

Ruptured pasts and captured futures: Life narratives in postwar Mostar

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Abstract: In situations in which an entire population is affected by war and great political-economic transformations, as was the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, generational differences exist regarding the extent to which people experience these events as disruptions to their lives. Even in a nationally divided city like Mostar after the 1992–1995 war, generational experiences—of past and present times as well as of future prospects (or the lack thereof)—are crucial for the way people rethink the past and (re)position themselves in the present. In the case of the generation of the “Last Yugoslavs”, I argue that the disruption of their life course and the resulting loss of future prospects prevent people from narrating the local past and their lives in a meaningful and coherent way.

Keywords: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mostar, generation, life course, memory, postwar society, postsocialism, Yugoslavia

The turn toward memory in the social sciences during the 1980s was accompanied by a sharp increase in interest in life narratives/histories (see Green 2004). Within these studies, memory has been explored as a narrative act in which people connect past and present as well as imaginations and expectations of the future into more or less coherent narratives. The basis of this approach is the presumption that memories are interpretations of the past that always include intellectual work. In order to make sense of our lives we have to structure our experiences; otherwise, life would be no more than a biological phenomenon (Wood 1991). A narrative approach emphasizes that the past is always linked to present conditions and to expectations for the future. As Natzmer (2002: 164) argues,

“For a society, as well as for an individual, the past must be constructed, reconstructed, and continuously reinterpreted in light of present events and a vision of the future.” Therefore, we can assume that the way meaning is attributed to past experiences is likely to change during one’s lifetime due to changes in historical-political contexts, new autobiographical experiences, and life cycle transformations.

Although there seems to be a consensus in the literature that individuals aim to “connect disparate parts into a coherent, meaningful whole” (Holstein and Gubrium 1995: 28; see also Roseman 1995), in this article I show that this is not necessarily always possible. In the case of the generation of the “Last Yugoslavs”, one of three generations I identified during



fieldwork in Mostar, I argue that the experience of disruption and loss of future prospects due to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the war, and political-economic transformations prevent people from narrating their lives and the history of their society in meaningful and coherent ways. Moreover, I show that the way wider societal transformations in Mostar are perceived as biographical disruptions varies along generational (rather than national) lines, tightly connected to the stage of life in which people find themselves. This, however, does not imply that generational identifications are stronger than national identifications in the context of Mostar, or that generational lines of demarcation prevail over national lines of demarcation in everyday life.

This article builds on fieldwork conducted in Mostar between 2005 and 2008 in Bosniak-dominated East Mostar, as well as in Croat-dominated West Mostar. Methods were qualitative in nature and included, among others, participant observation, life history interviews, and memory-guided city tours. The majority of my informants identified themselves as either Bosniaks or Croats and constituted a rather heterogeneous group. They came from different socioeconomic backgrounds, held different political-ideological views, and were of different genders and ages.

While I sought to include people of different ages,¹ I did not classify certain cohorts as generations at the beginning of my fieldwork, but instead retrieved lines of generational demarcation from the narratives of my informants. These narratives revealed certain generational patterns of discursive tactics concerning the way life history was narrated in respect to the historical disruptions that the wider society had experienced. The concept of generation used here is based on the idea that individuals belonging to a particular cohort, born within a certain period and a shared sociocultural context, are influenced by certain political and social ideas and norms (see Mannheim [1928] 1952). Moreover, these cohorts share experiences of significant historical events (see Borneman 1992; Schuman and Scott 1989; Yurchak

2006). The understanding of generations as historical generations differs from the classic sociological understanding of generations as ordering systems that structure society based on age classes.

The three generations I deduced from my fieldwork data—the “First Yugoslavs”, the “Last Yugoslavs” (who are the focus of this article), and the “Post-Yugoslavs”—are thus first and foremost generations I identified and not necessarily generations my informants identified with. Only the Post-Yugoslavs, who due to their young age possess very limited or no personal memories of socialist Yugoslavia, are perceived as a distinct generation by older compatriots, but also by the young people themselves, though in very different terms. The older generations perceive the Post-Yugoslavs as a generation that is spoiled by nationalist propaganda and lacks the experience of prewar Mostar (particularly the experience of good neighbourliness among the different national groups), whereas the Post-Yugoslavs present their relatively young age as a “shield” that has protected them from bad experiences. Rather than accepting the accusation of being the “spoiled” generation, they present themselves as the “unspoiled” generation, as those who were too young to really experience the war and who are therefore in the privileged position of being able to approach people of other nationalities more freely (see Palmberger 2010). The generation of the Last Yugoslavs presented here is not a real community, in the sense of a group of political actors or a group based on social interaction. Rather, the Last Yugoslavs are better described as a “community of perception” (Olick 1999: 339). In this sense they may be seen as a group of people who share a certain interpretation of experience, as suggested by Lüscher in the phrase “gemeinsame Verarbeitung von Erfahrungen” (a collective coming to terms with past experiences) (2005: 55).²

With the proliferation of publications on memory in the social sciences in recent decades, an increasing number of studies have addressed violence and memory. Among them one can find studies that concentrate primarily on col-

lective memory and public discourse, while others concentrate primarily on individual subjects exposed to violence. The latter studies have revealed that violence and war, often coupled with great socioeconomic, political, and ideological transformations, are likely to present disruptions of life histories. Das (2007: 90) describes such experience of extreme violence in the case of India as the “non-narrative.” Together with other authors (see, e.g., Argenti and Schramm 2010), Das argues that extreme violence has the potential to leave behind witnesses without words. Such experiences create disruptions in people’s lives in the sense that they cannot relate them to the life they lived before. Moreover, the experienced violence is too far removed from “normal life” for witnesses to share it with others.

Studies on memory and Yugoslavia (and its successor states) have primarily concerned themselves with collective, national³ memory (see, e.g., Basic-Hrvatinić 1996; Hayden 1994; Müller 2002). Fewer studies have focused on personal memories or the intersection of personal and national memory, and, of these, most have dealt with memories (collective as well as personal) of violence and war (see, e.g., Bax 1997; Jansen 2002; Sorabji 2006). The impact of the enormous political-economic transformations on the way in which people reflect on the past has received little attention. This article shows, however, that these transformations play key roles in understanding life narratives, particularly those of the generation in question here. The immediate time of the political-economic crisis is experienced and thus set in relation to *past time* (memory) and *future time* (prospects). Before delving deeper into the subject, let us first consider the main site of concern: Mostar.

Mostar

The 1992–1995 war left Mostar a city split in half between Croats and Bosniaks, who together form the vast majority of the population.⁴ Since then, the *Bulevar*, the main street

before the war and the front line during the fighting, constitutes the division between Bosniak-dominated East and Croat-dominated West Mostar. Even after Mostar’s residents were able to move about the city freely again, it remained divided in almost all aspects of life: politically, economically, culturally, and also in terms of health care, education, and the media (see Bose 2002; Hromadžić 2008; Veters 2007; Wimmen 2004). Once a showpiece for peaceful cross-national coexistence in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Mostar currently represents the country’s worst-case scenario of postwar partition. Due to the aforementioned institutionalized divisions, the lives of most Bosniaks and Croats are still separate.

The narratives of Bosniaks and Croats deviate when it comes to the interpretation of the 1992–1995 war. Although Bosniaks and Croats agree that the Serb-dominated Yugoslav National Army presented the primary threat to Mostar, they disagree about the reasons for the outbreak of the war among themselves after they had successfully pushed back the Yugoslav National Army. While in the Bosniak-dominant public discourse the Bosniak-Croat war is narrated as a war of Bosniaks liberating Mostar from Croat fascists (like the Partisans’ liberation of Mostar from the Nazis at the end of WWII), in the Croat-dominant public discourse the Bosniaks are portrayed as traitors who turned against their former protectors in order to Islamize Mostar. However, not only the recent but also the distant past is highly contested and official historiographies of crucial events differ starkly between Bosniaks and Croats (see Palmberger 2006; Velikonja 2003).

Considering the great controversies generated around almost every aspect of local history, the seemingly uniform representation of personal memories of prewar (socialist) Mostar among my informants is remarkable. According to the great majority of my informants, prewar Mostar was a colorful and friendly place, characterized by its good (interethnic) neighborliness (*komšilik*), its economic productivity, and its high quality of life. Prewar Mostar, I was told, was a buzzing city on the idyllic Neretva River,

highly valued by Mostaris and by tourists. Certainly there are competing narratives to this popular representation, particularly from nationalist voices that stress the national repression (with respect to religion, language, culture) to which people were exposed (see below). However, this representation of national repression was, by far, not the dominant representation among the Last Yugoslavs. Particularly when they engaged in personal memories of prewar Mostar, they painted an idyllic picture. This does not mean, as will become clear in the narratives presented below, that the discourse of national suppression is not present, but rather that it exists on a rather abstract and delocalized level.

Ruptured life courses

Regardless of whether my informants remained in Mostar throughout the entire period of the war or fled to (more) secure places and only returned after the war had ended, they were forced to build a new life in a place that had seen severe transformations. Facing great obstacles and insecurities, many were left in doubt about whether it was the right decision to return to (or remain in) Mostar. While the war and the far-reaching transformations that accompanied it were decisive for everyone, the generation of concern here, the Last Yugoslavs, experienced the war most prominently as a rupture in their lives. Constituting a relatively big cohort, all of the Last Yugoslavs were born and grew up in BiH during socialist Yugoslavia, that is, after WWII. They thus have no personal memories of that war and few, if any, memories of the first years of Tito's Yugoslavia. This generation does not perceive itself as those who built up Yugoslavia, as the First Yugoslavs do (who were born before WWII and were in their adolescence and early adulthood in the first period of Tito's Yugoslavia), but rather as its beneficiaries. The Last Yugoslavs have spent most of their lifetime in Yugoslavia and grew up under relatively stable political and economic circumstances, in contrast to the First Yugoslavs and the Post-Yugoslavs, who spent part of their

childhood or early adulthood either during WWII or during the 1992–1995 war. In contrast to the First Yugoslavs, who had already experienced a war and who knew that war always comes unexpectedly, the Last Yugoslavs simply could not imagine that war would break out in Yugoslavia.

The Last Yugoslavs find themselves in a stage of life in which they have to, in some way or other, face the political, economic, and societal changes they are confronted with. Compared to the Last Yugoslavs, the First Yugoslavs have reached an age that allows them more freedom to retreat to the past and delve into memories of better times with others of a similar age (see Palmberger 2008). Those belonging to the Post-Yugoslav generation, on the other hand, have spent most of their lives in postwar Mostar and do not experience the war as such a prominent rupture in their lives the way the Last Yugoslavs do (see Palmberger 2010). The loss of social security and economic well-being (compared to the present extremely precarious economic situation) has had a severe impact on the lives of the Last Yugoslav generation, as they carry great economic responsibility today, not only for themselves but also for their children and often for their parents. Moreover, the education path of many of this generation was delayed due to the war, and the career prospects they held (or retrospectively believe they held) during socialist Yugoslavia vanished.

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

For the generation of the Last Yugoslavs, one of the greatest (if not the greatest) concerns is Mostar's extremely weak job market. Many of the public enterprises went bankrupt due to the war, the loss of markets, and a dislocated labor force. As Pugh (2005) reveals, bankruptcy was also an effective way for realizing the privatization promoted by the so-called international community active in BiH after the war. The privatization of public enterprises was propagated as the key to economic growth in BiH. In many cases, however, the enterprises fell into the hands of corrupt nationalist managers and did not contribute to improving the economic situation of Mostar's larger population.⁵ Interestingly, most informants saw the economic downfall in connection to the war rather than to neoliberal postwar policies. Thus, the experience of the war and the disappearance of socioeconomic security were narrated as one disruption that separated their lives into a life before and a life after.

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

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

Life is difficult here. I believe people fight for their bare existence. One cannot see any improvement. What can I, for example, provide for my children? But it is not only difficult for me but also for them; what can they do here, which profession should they take up? There are no jobs; there is no future whatsoever! You cannot see any!⁶

Even if the situation of the war invalids presents a special case, Igor's disappointment with his current situation and his pessimism for the future is shared by many of the Last Yugoslavs, both men and women. Employment is a central concern for this generation. Aner, one of my Bosniak informants, who was one of the youngest soldiers in the Army of BiH during the war in the 1990s (and who was in his early thirties when I met him), is convinced that traumatic war experiences are not as threatening as the economic insecurity people face. Even though he told me quite openly about the depression he suffers from, he hesitated to connect his symptoms with personal war experiences. Instead, he linked them first and foremost to his desperate economic position and his hopeless career opportunities. Aner believes that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is only a myth that has been exploited for political reasons and is convinced that people in postwar BiH are primarily concerned with practical issues like finding a job. At the time I got to know Aner, he worked in a small private-run grocery shop, but he knew that the shop would be closed in the near future, since it was no longer profitable.

For Aner, the war and the breakup of Yugoslavia constitute a clear disruption to his life, which is characteristic of the narratives of the Last Yugoslavs. Their narratives are clearly divided into a threefold time frame: before the war, during the war, and after the war. To give only one example, after Aner had given me a comprehensive account of his experiences as a soldier, he told me that he had played the piano before the war. There are two remarkable observations about this statement. First, the time reference is the war, not a year or date or his age at the particular time. Second, the statement "be-

fore the war I played piano” is a statement that not only informs the interlocutor about musical skills, but also aims to capture the approach to life that people held in prewar Mostar. Aner told me about his past as a piano player right after he had told me about his life as a soldier. Making music and shooting people represent polar opposite activities: while the former stands for a truly “peaceful” activity, the latter stands for the opposite: absolute violence. The statement “before the war I played piano” in the context of his narration also expresses that at that point in his life, Aner had never imagined that he would ever hold a rifle in his hand. Moreover, it implies that since this point, nothing has remained the same.

The war severely changed the life course not only of those who fought as soldiers, but also of civilians who blamed the war for delaying or hindering their education/career and/or their aspirations to start their own family. The war narratives of those who experienced the war as civilians (among the Last Yugoslavs, these were mostly women) often centered on their families. Those who already had children of their own when the war broke out mourned for the time with their children that they lost due to the war. In extreme cases, parents were parted from their children when the children were moved to safer locations. One mother who shared this fate broke into tears when she told me her story. While she and her husband remained in BiH throughout the war, their two children lived in Germany. Even when her children assure her that she made the right decision, she still grieves over the long period of separation.

In summary, we can say that the war, coupled not only with great societal changes (particularly the devastating effects on cross-national coexistence), but also with significant economic-political transformations, was experienced by the Last Yugoslavs as a severe disruption to their lives. This disruption in the expected life course (in regard to education and career as well as family life) continues to this day, since for many of this generation life and, in particular, the *course* of their life remains “out of order”. In the Last Yugoslavs’ narratives, prewar BiH is pre-

sented as the “secure past” while present and future BiH is seen as insecure (even for those who are in favor of Mostar’s division, as will be shown later). A longing is expressed for the normal life (*normalan život*), which is tightly connected to the social security and economic well-being people fondly remember from Yugoslav times but also to *komsiluk* (neighborliness). In this nostalgic discourse Yugoslavia is often remembered as the ideal home, a lost home that can never be regained (PalMBERGER 2008). Home thus does not represent a geographically defined place but is, as Jansen (2007) vividly shows in the case of BiH’s returnees, strongly tied to feelings of security (*Sicherheit*), which again is bound to specific needs arising from the stage of life in which people find themselves. For the Last Yugoslavs, prewar, not postwar, Mostar presents this “secure” place. Evidently, only the relatively prosperous Yugoslav period is remembered by the Last Yugoslavs and not the economic decay of the 1980s. Even if social security and equality was one of the central ideals of Tito’s Yugoslavia in order to legitimize the socialist regime, these ideals were never achieved and the system failed to develop progressive redistributive mechanisms. Basic social securities, for example, in respect to housing, health care, and education—often mentioned by my informants—were not as sufficient as they are remembered today (see Allcock 2000; see also Pešić 1988).

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

the way they oscillate between different discourses: one localized discourse centering around the worsening of quality of life with the breakup of Yugoslavia and the war, and one delocalized discourse centering around the national liberation that came with it. While the former constitutes an immediate experience, the latter exists on a more ideological level.

My Bosniak informants claimed that only the Bosniaks have kept the spirit of “brotherhood and unity” (a common slogan of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia led by Josip Broz Tito), while others in Mostar (referring first and foremost to Croats) have tried to distinguish themselves from their respective “other”. In this discourse the war (and its outcome) is narrated as a senseless drama that severely worsened the life of Mostaris. Parallel to this discourse, my Bosniak informants also indulged in another, opposing discourse that stressed the national liberation that accompanied the war. Minela, one of my Bosniak informants who was in her thirties when we spoke, once told me: “I believe that this war had only one positive outcome: that we are no longer ashamed of ourselves.” With this she referred to the strengthening of the Bosniak identity as a consequence of the war.

Minela and her family stayed in their house throughout the entire war; only her father left to join the Bosniak-dominated Army of BiH. Minela connects the strengthening of her Muslim identity—a central part of her Bosniak identity—not only to personal war experiences, but first and foremost to the breakup of socialist Yugoslavia:

Before the war ... we were indeed ashamed to say that we were Muslims. Somehow we felt like this. Listen, at the time of Bajram [the Islamic Festival of Sacrifice], the last Bajram before the war began, I think it was February, I and a friend of mine were waiting in the hallway for a lecture to begin when someone came in and said, “Bajram Mubarek Olsun” [a Bajram blessing]. We looked like this [she looks with her eyes wide open] because nobody ever said that

out loud. Like they were some Hare Krishna or something like that. And so we stayed there and just looked at her like, “Why do you say that out loud?” as if she was not allowed to say that. It was because of communism.

Although in this quotation Minela blames communism for having suppressed her religion and with it the Bosniak nation, most of the time she indulges in a nostalgic discourse about Yugoslavia. At such times she proclaims the sameness of people in BiH and argues that distinctions are artificially created. Minela speaks about socialist Yugoslavia as a place where she felt at home, where she felt secure and society was intact. When, however, she switches the discussion from a personal to a more ideological (national) level, the picture of Yugoslavia deviates starkly. I could observe the same phenomenon among my Croat informants, such as with Željko, a Croat in his late forties.

Željko fought for the Croat army during the war. He describes the war as a period of his life that took much longer than he expected, a period he was forced to go through and from which he returned as a different person. Before the war Željko enjoyed stable employment working as a structural engineer. Today his regular income is much too small to support his family and he has to work elsewhere on the side. The responsibility to support his family in the present economic situation weighs heavily on his shoulders. He often thinks about how much easier life was during socialist Yugoslavia. He fondly remembers that people had jobs and good incomes and generally had a good life and he assures me that everyone, including his family, was extremely sad upon Tito’s death. When talking with Željko it becomes clear that he is greatly influenced by personal experiences of Yugoslav times and that many of the new developments (such as language politics) seem strange to him. Still, Željko indulges in an exclusive nationalist discourse when defending the recent developments in Mostar, including the division of the city. He believes that the Bosniaks aim to take over the city and that

gradually the Croat population will have to emigrate. The vacillation between these different discourses is characteristic of the Last Yugoslavs' conflicting narratives: even if prewar, not postwar, Mostar is the place that their future prospects were tied to, they are just as likely to defend present developments.

Discussion

As has been shown in this article, the narratives of the Last Yugoslavs are characterized by two central phenomena: first, they tend to oscillate between different, even opposing, discourses; and second, they are subject to the disruption that the war and the political-economic transformations caused. As a result, they do not proceed toward a conclusion but rather show a lack of cohesiveness. Life presents itself as fractured and there is a dramatic discontinuity between life before the war and life after the war. This is a phenomenon observed in cases of abrupt and traumatizing life changes that has been particularly researched among Holocaust survivors (see, e.g., Rosenthal 1995). After great political and societal rupture and economic transformations—periods that are perceived as chaotic and insecure—people seek to remake order by rethinking the past with respect to the changing present situation and their future prospects. Memory work is thus expected to become most prominent in times of crisis. But as Pierre Nora (1989) argues, memory not only enables people to maintain a sense of continuity, but also illuminates discontinuity. This is clearly evident in the Last Yugoslavs' narratives, which oscillate between a discourse of nationalist exclusion and fond memories of a multiethnic and secure past.

Gay Becker, in her book *Disrupted Lives* (1997), draws a clear parallel between expectations about the course of life that do not materialize because of unexpected life events and the experience of biographical disruption. Becker conducted research with Americans whose lives took an unexpected turn because of diverse reasons, including infertility as well as chronic ill-

nesses. Becker noticed that her informants share the experience of disruption of a life course pictured as a predictable continuous flow. "Although continuity in life is an illusion, it is an effective one: it organizes people's plans for and expectations about life, as well as the ways in which they understand who they are and what they do" (ibid.: 191). Becker's observations, as well as my own, suggest that ideas of the future are closely connected to the life course. When the flow of life is interrupted due to unexpected circumstances, the anticipated future disintegrates and a coherent narrative that connects past-present-future is under threat. As I realized in the case of the Last Yugoslavs' narratives, when expectations concerning one's life course are hampered by wide-reaching societal transformations and war, it is not only one's physical integrity that is threatened, but also the meaningful life that people long for. This makes clear that we need to consider questions concerning the life course in order to understand the multiple ways people position themselves toward and make sense of historical-political ruptures.

In the case of Mostar, I have shown that generational demarcations are informed by the past as well as by present shared experiences and by expectations of the future (or lack thereof), which are closely connected to the life course. Due to the stage of life the Last Yugoslavs find themselves in, they face a particular challenge when it comes to reorienting themselves in the new postwar sociopolitical context. The Last Yugoslavs' narratives discussed above have illustrated how the disappearance of a home and the future prospects tightly tied to it hamper the construction of a coherent and meaningful narrative. As some researchers working with refugees have observed, a sense of belonging and of home is crucial for a coherent narrative of one's life: "Forced movement as a rupture with the familiar social world tends to undermine the premises on which meaningful stories are built" (Eastmond 2007: 259). Although not all of my informants have experienced forced movement, they all experienced the disappearance of a familiar world. As long as they have not found a

new home that suffices as a base from which to create future projections, they are likely to struggle to find a coherent narrative. As Skultans (1997) has shown in her vivid account of Latvian life narratives, her informants were able to deal well with loss and discontinuities as long as they found an end to the stories of their lives. For Skultans' Latvian informants, the end of their story is the homecoming. However, as has been shown above, no such homecoming exists for the majority of my informants who belong to the generation of the Last Yugoslavs. Moreover, even for those who believe that the war has fostered national liberation, it seems too abstract an achievement to serve as the "story's end".

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Notes

1. My youngest informants were in their teens and my oldest in their late eighties.
2. This article concentrates on generational differences, but there are, of course, also national differences. For example, in the dominant Croat public discourse, recent developments are much more clearly presented as national liberation than in the Bosniak public discourse.
3. Even if the local term *narod* cannot be directly translated into the Western notion of "nation", it is still better translated as "nation" than as "ethnic group".
4. Although the Bosniaks and Croats already constituted the majority of prewar Mostar's population (which was 35 percent Bosniak and 34 percent Croat), there was also a Serb population (19 percent) and those who defined themselves as Yugoslavs (12 percent). The supranational identity "Yugoslav" was promoted by Tito and was established as an official census category. Even if religion is the most obvious identity marker—most Bosniaks are Muslims and most Croats are Catholics—Mostar's present division does not run along religious but rather along national lines.
5. A prominent example in this respect is Mostar's giant aluminium plant.
6. All interviews cited in this article were conducted in the local language and were translated by the author. All informants' names were changed by the author.

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