very negative light. These victimization-centred narratives preserved the positive self-image of Bosniaks and invoked the sympathy of the Western world, which propagated this narrative in turn. Faced with these strong narratives, which were quickly standardized and crystallized into Bosniak cultural memory, Serbs had few options but to rely on the accounts of traumatized individual Serbs and create counternarratives to the Bosniak ones. Although these counternarratives have largely crystallized into cultural memory among Serbs, this has yet to happen in BiH as a whole and even the wider world in order to regain a somewhat positive Serbian identity and move on from the cultural trauma of the war. In all this we recognize Robben's argument that the meaning struggle inherent to cultural trauma involves the construction of collective memories by contesting social groups with their own political agendas (Robben 2005, 155).

Expression

In the face of the cultural trauma stemming from the Bosnian war, adolescent Serbs respond in various ways. 'Traditional' forms of expressing cultural trauma such as attending commemorations, visiting monuments and the like (Argenti and Schramm 010) were found to be of little importance to informants. Five strategies for expressing and coping with trauma can be identified, namely externalizing blame, fight, focusing on contemporary problems, moving on, and flight. Apart from the flight strategy and to some degree focusing on contemporary problems as well (since this is also a type of flight), they involve constructing meaningful narratives in order to cope with cultural trauma (Giesen *in* Alexander et al. 2004). Several strategies are often used by one individual at once.

Firstly, some adolescent Serbs cope with cultural trauma by externalizing the blame aimed towards themselves to others, particularly the USA and/or the Western World and politicians. The USA in particular is often perceived as the initial instigator of the wars in the former Yugoslavia.

Europe and the EU are perceived as blameworthy as well due to their support of the US and their propagation of the Bosniak narrative about the war. NATO is usually despised more however due to its role in the bombing of Serbia in 1999. As mentioned before, politicians are blamed for the war as well, because they supposedly instigated it for their own gain.

The most common strategy is what I call the fight strategy. This can be fighting in the literal sense, meaning that one is willing to fight when a new war will break loose. The more common mode of fighting however is focused on defending the Serbian narrative. This is done by simply talking with peers or elders about the war, actively researching it, taking action in the face of discrimination, or even by aiming for a career in journalism or politics. Small acts of defiance and meticulously researched and crafted stories about what actually happened in the war all fall under this category.

Yeah, now I refuse to go in [City Hall]. *And it's the same problem I had with the ceremony of awards, because if I come to that event I'm going to legitimize all the double standards when I'm entering in that building I feel that I'm going to give legitimation to something that is not true. When you remove the plate* [the stone slabs]*, OK I'm going to get in and explore the rest of that.*[41]

A third strategy is flight, which can entail ignoring everything about the war or literally fleeing the country in order to escape the discussion about blame and truth as well as the detrimental politics and economy of BiH.

A closely related strategy is focusing on contemporary problems instead of the past. This strategy is employed both by people who want to flee and those who want to fight, but who think that the past is over-emphasized.

He [president Dodic] *wants to make Serbia and Republika Srpska one country. And he's just going 'I want to do that, I'm not interested in anything else.' And if he could just focus on Republic of Srpska like to open some factories. That's much more important to make money.*[42]

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[41] Semi-structured interview with Vladimir, 19-02-2018.

[42] Focus group interview with Katarina, Andrej, and Matija, 16-03-2018.

The final strategy concerns moving, which mainly involves consuming media from the 'other side' of the story and establishing social contact with Bosniaks and Croats in order to learn from them and search for the truth of what happened together.

Aleksandra: *It was really nice. Before that, I think I never had Muslim friends. I still have contact with them and sometimes we go for coffee and as I said, we talk about differences between us. They tell me about their religion, their tradition and it's really nice.*
I: *Cool. OK. Have you had similar experiences meeting with Muslim people?*
Teodora: *Yeah, I meet a lot of them of my dad's friends. I don't really have a friend of my age who is Muslim. I would have had* [unintelligible], *but I just haven't had the chance to meet them.*[43]

Although the war remains a difficult topic in inter-ethnic conversations, the establishment of social contact and friendships across ethnic lines is a hopeful sign of this generation.

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[43] Semi- structured interview with Teodora and Aleksandra, 14-03-2018.

Discussion and Conclusion

When comparing the results from both research populations, several important similarities and differences become apparent, which reveal much about why and how cultural trauma is experienced by these two groups. In the following discussion, we will examine how Bosnian Muslim and Serbian adolescents in and around Sarajevo construct their collective identities and collective memories, how they experience their respective cultural traumas, and how they express and make sense of it. By doing so we will answer the research question:

What are the differences between the experience of cultural trauma as a result of the 1991-1995 war between Bosnian Muslim and Serb adolescents (born after 1995) living in Sarajevo?

The society that emerged after the Dayton Accords differed substantially from Yugoslavian times and required people to reinvent their collective identities and their place in society. A difficult situation had emerged in which two separate societies, namely the Federation and the Republika Srpska, were loosely governed by the larger umbrella society of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The literature tells us that the two societies within the Entities mostly turned inward on themselves and presented themselves as different from the other society (Stefansson 2010, 31; Leonard et al. 2016, 18-23). This was done through certain narratives, monuments, religious buildings, museums, commemorations, and certain behaviour corresponding to their respective collective identities. For adolescents who have not experienced the events that led to the establishment of this situation, making sense of it and finding their own place in society can be challenging. Our research has found that most Bosnian Muslim adolescents reject this inward approach and focus more on Bosnian society as a whole by emphasising the multi-ethnic nature of BiH. Young Serbs on the other hand are more prone to isolate themselves in primarily Serbian communities in the Republika Srpska.

Identity

Young Bosnian Muslims and Serbs construct and negotiate their collective identities in markedly different ways. The three collective identities that Bosnian Muslims subscribe to, namely the national Bosnian, the ethnic Bosniak, and the religious Muslim identity, are the

result of the negotiation of the external ascription of the Bosniak ethnic identity. Bosnian Muslims experience this external ascription through politicians, the political system, the ethnic division of Bosnian society, and the media. Bosnian Muslims experience a certain reification of the Bosniak ethnic identity, which they don't identify and agree with. In reaction to this they create a distinction between the aforementioned three identities and identify with one or more of them in accordance with what makes sense to them. Most of them choose to identify with the national Bosnian identity in combination with the religious Muslim identity, as they oppose the focus on the past inherent in the ethnic Bosniak identity. Adolescent Serbs also experience the external ascription of the ethno-national Serbian collective identity, particularly in the predominantly Serbian communities and families they grow up in and in the Federation where they are often treated differently because they are Serbs (e.g. discrimination). Similarly to Bosnian Muslims, they are born and raised with a reified Serbian identity. Differently from them however, they do not rebel against this, nor try to create a different collective identity. This difference can be largely attributed to the strong presence of Serbian culture in the rather isolated communities they live in such East-Sarajevo and Pale in contrast to the multicultural cityscape of Sarajevo in which most Bosnian Muslims live. Moreover, Bosnian Muslims were found to engage in more inter-ethnic social contact in Sarajevo than Serbs living in these communities. Most Bosnian Muslims claim to have several inter-ethnic friendships in Sarajevo. Most young Serbs want to do so as well, but have little opportunity to do so, because of the relative isolation of the communities they live in and because they are discouraged by others in said community to go to Sarajevo or the Federation for that matter.

Collective memory and transmission of cultural trauma

Regarding their collective memory about the war, it seems that both populations attach more importance to communicative memory rather than cultural memory (Assmann 2008). Bosnian Muslim perceive that the narratives in the collective memory regarding the war are politically motivated, one-sided, and not covering the complete story. In addition, those stories mainly focus on the victimization of the Bosniak population. Victimization is part of their collective identity and collective memory, but they are against the politicization and strong emphasis on this. Therefore, they prefer to listen to the personal experience of parents, family members and friends regarding the war. Most Bosnian Muslims experience that their parents and family members are mostly telling them the bare 'facts' of the war and are not

trying to impose a certain view upon them. They perceive that their parents let them figure it out on their own, either by asking questions or turning to media to find out about other perspectives. Adolescent Bosnians also attach importance to personal stories about Yugoslavia, because this period is often described as 'the good old days' when different ethnic groups lived together peacefully by their (grand-)parents. Despite this emphasis on communicative memory, some narratives of victimization within cultural memory are seemingly inescapable, notably the Srebrenica genocide. Bosnian Muslim adolescents dispute it nonetheless by arguing that it shouldn't be the main narrative in their collective memory and that is used for political purposes.

In contrast to Bosnian Muslims, cultural memory about the distant past is perceived as important by young Serbs for their Serbian identity. However, when it comes to collective memory about the war, communicative memory takes on a more prominent role. Eye-witness accounts are used to challenge common stories in media, because the latter are perceived as explicitly promoting Bosnian Muslim cultural memory, which vilifies Serbs and victimizes Bosniaks. Particularly the narrative about the Srebrenica genocide is seen as offensive by young Serbs, because it is not only prominent in media, but also in physical space in the form of museums and monuments. Bosnian Muslim cultural memory is also challenged through counter-narratives such as the idea that it was a defensive war and that all three sides are to blame for it. These narratives are part of Serbian cultural memory, but have not yet permeated Bosnian society as a whole to the satisfaction of Serbs. Many young Serbs attribute the discrimination and bullying in the Federation to the dominance of Bosnian Muslim cultural memory about the war. Therefore, many adolescent Serbs refer to communicative memory instead to challenge it. They listen to eye-witness accounts, cite obscure books and websites, and generally research the events of the war in order to construct and promote a collective memory that incorporates the Serbian perspective.

From this we can conclude that the construction and negotiation of the collective memories about the war is far from over and that many young people are actively engaged in this process. It shows how collective memory is functional, in the sense that it is constructed in order to mark boundaries between collective identities and/create a sense of unity (Neiger et al. 2011; Gongaware 2003, 486). In the case of Bosnian Muslims, the prominent function is to create a sense of unity among all Bosnians whilst for Serbs the goal is to clearly demarcate the boundaries between themselves and other ethnic groups (Barth 1998). The communicative memory about what happened is still very much alive in the shape of stories

from family or people from the older generations in general. This is employed by both groups in order to nuance or contest dominant narratives within cultural memory.

Experience of cultural trauma

The experience of cultural trauma is very different between Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Serbs. Similarly to Robben's findings in Argentina (2005) it can be argued that there are two different cultural traumas in one society. Although he calls them social traumas, we argue that these concern cultural trauma's, because they exist among two different ethno-national groups that live largely separately from one another, namely Bosnians in the Federation and Serbs in the RS. The experience of adolescents within these groups could differ from that of other generations and thereby constitute separate social traumas. Since we only researched one generation however, we cannot draw conclusions about this.

These different cultural traumas are best characterized through the different experiences of vilification and victimization. The former applies to Serbs, who experience that they are constantly being blamed for most of the atrocities of the war and the war itself. This is mostly experienced in written and digital media concerning the war as previously mentioned, but also through discrimination and bullying in the Federation. A strong sense of frustration and sometimes even anger is prevalent among adolescent Serbs in response to this blame. The strong identification of adolescent Serbs with their ethno-national Serbian identity explains why they feel the weight of blame that is directed towards all Serbs so keenly and why to react so strongly to it. This is further reinforced by the aforementioned stories they hear from witnesses of the war and also importantly the ongoing proceedings of the ICTY, in which mostly Serbs are prosecuted. Victimization applies to the Bosnian Muslim experience of cultural trauma. This includes the idea that Bosnian Muslims were the main defenders against the Serbian attack and as a result had the highest number of casualties. The victimization narrative is epitomized in the story of the Srebrenica genocide. The commemoration of Srebrenica on 11 of July is the most important expression of this chosen cultural trauma (Sehagic 2016; Volkan 2001). Although all remember and mourn it in various ways, young Bosnian Muslims challenge this chosen trauma, particularly the exaggerated and politicized manner in which it is remembered and commemorated (Alexander *in* Alexander et al. 2004; Robben 2005).

A shared experience of cultural trauma of Serbs and the Bosnian Muslims is the detrimental economic and political situation left over from the war. Limited job opportunities,

widespread corruption, and low wages and other factors are the direct result of the war and the political situation that was put in place after Dayton. This demonstrates that cultural trauma doesn't "evoke an event or situation" (Giesen *in* Alexander et al. 2004, 44), but is a continual process. This opposes the idea in the psychoanalytic tradition that events are inherently traumatic (Alexander *in* Alexander et al. 2004, 8) as well as the sociological emphasis on a singular event as the cause of cultural trauma (Robben 2005, 345).

Expression of cultural trauma

Bosnian Muslims and Serbs deal with their cultural traumas in various ways. Many of these coping strategies are used by both Bosnian Muslims and Serbs, albeit in slightly different ways. Firstly, both groups externalize the blame for the war. Both research populations claim that politicians helped to start the war for their own gain, but only Serbs also blame the West for it was well. Secondly, most Bosnian Muslims as well as some Serbs simply want to move on and focus on contemporary problems in society rather than the past. Bosnian Muslims do emphasize however, that Srebrenica shouldn't be forgotten. Thirdly, a more practical way of dealing with this cultural trauma is by flight. This involves literally escaping the country and/or avoiding discussing the war. A fourth strategy shared by individuals from both groups is finding a way to co-exist peacefully, which mainly involves seeking out social contact with individuals belonging to other ethnic groups. However, for Bosnian Muslims this involves identifying with an encompassing national identity that includes Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats. They even want to go so far as abolishing the Entity-system entirely and uniting BiH. Serbs cannot agree with this, because they want to either preserve the status quo of a semi-autonomous RS, become fully independent, or unite with Serbia. They do not identify themselves as Bosnian, because this identity contradicts their national Serbian identity. Most Bosnian Muslims and a few Serbs used humour as another coping mechanism. Similarly to Sheftel's (2012) findings, they use humour to make more sense of it and claiming some of their autonomy back.

A more specifically Serbian strategy involves fighting, which entails either literally wanting to fight in a new war or fighting for the Serbian narrative. The latter is the most common interpretation of this strategy and usually involves doing a lot of research into the events of the war in order to rectify the perceived biased narratives about the war. This strategy is the most common one among Serbs, which isn't surprising due to their strong frustration with the vilification of Serbs. We have found out that only some Bosnian Muslim

cope with their cultural trauma in this way. They are fighting for justification of what has happened and recognition of perceive facts of the war, such as the genocide, and that of the Bosniak identity, by the Serbs.

A main difference between the expressions of Bosnian Muslims and Serbs is the place of commemorations in their respective cultural trauma. Regarding the Srebrenica genocide, different ways of commemorating it have been identified among the Bosnian Muslims. This way of expressing cultural trauma seems to be of little importance for Serbs. They put more value in the different strategies explained before.

Theoretical implications

Our research supports much of the scholarship concerning cultural trauma. It shows that events such as the Bosnian war are not inherently traumatic, but that cultural trauma is a socially and culturally mediated phenomenon (Anderson *in* Alexander et al. 2004, 8). This mediation furthermore does not occur in a linear manner however. It is truly a struggle for meaning (Alexander et al. 2004; Robben 2005). We argue for the use of anthropological perspective in order to understand this meaning struggle, since our research demonstrates that cultural trauma cannot be "carved out of the flow of everyday existence" (Lexter 2013, 755) and the anthropological methods of participant observation and in-depth interviews are ideal for studying the manifestation cultural trauma in everyday life.

Contrary to Assmann's argument (2008) that the construction of collective memory about the war moves from an emphasis on communicative memory to an emphasis on cultural memory, we have found that some young people actively challenge some narratives in cultural memory, sometimes even by referring to communicative memory. For example, some Serbs challenged the vilification narrative by referring to the stories of witnesses of the war and some Bosnian Muslims tried to nuance the narrative about the Srebrenica genocide. This suggest that the construction of collective memory about the war is a rather messy process rather than a linear one, especially considering the different interpretations of cultural trauma that can arise among a post-war generation.

Applications and recommendations

Through analysing the case of the experience of cultural trauma by Serbs and Bosnian Muslims, we have aimed to enhance the current available knowledge on different cases of

cultural trauma. In a case like BiH, where such a diversity of cultural and social traumas exists, the ways cultural and social traumas are experienced and worked through can be insightful for the theoretical debate on cultural trauma. We hope that we have been able to provide new insights for organizations working for these adolescents and striving for peaceful relations among the ethnic groups in Sarajevo.

We fully acknowledge that this research was very limited. Especially the short time period available for this research has limited our ability to research the life of Bosnian Muslims and Serbs. More research is needed to fully understand their experiences with cultural trauma. Particularly thorny issues such as the complex identities of Bosnian Muslims should be further examined as well. This research was too short in order to fully understand the similarities and differences between Bosnians, and Bosniaks identities within the Bosnian Muslim population. Much can be gained for the understanding of identity by researching this population. In addition, we were not able to do research among the Croats in Sarajevo, as there was only the two of us and we each wished to focus on one ethnic group. Another limitation was that we were not able to research the cultural trauma among the generation who experience it first-hand. This could reveal the possible existence of different social traumas among different generations.

Despite these limitations, our research has definitely revealed the complex relationship between Bosnian Muslims and Serbs, which are an essential element of Bosnian society as a whole. As one informant aptly put it:

And it [the book 'The Bridge on the Drina'] shows the diversity in Bosnia and how they are different, but at the same time they're all the same. They hate each other, but they love each other. I think that Bosnia wouldn't be Bosnia without the Muslims and without Serbs. - Aleksandra

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Appendix

1. Thesis summary

The Bosnian War that raged between 1992 and 1995 and its aftermath have dramatically affected Bosnian society and culture, a situation that can be referred to as cultural trauma. Apart from the casualties and damage of the war itself, the Dayton Accords that ended it established an overly complicated governmental structure that formalized the ethnic segregation of Bosnian Muslims and Croats in de Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the one hand from Serbs in the Republika Srpska on the other. The border between these entities runs through the capital of Sarajevo, which had been under siege by Serbian forces for four years. More than two decades after the war the memory of Bosnian war still resonates in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sarajevo in particular. A neglected voice in this situation is that of the youth belonging to the different ethno-national groups. This comparative research has tried to give insight in different ways the cultural trauma is experienced by Serbian and Bosnian Muslim adolescents, which has led to the following research question: What are the differences between the experience of cultural trauma as a result of the 1991-1995 war between Bosnian Muslim and Serb adolescents (born after 1995) living in Sarajevo? To answer this question we have conducted qualitative anthropological research in Sarajevo and its vicinity. We have used the methods of participant observation and interviewing. Cultural trauma can be briefly defined as "...the culturally interpreted wound to cultural tissue itself" (Sztompka, 2000: 458). We have found that there are two different cultural traumas among these two groups. Among Bosnian Muslims, this centres on the experience of victimization, which is particularly evident in narratives about the siege of Sarajevo and the genocide of Srebrenica. For the Serbs the cultural trauma centres a sense of frustration caused by experience of imposed vilification by Bosnian Muslims and the Western world. The strong identification of young Serbs in turn leads them to experience the cultural trauma of their people very strongly. A common experience of cultural trauma of both research groups is the contemporary detrimental economy and the corruption of politicians. This can be perceived as being part of the aftermath of the war, namely the economic stagnation, the ethnically-based political parties and the ethnic separation in society. This cultural trauma influences the identification process of the respective populations in different ways. In the case of the Bosnian Muslims identity is a complex dilemma to deal with. Most

resist against the external ascription of an ethnic identity and try to cope with victimization by trying to move away from the Bosniak ethnicity which they perceive to be focused on the past. They identify with a national Bosnian identity that emphasizes mutual coexistence. The unity of Bosnian Muslims is furthermore strengthened through historical narratives of the historical Bosnian nation and life under the rule of foreign powers. Another important idea within Bosnian collective memory is the idea of mutual coexistence with Serbs and Croats, which is brought forward in the idea of Yugoslavia for example. Serbs on the other hand, grow up surrounded with Serbian culture in fairly isolated communities in the Republika Srpska which strengthen their collective identity. This Serbian identity is furthermore strengthened through a collective memory centred on the historical narratives about the Serbian nation. For Bosnian Muslim adolescents, cultural trauma is mostly transmitted through personal stories from their parents and other family members, various digital media, newspapers, politicians, museums, monuments, commemorations, and the cityscape. In the Serbian case, cultural trauma is transmitted mostly through stories from parents and other family members, monuments, and various digital and written media. Many Serbs use such media in particular in order to counter the vilification of Serbs in Bosnian and Western media and thereby divert the blame for the war away from themselves. Some are less involved with countering these narratives and express the cultural trauma by focusing on contemporary problems in BiH, fleeing the country, or establishing social contact with Muslims and Croats. Bosnian Muslims express their cultural trauma in various ways, such as commemorating Srebrenica, humour, escaping the country, fighting for their collective memory about the war, moving on by focusing on contemporary problems for example. They contest the established collective memory of the war by researching it themselves and rejecting the strong emphasis on dominant stories like Srebrenica, the vilification of all Serbs, the victimization of Bosnian Muslims, and the politicization of entire collective memory. In conclusion, although the experience of cultural trauma of adolescent Bosnian Muslims and Serbs differs substantially, similarities can be discerned with how the collective memory about the war is transmitted to them and some of the strategies that they use to deal with the cultural trauma.