

Mobilizing for Ethnic Violence? Ethno-National Political Parties and the  
Dynamics of Ethno-Politicization

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## Abstract

On July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1990 the Serb Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina (SDS BiH) held its founding assembly. Less than five months later, it participated in the November 1990 elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), winning a decisive majority of the vote of ethnic Serbs. Yet, SDS BiH was not an ordinary political party. In the sixteen months that followed the elections, it initiated a series of activities that eroded the power of BiH institutions to which it had been elected. SDS BiH declared its own organs superior to those of BiH and established exclusive control in Serb-majority areas. In early 1992, it united these areas into a single Serb Republic, formed an exclusively Serb armed force, and set out to violently expand the territory that would be incorporated into the new statelet.

This study seeks to advance an understanding of the role of ethno-nationalist agents in the outbreak of violent conflicts fought in the name of ethnic nations by analyzing the activities of SDS BiH on the political homogenization of Serbs in the two years leading up to the 1992 onset of violence in BiH. It incorporates the tools of discourse analysis and the recent findings in the studies of human cognition, identifying the agency of SDS BiH in the power of the Party's discourse to produce affective sensibilities that served its nationalist agenda. It argues that this engineering of affect was crucial for constituting the dispersed individuals of Serb ethnic background as a palpable political group, and preparing them for armed mobilization.

The analysis also argues that ethno-nationalist agency can be properly understood only by considering the case-specific structural factors with which all agents interact. Toward this point, it draws contrast between the agency of SDS BiH and that of the National Movement in the Republic of Georgia, showing that ethnic structures hold a greater explanatory value in the Georgian case. Rather than departing from pre-given ethnic groups, both case studies suggest that conflict analyses should problematize the dynamic interaction between the dominant ethno-nationalist agents and ethnic structures, which produce ethnic groups, ethnic interests and sides to armed conflicts.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF ETHNO-POLITICIZATION.....	1
Ethno-national Identity and Conflict: From Ethnic to Ethnicized.....	7
Agents and Meanings: The Discursive Politics of Identity.....	13
Beyond Signs: Metaphors, Mental Structures and Affective Thinking.....	20
Synthesizing Discourse and Affect: Toward a Regime of Feeling.....	23
Political Parties as Discourse Coalitions.....	29
Mode of Inquiry: The Three-fold Approach.....	32
Data Gathering.....	36
Organization of chapters.....	38
INTERACTING WITH THE FIELD: SDS BiH AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES.....	41
New Opportunities and the Emergence of SDS BiH.....	43
From Yugoslav party-state to nationalizing states.....	43
From Yugoslavisation to ethnicization in Bosnia-Herzegovina.....	53
Political pluralisation and expansion of opportunities in BiH.....	56
The dynamic of initial ethno-politicization in BiH.....	59
Political Possibilities and SDS as an Agent.....	67
The political opportunity structure in the 1990 election campaign.....	68
Yugoslav disintegrative processes and the post-election dynamics in BiH.....	74
Croatia's <i>de facto</i> independence and the divisions in BiH.....	80
International termination of Yugoslavia and the path to war.....	84
Concluding Remarks.....	90
DISSEMINATING DISCOURSE: ORGANIZATIONAL REPERTOIRE, TECHNOLOGICAL MEDIUMS AND SDSBiH.....	91
Organizational Repertoire.....	95
From informal relations to political mobilization.....	96
Organizations of the broader discourse coalition.....	106

The Serbian Orthodox Church.....	110
Formal structure of SDS BiH.....	113
The broader coalition of SDS BiH.....	118
Institutional modality.....	119
Parainstitutional modality.....	121
The Technologies of Dissemination.....	124
Money.....	124
The Media.....	129
Weaponry.....	135
Concluding Remarks.....	145
FEELING THE NATION: SDS BIH AND THE DISCURSIVE FRAMINGS.....	147
Master Frame.....	150
The ethno-national ontology of SDS.....	151
Master narration of the political moment.....	155
Framing Collective Action.....	163
Pre-election mobilization.....	164
Post-election affective escalation.....	185
Framing collective action after Croatia’s separation.....	194
Post- Badinter escalation and ethno-separatist mobilization.....	206
Concluding Remarks.....	218
COMPARING THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND SDS BIH.....	221
Comparing Political Opportunity Structures.....	222
The conditions of emergence: Glasnost.....	227
The fallout of April 9 <sup>th</sup> .....	233
The structures of ethnopolitical conflict.....	235
Comparing Dissemination Modalities.....	240
Organizing dissent.....	241

Dissemination technologies.....	246
Comparing Discursive Framings.....	249
Comparing master frames.....	251
Comparing collective action frames.....	259
CONCLUSION: THE MAKING OF AN AFFECTIVE COMMUNITY.....	271
Nation as an Affective Complex.....	275
Affect and Structure.....	276
Categories and Ethno-nationalism.....	278
Rediscovering the Lost Affect.....	280
EPILOGUE.....	282
REFERENCES .....	293

## Chapter 1

### Understanding the Dynamics of Ethno-Politicization

The first week of April 1992 was a defining moment in the politics of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH). Two years of ethno-political conflict between the three ethno-national parties that governed the former Yugoslav Republic were culminating in widespread violence. In the capital city of Sarajevo, rival mono-ethnic paramilitaries roamed the streets, setting up roadblocks and checkpoints. As subsequent events would show, Bosnia-Herzegovina was descending into a three and a half year-long war. Amidst this breakdown of order, on April 5<sup>th</sup>, tens of thousands of ordinary citizens filled the square in front of the Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina to protest the turn of events. While the gathering is remembered today as a peace rally, it is more remarkable as a mass expression of collective loyalties that were incongruent with the ethnically divided elite politics. The protesters did not mobilize due to an ethnic security dilemma, a desire to defend an imagined ethno-national community perceived to be under threat, or an attempt to revive an ethnic nation to its glorious heyday. Rather, the mass solidarity came in defense of something seemingly much more banal that was jeopardized by the direction of ethnopolitics; the Bosnian<sup>1</sup> tradition of *zajednicki zivot* (common life) in which personal relations and everyday lived experiences routinely transgressed, re-inscribed and blurred ethnic boundaries. The protesters braved the paramilitaries in the nearby streets to chant against ethnic divisions and sing Bosnian folk songs while displaying the symbols of both Yugoslavia and BiH.

Despite these and many other expressions of similar mass sentiments, many domestic and international observers have subscribed to the *ethnic conflict* paradigm as a framework for understanding the Bosnian War. At the foundations of this interpretative framework is the concept of well-bounded ethnic groups, whose conflict stemmed from mutually exclusive, longstanding and self-evident political interests. While the advocates of this conceptual grounding often make use of nationalist protests as evidence of the politically powerful ethnic structures, they dismiss mobilization around alternative axes of collective identification, such as the large protest gathering of April 5<sup>th</sup>, as politically irrelevant anomalies or outliers. The paradigm utilizes the sedimentation and politicization of ethnic identities that occur prior to and

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of brevity this study also refers to Bosnia-Herzegovina as simply “Bosnia”. For the same reason, the term “Bosnians” is occasionally used to refer to the entire population of BiH. Both are commonplace usages in academic literature.

during conflicts as evidence of a conflict's cause, and of appropriateness of the essentialist understandings of ethnicity. Olga Sucic and Suada Dilberovic, two of the protestors killed on April 5<sup>th</sup> by armed Serb nationalists, are thus remembered today as a Croat and a Bosniak woman killed by Serbs. This frame is precisely an inverse of the antinationalist understanding that led the April 5<sup>th</sup> protestors to the streets. The ethnic conflict framework, it seems, absorbs even the evidence against it.

This reductionism comes with both political implications and analytical flaws. It condenses diversities that exist at manifold levels- in the multiplicity of axes of identification, in intensity of ethnic sentiments, and in a variety of intra-ethnic voices. The agency of ethno-political elites is reduced to that of articulation of the pre-existing *national will*. This understanding not only obscures the dynamics through which ethnicity is promoted into a primary axis, ethnic sentiments intensified, and the various voices homogenized, but also contributes to the ethno-nationalist ontological politics that seek to naturalize these outcomes as the true or proper social order. Indeed, it is surprising that “ethnic conflict” has been used so broadly as a framework in academic research. Evidence that the paradigm can be both a flawed category of analysis and a discriminative category of practice is abundant. In the case of BiH, the April 5<sup>th</sup> protests were one in a series of acts of opposition to the elite driven ethno-homogenization. In other cases, where cultural differences were more pronounced, little suggested that ethnic sentiments could lead to violence. In the case of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, the narratives of the 1918-1920 atrocities that were reproducing the longstanding ethnic animosities clashed with lived experiences of harmonious interethnic relations. The decades of coexistence had produced a decline in social relevance of ethnicity, as evidenced in dense interethnic social ties and a high rate of intermarriages. The cleavages would radicalize once again in the late 1980s, through the complex dynamics of the Soviet collapse.

How, then, can we understand conflicts fought on behalf of ethnicity without assuming the primary political relevance of ethnic categories and homogeneity of people who fall within them? The approach proposed here is to analyze the dominant agencies that promoted the politicization of ethnicity and homogenization around an ethnic axis of collective identification. This requires parting with a static view of identity implicit in the “ethnic conflict” framework. For this reason, I replace it with that of *ethnicized* conflict, which signifies the dynamic, open-ended and continuous process of the political production of ethnic groups and violent conflict

fought on behalf of them. The agents of ethnicization here are those parties and movements that participated in the conflict-generating processes of *ethno-politicization*. The concept of ethno-politicization refers to the activities of ethno-national elites that elevate the political relevance of ethnic affiliations. The politicization of ethnicity at the elite level is mutually constitutive with a more general ethnicization of the social field. Ethno-politicization leads to broader ethnicization, and vice versa. The activities of the elites on promoting ethnicity as a primary axis of collective identification, and on defining particular ethno-political interests, reverberate across social fields. They affect how people interpret who they are, what their economic condition is, whom they should trust and fear, what cultural practices should be embraced, and whose leadership should be followed. The more these perceptions are informed by categories of ethno-national belonging, the more the field is ethnicized. The levels of ethnicization in turn shape the capacities of the elites to carry out particular ethno-political action, defining what political agents could do to mobilize ethnic sentiments, and the policies for which they could secure mass support. The process of ethno-politicization, then, is a dynamic interaction occurring between elite politics and the broader social field. It also occurs between different elites pursuing diverse agenda, as their exchange shapes the direction of ethnic politics.

The dynamics of ethno-politicization are too complex, dispersed and case-specific to be properly understood through large *n* analyses. The complexities that make a difference between ethnic categories and ethnic groups, between cultural commonalities and political identities, and between multiethnic coexistence and ethnic war can be understood only through the analytical thickness of case studies. For this reason, my study is confined to the processes of ethno-politicization that produced two cases of violent conflicts- those that erupted in BiH and the Republic of Georgia. The primary focus is on the dominant drivers of these processes in BiH. It looks at a two-year period that preceded the outbreak of the 1992-1995 Bosnian war, which covers both the emergence and rise of ethno-political agents and a sharp increase in the salience of ethnicity in Bosnian politics. The ethno-nationalist activists in BiH began organizing into official political parties in the spring and summer of 1990, taking advantage of the end of the political monopoly that had been held by the Yugoslav League of Communists. In Bosnia's first free elections held in November of 1990, the victory belonged to three leading ethno-nationalist parties- the Serb Democratic Party (SDS BiH -*Srpska Demokratska Stranka Bosne I*

*Hercegovine*)<sup>2</sup>, the Muslim ethno-national Party for Democratic Action (SDA- *Stranka Demokratske Akcije*) and the Bosnian wing of Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ BiH- *Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica Bosne I Hercegovine*). The winning parties subsequently formed an uneasy partnership that would lead the republic through a period of rapid disintegration of the Yugoslav federation. The crumbling of the federation created a fluid and uncertain situation in Bosnia, collapsing the power mechanisms that underpinned its legal and geopolitical status. The three ruling parties responded by advocating incompatible visions of the republic's future. SDA and HDZ BiH saw Bosnia as a sovereign state, and eventually began a push for its international independence. On the other hand, SDS accepted nothing short of either Bosnia remaining in the rump Yugoslavia or being divided into ethnic territories. These positions were, the parties claimed, the wills of their respective nations.

But are the political desires of the Bosnians in the early 1990s properly understood by referencing the agenda of the ethno-nationalist elites? At first glance, an affirmative answer seems justifiable. Only several months after the emergence of political pluralism, the ethno-nationalist parties overwhelmingly won the republic's first free elections. In many areas, the armed mobilization of 1992 closely followed ethnic lines. It is indeed undeniable that ethnicity was the axis of political identification around which most Bosnians eventually congregated in the early 1990s. However, this should not be taken to mean that the political developments corresponded to the will of the people and dominant social cleavages, or that they had any degree of inevitability. The mass gathering of April 5<sup>th</sup> is one example that the ethnicization of Bosnia's society was far from complete as late as two years since the formation of political parties that advocated it. Indeed, significant segments of the Bosnian population not only failed to identify with *national interests* as constructed by the ruling parties, but also with the politicized ethnic categories.

An understanding of the conflict in BiH thus requires an analysis of how these various alternative voices were drowned out by nationalist discourse. An approach that sees political agency in individual and collective activism rather than in imagined ethnic groups reveals complex processes of mutual constitution of elite politics and popular will, of nationalist metanarratives and social cleavages, of party goals and national interests. The line between high

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<sup>2</sup> SDS BiH is also abbreviated in this work as simply SDS. While there were two Serb Democratic Parties, one SDS in BiH and another in Croatia, any reference to the latter is made by explicitly identifying it as "Croatian SDS" or "SDS of Croatia".

politics and the broader social field is thus ambiguous and fluid, with political parties having a productive role in both. The ability of political agents to achieve desired outcomes is no less a function of access to resources, discursive tactics and political maneuvering skills than the extent to which the party agenda corresponds to the pre-existing wishes and sentiments of the masses. An understanding of successful ethno-politicizations, then, can be advanced by directing the analytical focus on its most skillful, resourceful and accomplished advocates.

This research studies SDS BiH as a leading agent of ethno-politicization in BiH. While SDA and HDZ BiH were also significant contributors, SDS went the furthest in making social realities correspond to its meta-narrative. The party advocated both political and physical separation of Bosnia's ethnic nations, despite a geographic mosaic of intertwined ethnic communities and a large share of urban populations that did not neatly fall into any of the three dominant ethnic categories. The resources of SDS for implementing their agenda were far superior to those of any other Bosnian political party or movement. What Bosnia's demographic realities and rival political agents did not let it achieve politically, SDS BiH sought to achieve forcibly. In the spring of 1992, it led the creation of an exclusively Serb military force that outgunned those of the internationally recognized Bosnian government and other opposing armed formations present on the republic's territory. With unmatched military prowess, the party enforced its vision of carving out an exclusively Serb statelet on Bosnia's ethnically heterogeneous territory. As of this writing, most of its senior leadership has been either convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia or are still on trial for crimes committed against the ethnic other. The party's leader, Radovan Karadzic, stands accused of genocide. Despite this, SDS's project was a remarkable success. The statelet created through forcible changes to Bosnia's demographics has been legalized as one of two entities constituting the present day Bosnia-Herzegovina. The entity's name, *Republika Srpska*, has enshrined the linkage of ethnicity to territory to which its wartime founders aspired. Indeed, SDS BiH was a main contributor to the outbreak of conflict in Bosnia, the radical deepening of ethno-national cleavages among its people and the polity's postwar ethno-territorial order.

The analytical focus on SDS here also offers an understanding of how a single agent can affect sociopolitical outcomes. It contributes to the structure and agency debate by examining the mutual interaction between the agency and structural dispositions of the social field within which it was situated. Moreover, the analysis of SDS does not exclude other relevant actors. In fact, its

major challenge is to properly situate the role of SDS vis-à-vis its political allies and adversaries that also contributed to the structuring of Bosnia's sociopolitical environment. This involves looking at other significant agents insofar as they influenced the dynamics of ethno-politicization and thus enabled and constrained the activities of SDS. These are not only other major ethno-nationalist parties that participated in marginalization of the non-ethnic alternatives in the 1990 elections and the shaping of the post-election debates, but also agents in Bosnia and neighboring Serbia that provided crucial discursive and material support to SDS BiH.

The analysis of SDS also offers lessons exportable to other cases. It identifies the party as a galvanizer of Serb ethnic solidarity, a role that cautions against the commonplace assumption that sides to a violent conflict have temporal continuity. The rival groups may emerge and shift in relation to political activism that precedes the violent confrontation, with the violence-driven polarization constituting the final stage of their constitution. However, the skills, tactics and strategies are specific to each agent, while the repertoire of available action is specific to each society and political context. In this sense, a comparison of SDS with dominant agents of ethno-politicization in a different sociopolitical environment can demonstrate the uniqueness of the dynamics of ethno-politicization and the variable extent to which agents could affect outcomes across different cases. This benefit of the comparative dimension is attained here by contrasting the various aspects of SDS's role in the Bosnian case with the related aspects pertaining to the Georgian National Movement, a political coalition advocating an independent Republic of Georgia as the home of the Georgian ethnic nation. The locus of the comparative analysis is on "Round Table- Free Georgia", a coalition of formalized political parties that sprang out of the informal dissident movement to decisively win the 1990 elections in Georgia. The cases have unique complexities, but also similarities that make them well-suited for a comparative analysis. By the late 1980s, both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Georgia were in the process of transition from a single party Communist regime to political pluralism. The multinational federations of which they were constituent parts were collapsing. Both ethno-nationalist agents studied here gained power by means of free democratic elections and pursued discriminative policies against the ethnic other. In the following months, the ethnic polarization of the Georgian and Bosnian populations accelerated and culminated in violence. The comparison is that of two distinct paths to familiar outcomes- the outbreak of ethnicized conflicts in the newly independent post-communist states. Both cases were widely recognized as ethnic conflicts.

## **Ethno-national Identity and Conflict: From Ethnic to Ethnicized**

The flaws of the “ethnic conflict” paradigm can be identified as a three-fold structural determinism. First, the available ethno-national categorizations are taken to reflect actual ethno-national groups. Many people who fall into an official collective category by virtue of family background or adherence to cultural traditions may not have sentiments that give rise to group solidarity. Second, the existence of palpable ethnic groups does not mean that its members see ethnicity as a primary political identity. An ethnic axis of identification may be superseded by alternative sub-ethnic and supra-ethnic identifications, such as those that follow clan, regional, class and other axes. Third, politicized ethnic identities do not come with self-apparent political interests. Most often, the constitution of these interests is a subject of considerable intra-ethnic debates. Groupist understandings may be more adequate in cases where ethnic identities have long been consolidated and politicized and ethno-nationalist agents do little more than reproduce previous understandings. In other cases, however, such understandings obscure agency involved in production of politicized ethnic groups. A better approach requires a more nuanced analytical framework sensitive to the presence of political agency at multiple sites of constitution of identity and interests. First, the concepts of “ethnicity”, “identity” and “agency” will need to be revisited and reworked to meet the task.

A point of departure can be found here in the various strands of constructivism, which offer a way beyond the overly static and singular commonplace understandings of ethnic and national identity. They see ethno-national groups as constructed, unstable, multifarious, and not the primordial givens that ethno-nationalists and other commentators claim they are. More than three decades ago, Benedict Anderson (2006) has coined the term “imagined community” to argue that a nation is a socially constructed community imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of it. For Anderson, “a nation is imagined because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6). These collective imaginaries themselves vary across space and time, being enabled and constrained by a broader social context. Anderson sees the 19<sup>th</sup> century spread of print-capitalism as a key development that facilitated the global proliferation of national identity. In order to maximize circulation of the print media, the capitalist entrepreneurs expanded the print languages to include not only the scripts known to the privileged few but also the vernacular languages of the masses. This

produced unified fields of communication, enabling speakers of a variety of dialects to become aware of the existence of the millions with whom they shared language and press. The national imaginaries were also enhanced by the stability and sense of antiquity that the fixity of print gave to language.

Other thinkers had emphasized that 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalisms were a *necessary* outcome of industrialization. In Ernest Gellner's view (1983), the industrial age came with the need for cultural standardization, generic employment training and context-free communication. The fulfillment of these functions required and resulted in the development of large collective identities. While valuable for identifying the decisive influence of technological conditions on collective self-identifications, the argument is less informative for understanding specific nationalist movements that had successfully consolidated larger imagined communities. Indeed, Gellner's work and Anderson's concept are complementary insofar as the specific economic conditions described by Gellner shaped the development of national imaginaries. However, Anderson rightly corrects Gellner's absorption of human agency under economic functionalism with an emphasis on what social action modernity made *possible* rather than *necessary*. For Anderson, the relationship between modernity and collective identities is considerably more contingent, heterogeneous and open-ended. The invention of printed press here represents a transformation in the reservoir of resources that enabled and favored the social construction of national imaginaries. No less important were the discursive shifts, such as the 17<sup>th</sup> century decline of belief in sacral monarchy and privilege of sacred texts. Anderson does not foreclose the possibility that much of the radical social impact of industrialization would have been absorbed had the hegemony of religious discourse been maintained into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The vernacularization of the print languages was thus not only a function of the capitalist condition but also of the removal of discursive prohibitions. Furthermore, Anderson accounts for the spread of nationalism by placing greater explanatory weight on ideas, socially constituted categories and political projects. He discusses the American Revolution as precedent for some European nationalist movements, and imperial map, census and museum representations as resources that fostered the emergence of post-colonial nationalisms in societies with low levels of industrialization.

Anthony Smith (1998) has challenged the marriage of nations and modernity by pointing to the many cases of nationalism that antedated the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Smith criticizes the Modernist

theorists for assigning excessive generative force to modernization. In his criticism of Gellner, Smith convincingly argues that the rise of nations could not be explained within the framework of the 19<sup>th</sup> century economic functionalism. He usefully observes that successful nationalisms found resonance through deployment of the pre-existing myths, values, symbols and memories. Yet, some of Smith's criticisms are misplaced. He thus challenges Anderson on the grounds that he relied too much on linguistic narratives at the expense of other elements of folk traditions. However, Anderson does not deny the diverse contributions to the fostering of the national imaginary. Print capitalism itself was the medium that enabled people to envisage the existence of millions of others with whom they shared folk traditions. Furthermore, Smith is himself guilty of case neglect. His insistence on ethnic origins and traditions helps little in explaining some post-colonial and post-Communist nationalisms that were based on hegemonic categorizations rather than cultural resources. Finally, his near-fixity of ethnic symbols, myths, memories and other traditions is poorly suited to account for inventions, evolutions and transformations that occur in the cultural field.

Moreover, Smith's emphasis on ethnic structures does not expunge social agency. While cultural traditions may be durable, they are also versatile as resources for social action. In much of his account, Smith sees culture as a storehouse of meanings on which nationalist agents rely for *fashioning* a sense of common identity. Culture here does not dictate how this common identity will take shape, as agents can deploy cultural elements in a variety of ways. Smith even acknowledges that nationalist interpretations of ethnic history are frequently fabricated to justify political goals. With this constructivist dimension, Smith joins the Modernist thinkers in refuting the transcendental understanding of a nation advocated by nationalist agents. Despite the differences, these works together constitute a devastating challenge to a primordial understanding of a nation as a natural community that has existed as such since early human history. At the same time, Smith's account is an important corrective to the Modernist perspective as it provides solid evidence of the enduring character of cultural traditions. It thus exposes the need to account for the social constitution of nations by synthesizing both historical change and continuity.

While a theorization of nation and ethnicity deals only with the first half of "ethno-national identity", Rogers Brubaker (2006) has also problematized the use of "identity" as an analytical concept. Brubaker claims that the concept rests on a flawed assumption that identity is

something all people and groups have or are in search of. Brubaker advocates its replacement by several less congested terms that do the same theoretical work, such as categorizations, commonalities, self-understandings and identifications. In this view, shared folk traditions are better seen as indicative of commonalities than of ethnic identities. Similarly, map, museum and census representations display socially constituted categorizations rather than actual identities. Yet, Brubaker acknowledges its power as a category of practice, arguing that identity is: used by political entrepreneurs to persuade people to understand themselves, their interests, and their predicaments in a certain way, to persuade certain people that they are ‘identical’ with one another and at the same time different from others, and to organize and justify collective action along certain lines (2006, p. 32)

Brubaker does not see the bracketing of people’s self-understandings and commonalities into collective categories as necessarily problematic. However, he cautions against assuming that these categories reflect palpable groups. Brubaker instead thinks of ‘groupness’, or group solidarity, as a dynamic variable responsive to political action. Groups emerge and fade across time and space as solidarity ebbs and flows. As such, they lack a one-to-one correspondence to the more stable categorizations and commonalities. Groups also do not have a referent in peoples’ self-understandings and identifications, since the latter are always individual, highly contingent and multiple.

Furthermore, groupness exists as a variable across a multitude of lateral social domains, and is always constituted contextually. Any single individual may be member of a fan group at a sporting event, environmentalist groups formed in response to specific issues, or ethnic groups protesting the neglect of traditional culture. The latter refer here to activist groups rather than to imagined ethnic nations. In this sense, the “ethnic conflict” framework is flawed for assuming that individuals who fall within particular ethnic categories based on certain cultural traits or family background are bounded by high levels of group solidarity. In contrast, the ethnicized conflict framework seeks to account for the processes through which the levels of ethno-national groupness are produced, reproduced, proliferated and politicized. It treats dominant categorizations not as reflections of actual social cleavages, but as problematic tools for organizing chaos into familiar understandings. The continuous reproduction and stabilization of categories in official, scientific, cultural and other discourses serves to conceal their socially constituted character, naturalizing the well-defined differentiations as an objective description of

a society. The diverse particularities of specific cases both support and oppose the arguments about the essence and suitability of categories (Toal, 2001). Yet, the existing categories are privileged as familiar, commonsense understandings. Ethno-national categorizations thus absorb, marginalize or coexist with the examples of April 5<sup>th</sup> protests, high rates of intermarriages and other instances of particularities at odds with the long-established generalities. On the other hand, the conforming cases, such as those of inhabitants of rural areas who preserve ethnic traditions and live in deeply ethnicized communities, are mobilized in support of the categorizations.

While the categorizations are inherently problematic, the availability of a category is crucial as a resource for agents who seek to elevate the intensities of group solidarity. Milton Esman (1994) argues that the production of high levels of groupness in everyone who could conceivably fall within an established ethnic category represents the first step toward politicizing ethnic identities. The next step is to create a basis for making claims and challenging the state. Esman observes that “the more politicized ethnicity becomes, the more it dominates other expressions of identity, eclipsing class, occupational and ideological solidarities” (1994, p. 15). David Romano (2006) uses the available categorizations to propose a four-fold differentiation of self-understandings:

1. Those that lie outside of the ethnic group category
2. Those that may be within the category but do not define themselves in ethnic terms
3. Those that consider themselves part of an ethnic group but in a non-politicized way
4. Those whose identity is politicized

An ethno-national organization is here an agent that actively seeks to produce homogeneity by bringing together people whose ethnic identifications fall into the latter three categories.

V. P. Gagnon (2006) has offered a somewhat different perspective by arguing that nationalist elites are concerned not so much with mobilization of ethnicity as with suppression of non-ethnic axes of identification. He argues that the ultimate goal “is not so much ethnic homogeneity as it is the construction of homogenous *political* space as a means to demobilize challengers” (p. 9). In his analysis of the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, Gagnon holds that ethno-nationalists aimed to prevent alternative mobilizations that could have occurred around a host of other issues, not the least of which were democratization, economic reforms and a crackdown on corruption. Yugoslavia was on the verge of social and economic change that

threatened the existing power structures. The elites responded by pursuing nationalism as a strategy for holding on to power and privilege. Gagnon's argument may have somewhat understated the importance of ethnicity as an independent factor and neglected the role of genuine nationalism. However, it has contributed to an understanding of ethno-politicization by emphasizing the sociopolitical context, access to resources and political strategies as its key aspects. Gagnon's account is also useful for suggesting that the motives behind the elevated levels of ethnic groupness may have little to do with ethno-nationalism.

The successful construction of a homogenous political space does not necessarily explain the outbreak of violence however. Ethno-politicization may not culminate in ethnicized war. The rival ethno-nationalist elites sometimes reach compromise or their call to arms fail to resonate. Strong ethno-nationalist sentiments may clash with a desire to avoid bloodshed. Personalized, lived experiences gained through interethnic interaction may have more weight in forming perceptions of the ethnic other than the macro-discursive framings of the elites. While ethnic politics has led to armed mobilization en masse in many cases, the atrocities that trigger or escalate ethnicized war are typically committed not by the murderous ethnic masses but by a much narrower stratum of individuals organized into armed gangs or semi-independent paramilitary units. Their motives often have more to do with looting, personal enrichment, and idiosyncratic psychological profiles than with nationalism. As John Mueller argues:

Ethnic warfare more closely resembles non-ethnic warfare, because it is waged by small groups of combatants, groups that purport to fight and kill in the name of some larger entity. Often, in fact, 'ethnic war' is substantially a condition in which a mass of essentially mild, ordinary people can unwillingly...come under control of small groups of armed thugs (2000, p. 42)

Ethno-politicization may undermine the state's monopoly on the use of force, thus creating opportunities for violent criminals to loot and murder with impunity, for shady businessmen to benefit from black marketeering, and for individuals with dense social ties and capital to take the reins of local power independent of central authority. The involvement of these actors can potentially make a difference between ethnicized violence and a peaceful resolution. On the other hand, their independence vis-à-vis the nationalist elites and macropolitics should not be overstated. Indeed, ethno-politicization can produce divisions and tensions that overdetermine violent outcomes. The elites may even pursue violence as a tactic, and instrumentalize violent entrepreneurs to serve their political goals. The felt political imperative of ethnic unity can ensure that the masses of co-nationals unwilling to participate in the atrocities give tacit support

to those who do, or at least decide not to oppose them. The lesson here is that the relationship between ethno-politicization and outbreak of ethnicized violence may have its distinct set of dynamics. It is thus a distinct analytical terrain that should be empirically scrutinized.

The discussion so far has suggested that ethnic identities do not have a referent outside of their social constitution. The ethno-nationalists do not draw on some objective realities but on the socially constituted meanings that pre-exist them. It thus appears that both continuities and change, and both structure and agency, need to be situated in the field of meanings that is negotiated and transformed through human action. This is the task of the next section.

### **Agents and Meanings: The Discursive Politics of Identity**

In recent years, many theorists have convincingly argued that there is never a one-to-one correspondence between linguistic signs, or signifiers, and concepts through which humans assign meaning to them, or signified. Rather, the production of meanings is inherently a social activity. Human language is here not a conveyor of meanings that exist in the physical world or in people's minds, but an intersubjective field in which meanings are constituted. Considering these autonomous and generative powers of language, it is analytically useful to avoid commonplace understandings that see language as merely a medium of written and spoken communication, and change terminology by thinking of discourse. Discourse here represents a polyvalent analytical tool that is conceptualized at multiple levels, sometimes referring to a general domain of all semiotic acts, sometimes to determinable groups of acts, and at other times to specific rules, or modes of understanding, that inform human behavior.

If all meanings are constituted discursively, then both structures and agency involved in the production and politicization of ethnic identities should be situated in the field of discourse. But how does this positioning affect the conceptualization of the two? A useful point of departure here is Anthony Giddens' understanding of structures as "the properties which make it possible for discernibly similar social practices to exist across varying spans of time and space and which lend them 'systemic' form" (1984, p.17). At the most general level, there are structuring properties that make possible the communicative function of language. Inherent in linguistic signs is a minimum of meaning that makes a sign recognizable, reiterable and reusable across space and time. Yet, this citationality does not go a long way in defining the meanings of language in use. Linguistic performances gain meanings contextually. The context here is both that of previous usage, or historicity that a sign acquired over time, and the one concurrent with

each deployment, or the relation to broader discursive configurations within which the deployment is situated. When political agents advocate a particular position, their discourse acquires meanings through both this citationality and contextuality. What an audience hears upon deployment of a particular sign, or a larger assemblage of them, goes far beyond that minimum of conveyed meaning that make them distinct and familiar signifiers. The audience also hears a web of other signifier to which the signs have been associated in both past and concurrent usage. Language, understood not as a stable system of differences that objectively impose meanings but a fluid field of differentially-constituted resources for their social production, thus structures the possibilities for social action.

The work of Judith Butler is informative for advancing the discussion of the historicity of language. Butler has argued that the enunciated signs, as well as the larger discourses that they constitute, never entirely break with previous deployments. She asserts that “the present discourse breaks with the prior ones, but not in any absolute sense. On the contrary, the present context and its apparent ‘break’ with the past are themselves legible only in terms of the past from which it breaks” (1997, p. 14). When applied to the theorization of ethnicity as an axis of collective identification, this statement speaks of the extent to which Smith is correct in emphasizing the role of folk traditions in constitution of national communities. A structural dimension of ethno-national identity can be identified in the enduring ethnic traditions that have been discursively passed on between many generations. A political agent that deploys the linguistic sign of “Serbs” mobilizes not only a familiar element from the available lexical reservoir, but also a web of associations to other signifiers and broader discourses to which the sign was linked in previous usage. “Serbs” here is recognizable across social fields for signifying a distinct sociocultural category, differentiated in relation to the categories of non-Serbs. While this minimum of difference is not a mere descriptive, since the term itself emerged at some past point as a social activity, it secures the life of “Serbs” as a familiar, recognizable and telling signifier. Beyond these conditions of possibility, the meaning has been added to the signifier through associations to other signifiers and broader discourses. It has been deployed as part of various performances, such as folk songs, the myths of divine ethnic origins, and narratives of suffering that portray the ethnic group as a victim of historical injustice. Each time “Serbs” is deployed, an audience may also hear these and other performances within which the sign had been previously situated. The point is even more pronounced when speaking of larger

assemblages. A sentence “Serbs must live in a single state” becomes meaningful through previous associations to both “Serbs” as a victimized people and the past political projects aimed at Serb state unity. This quality of language to acquire historicity warns against assuming that the political constitution of national imaginaries is done in some *ad hoc* fashion. While nationalist movements may reinterpret the axes of collective identification in novel ways, the production of new meanings is always infused with those produced by previous agents. This is particularly pronounced in social fields with relatively well-defined ethnic cultures. As Smith rightly points out, the pre-existing shared folk understandings and practices are a material that guides the constitution of imagined national communities.

The meanings are also constituted through a broader contextual web of relations that occur at the time of enactment. A spoken or written word becomes meaningful in relation to a sentence or statement of which it is part, a statement depends on its relations to a larger performance, and all are related to broader modes of understanding the world, such as the political, economic, cultural or other discourses within which they are situated. A popular folk song or an ethno-religious ritual emerged as politically meaningful during the 19<sup>th</sup> century rise of nationalism not so much by virtue of their historicity that signaled cultural distinctness as through their relations to the broader sociopolitical context that existed at particular times and places. A wave of “national awakenings” throughout Europe, which was drawing sharp lines between cultural fields, served to make nationalist politicization of such cultural practices appear as a commonsense understanding. Yet, this should be seen as a shift in discursive structures that favored some social action over others, rather than an automatic process that deterministically imposed meanings. Indeed, the system of discursive relations involves a multitude of heterogeneous, versatile and shifting elements, and is a field of meanings that can never be exhausted. Discourse is thus always to some degree a site of ambiguity, and any fixation of meanings is inherently tentative and partial.

How should the role of human agents be understood vis-à-vis these structuring properties of discourse? Toward this purpose, we can broadly define discourse as a set of capabilities that allow social actors to give meanings to the world and their actions within it (Toal, 2002). Yet, agents here do not stand outside of discourse. On the contrary, human subjects are the inhabitants of discourse that constitutes them as agents with particular agenda and capacities to achieve it. They occupy discursively constituted slots that function in what Michel Foucault (1963) termed

as enunciative modalities, or specific modes of conditions that delimit capacities for meaningful discursive action. Agency here is conditioned by systems of relations between discourses that serve as rules of meaning-making, determining who can speak meaningfully and from what sites. This disperses a commonplace understanding of thinking, knowing and acting human subjects in favor of conceptualizing agency as an aspect of discourse. As Barnett and Duvall (2005) observe, power inheres in structures and discourses that are not possessed or controlled by any single actor.

At the same time, these structuring effects of discourse exist only when agents reproduce previous meanings. This is an uneven process, as structuring properties enable and constrain action to varying degrees. Some previously constituted meanings have greater tendency for reproduction across time and space than others. William Sewell (2010) has offered a conceptualization of social structures that aspires to account for both the mutual constitution of structures and agency and the varying degrees of structuring properties. Sewell sees structures as consisting of schemas, which are sets of social conventions, and resources, which refer to both human capabilities and non-human material objects. The greater the resources, the more stable the discursively constituted schemas. Resources are themselves constituted in the discursive field. A person joins a national army after acquiring culturally defined knowledge and training, but also contributes to the reproduction of structures by embodying these schemas and demonstrating the reality of a national community. The weapons may be constituted as a resource by the schemas that inform national foreign policy, but they also materially instantiate the schema when the availability of weaponry enables the development of a national army. To quote Sewell, “schemas not empowered or regenerated by resources would eventually be abandoned and forgotten, just as resources without cultural schema to direct their use would eventually dissipate and decay” (2010, p. 137).

For Sewell, the structures are multiple, multifarious, intersecting, and operating in different modes and at different levels. Ethnic structures may exist at macro-level, such as the official ethno-national categorizations, and micro-level, as in the ritual celebrations of a national hero practiced only in a few villages. Their modes of operation may be ritual, theological, authoritarian, educational, institutional, and so on. The structures constitute discursive positions that delimit one’s capabilities for social action. The ability of an ethno-nationalist leader to mobilize the masses to war will be shaped by the authoritarian mode of ethnic structures. The

leader's capacities here will depend in part on whether the cultural schemas define policymaking as an exclusive realm of the elites or demand broader deliberations.

This de-centering of the subject does not entirely expel human agency, however. The leader's ability to mobilize masses may also be a function of her or his innate talents to deploy the schemas toward desired goals. While discourse is a field of socialization that shapes peoples' cognitive makeup, it cannot entirely absorb the organic structures of a human brain. These extra-discursive biological structures account for much of the uniqueness of human personalities and the differences in social behavior between individuals having similar backgrounds and occupying similar discursive slots. The unique personality traits contribute to the constitution of individual talents and skills required for obtaining particular subject positions. Each human subject that participates in the negotiation of meanings brings this individuality into the process. If human agency is not entirely determined in the field of discourse, it then has genuine causal autonomy and the ability to alter structuring properties. Sewell situates these transformative capacities of social actors in the transposable qualities of the schemas. Since the meanings of the schemas are not exhausted by their previous usage, the agents can produce new meanings by creatively applying the schemas across different contexts. An ethno-nationalist agent may adopt an old fight song as a national anthem, transpose a religious symbol onto a national flag, or interpret a dance of a particular geographic region as a tradition of the ethno-national whole. Other agents may do things differently, such as choosing a song with peacetime themes, a flag with exclusively secular symbols, or a dance from a different region. The possibilities only multiply when agency is situated within complex ethno-political dynamics. In ethnically diverse societies, ethnic traditions may intersect with many other schemas, such as those that guide interethnic coexistence, inform alternative axes of identification, or define desired economic behavior.

Discourse, then, is a site of contestation over meanings. The stabilization of meanings is an inherently political process dependent on power to exclude alternative possibilities. As Howarth and Stavrakakis explain, "a political project will attempt to weave together different strands of discourse in an effort to dominate or organize a field of meaning so as to fix the identities of objects and practices in a particular way" (2000, p. 3). Social structures can be understood here as partially fixed rules of meaning-making. In this sense, cultural schemas are tentatively stabilized discursive formations that delimit possibilities for meaningful social action.

Yet, such formations may also assume the form of official categorizations, hegemonic economic understandings, new scientific knowledge, and other sets of stabilized meanings that cannot be reduced to any cultural field. For this reason, it is useful to replace the notion of cultural schemas by adopting a broader concept of ‘rhetorical commonplaces’ offered by Patrick Jackson (2006). Rhetorical commonplaces stand for all discursive resources that agents depend on to engage in meaningful linguistic acts. They can be further identified here as multifarious and free-floating rhetorical elements, ranging in size from a single sign to assemblages that inform macro-scale understandings, which are commonly shared between members of a particular society. In contrast to more typical frameworks that privilege continuities, the concept of rhetorical commonplaces assigns explanatory weight on meanings constituted relationally at the time of each enactment. As such, it is well-suited to account for the processes that drive social transformations. Agents are able to uniquely assemble the available elements by linking one element with another, or specifying them in one way rather than other. Such relations between elements can generate novel meanings, which add new rhetorical commonplaces to the reservoir and make others fade away. While the commonplaces acquire historicity through each relational deployment, the previous use does not determine their signification. The commonplaces of racial or ethnic superiority, for example, do not make attitudes toward the perceived inferior group self-apparent, as they can be joined to both moralistic premises to help the weak as well as to *realpolitik* and policies of conquest and exploitation. Broader contextual developments participate here by shifting resources in favor of one linkage over another. The experience of economic hardship can provide new resources for legitimizing exploitation, while a decline in religious discourse that underpins the notion of superiority may create opportunities for challenging the very survival of the commonplace.

Rhetorical commonplaces are often durable, however, and cannot be easily specified and joined in a manner that generates new meanings and commonplaces. The resonance of a particular act is a function of not only the reservoir of available discursive resources but also of access to human and material resources that bolster or undermine them. While all meanings are constituted discursively, including an understanding of worldly phenomena as human and material resources, the extra-discursive availability and phenomenological experiences of the objects perceived as resources reflects back on the stability of a discourse that constituted them as such. The meaning of a threat with a deadly weapon is not only a function of how the threat is

made linguistically, but also of whether the weapon is only discursively evoked or held in one's hand. The portrayal of a political adversary as an enemy to be physically eliminated is bolstered by military parades and exercises that *display* the coercive capacities for implementing the policy of elimination. The empirical verifiability of an object on which discourses are inscribed thus contributes autonomously to the stabilizations of meanings.

For this reason, it is useful to maintain Sewell's duality of structures, which distinguishes between discursive assemblages and human and material resources. Yet this duality should be reworked to incorporate the versatility of Jackson's framework. While the concept of 'rhetorical commonplaces' is useful, it is worth here to expand it so it refers to all semiotic acts, rather than to rhetoric *per se*. The waving of a national flag, for example, is an act of deploying a commonplace discursive element that does not require spoken or written language. Indeed, in this study I change terminology from 'rhetorical commonplace' to that of a 'semiotic commonplace', with the rhetorical commonplaces representing a subset of semiotic commonplaces. I further rework the duality of social structures to consist of a specific set of meanings, or a particular arrangement of semiotic commonplaces, and resources that underpin this arrangement as a commonplace understanding. A celebration of an ethno-religious holiday, for example, is a practice grounded in meanings generated relationally by a particular arrangement of semiotic commonplaces. The task of identifying the constituent commonplaces and agency involved in their assemblage is that of genealogy of meaning. Rhetorical commonplaces that signify a category of ethnic belonging have been at some point linked to and specified with religious discourse. Such associations not only add meaning by which a "Serb" also comes to signify an "Orthodox Christian", but they also inform further linkages, as in canonization of ethnic heroes and transcendental understandings of what it means to be a Serb. The availability of material resources, such as those needed for construction of churches, reinforces this linkage of ethnicity and religion. Human resources here represent an ultimate measure of the strength of the association. The more people internalize it as a natural or proper order, the more stable it is as a discursive structure.

If all meanings are constituted relationally through the arrangement of the available semiotic commonplaces, then self-understandings have neither a stable referent outside discourse nor possess inherent meanings within it. As Anthony Giddens observes, the awareness and singularity of a self is a function of the discursive system of difference: "The constitution of the

‘I’ comes about only via the ‘discourse of the other’ - that is, through the acquisition of language...Although we might tend to think of ‘I’ as bearing upon the richest and most intimate aspects of our experience, it is in a way one of the emptiest terms in language” (1984, 43). The ‘I’ exists insofar as it is enacted in language, and, at the basic syntactical level, refers only to the subject of a statement or utterance. Beyond this, the “I” is always determined by the context of social differentiations and the discursively constituted positions that the “I” or the “self” may occupy here. The point becomes only more pronounced when referring not to an individual human subject but to an imagined collective “self”. In this sense, the condition of possibility of an ethnic nation is its discursive constitution in relation to an ethnic “other”. Lene Hansen has argued the same in her study of the relationship between identity and foreign policy, observing that “identity is relationally constituted and always involves the construction of boundaries” (2006, p. 42). The clarity of these boundaries and the character of the “self” are a function of the degree and type of “otherness”. Ethno-nationalists typically seek to draw sharp borders of an ethnic self by discursively framing the ethnic ‘others’ as radically different and corrupt. The “other” can also be an entity that does not define itself in ethnic terms. During the Bosnia’s 1990 election campaign, the three principal ethno-nationalist parties partnered up to defeat the non-ethnic alternatives and make borders of ethnic identities as clear as possible. A year and a half later, SDS framed the April 5<sup>th</sup> protesters as conspirators against a Serb nation, which simultaneously suggested that the party represented a virtuous and genuine Serb self.

### **Beyond Signs: Metaphors, Mental Structures and Affective Thinking**

The discussion so far has identified a framework for understanding the discursive processes that tentatively stabilize meanings. However, a sole focus on signs is not well-equipped to account for the varying degrees of this stability. The focus does not go a long way in explaining why people are typically more likely to adapt change in the economic than in religious realm, or why calls to defend an ethnic nation in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union found greater resonance than appeals to defend a transnational state. Indeed, the discursively constituted meanings may represent a common mode of understanding the world, but human subjects internalize them with different degrees of commitment. Some discursive structures collapse together with external power mechanisms that underpin them, while others continue to live on as deeply engrained beliefs. While a semiotic commonplace conveys a degree of embedded signification that makes it stand for a widely recognizable and accepted

comprehension of some aspect of the world, this does not say enough about how a sign or assemblage is experienced by an audience. Ultimately, the meanings of a discursive act are about perceptions irreducible to some objectivized, rational cognition. As such, a framework that analyzes the semiotic content of an act, as in tracing how the commonplaces are linked and specified, cannot grasp its meaning without exploring how the audience *experienced* the deployed discursive material. Such cognitive processes do not become self-apparent by tracing the deployments of a sign, or an assemblage of them.

While any analytical venture into people's minds is bound to be messy and speculative, the recent literature on human cognition has advanced our understandings of psychological effects of discourse and opened an avenue for explaining the mobilizing power of discourse. The first step is to recognize that discursive acts have not only the conscious manifest meanings, but also those that are implicit and diffuse. An understanding of how and why particular acts resonate and certain discourses stabilize as dominant ways of seeing the world requires decoding and translating these implicit meanings. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) have thus observed that humans understand abstract concepts by metaphorically referring to something understood more readily, namely the physical phenomena experienced through senses. The metaphors can infuse social concepts and categories with meanings constituted in the realm of sensory experiences. A new reality is created if people begin to comprehend reality and act in terms of a metaphor. Individual metaphors are systematically tied into sets of metaphors that convey meanings both explicitly and implicitly. The meanings generated by an ethno-nationalist discourse, for example, are a function of the discourse's metaphorical representation of an imagined ethno-national community as a live, physical organism.

In the *Political Brain*, psychologist Drew Westen (2007) identifies biological processes that link discursive acts to emotional states. Westen studied brain scans of political partisans to build a convincing argument that, when it comes to choosing a political candidate, emotions prevail over reason. When the partisans were shown slides displaying two contradictory statements by their favorite candidates, the scans showed activation of neural circuits charged with regulating emotions and comparatively little involvement of circuits typically involved in deliberative reasoning. The findings suggested that emotions overrode the rational distress of logical contradictions. Westen explains this by thinking of neural pairings that form *networks of association*, or "bundles of thought feelings, images, and ideas that have become connected over

time” (2007, p.3). In this sense, the semiotic commonplaces often have strong association to emotional states, and their deployment is a stimulus that can generate the experiences of both pleasure and distress.

In *Thinking Fast and Slow*, psychologist Daniel Kahneman (2011) thinks of two cognitive systems that can be seen as complementary to Westen’s networks of association. System 1 refers to fast and impulsive thinking while system 2 is that of conscious, analytical deliberations. The affective reaction of system 1 often has the effect of shaping, or “priming”, the rationality of system 2. The enactment of semiotic commonplaces, as in the acts of waving a national flag or celebrating national heroes, can be seen as an attempt to link the enacting agents to ethnic identities that the targeted audience cognitively associates to positive sensibilities of system 1. The linkage is a way toward being instantly recognizable as a ‘we’, and hence legitimized as a representative of an ethnic community. Similarly, the framing of political opponents as existential threats seeks to link the opponents to negative emotional states. Such relational transmission of sensibilities from one discursive element to another may occur through a larger web of associations. Important here is historicity as well as the immediate context.

A dominant mode of understanding in a particular society, for example, may identify Islamic activism as an existential threat. This understanding constitutes a discursive slot of an Islamic threat that could be occupied by various political actors over time. These actors can themselves be used in subsequent deployments as rhetorical resources for triggering sensibilities associated to the threat. A metaphorical depiction of a Muslim leader as the new ‘Khomeini’, for instance, seeks to lexically fill the discursive slot of an Islamic threat through association to someone who had personified the threat in the past, in this case the Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini. Such associations serve to transpose the previously constituted affective pairings onto the new leader, which “prime” the more conscious and analytic processing that occurs in system 2. The instincts would then sustain the threat perception despite factual inaccuracies that may or may not be detected in the mode of deliberate thinking.

A neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (1994) has offered another view of this entanglement of reason and emotions. In *Descartes’ Error*, he argues that emotions and gut feelings participate even in the seemingly most rational activities, such as the cost-benefit analyses. Damasio’s argument is centered on the notion of somatic markers, or instinctive emotions and bodily feelings that had been connected by learning to certain scenarios. In any cost-benefit

deliberations, the somatic markers first highlight some options and eliminate others before deliberative reasoning can take place. The somatic markers themselves are analogous to Westen's networks of association, while their role in cognition is comparable to the functioning of Kahneman's system 1.

Indeed, the fostering of affective pairings that intensify a sense of belonging to an imagined ethno-national community is crucial for accomplishing the task of ethno-homogenization. As psychologist Dusan Kecmanovic observes, the resultant identity anchoring can be powerful:

When people begin to identify with a certain community, they start to treat it as if it were their own and soon behave toward it the way people usually behave toward themselves. They prize the virtues of their own and ignore its imperfections, appear to themselves more beautiful, ready to give precedence to their own over that which is not theirs (1996, p. 5).

The pre-existing discursive resources are critical here for a movement that seeks to promote group solidarity, as these are familiar to the audience and may be already associated with particular emotional reactions. If the resources are assembled in a manner that associates the movement and its agenda with positive 'gut feelings', contradictions or ethical issues will be downplayed and possibly overlooked.

### **Synthesizing Discourse and Affect: Toward a Regime of Feeling**

While cognitive sciences look below the level of the conscious subject, they offer lessons exportable to the studies of the intersubjective processes of meaning-making. In this analysis, I seek to extract their insights on affective thinking toward gaining a better understanding of the processes of ethno-politicization. Namely, I seek to incorporate them into a framework for discourse analysis. The use of this literature here is neither a claim of expertise in neuroscience nor an exhaustive account of cognitive processes. Rather, it should be seen as reliance on an extradisciplinary resource toward addressing the multidimensionality of the studied phenomenon of ethno-politicization.

So how does the above discussion of affective thinking help this study of ethno-nationalist agency? At a most general level, it shifts the analytical locus to the question of how agents mobilize emotions in ways that highlight commonalities within and differences between ethnic categories. As Roger Petersen observes in his study of emotions as political resource, "emotions are a mechanism that can heighten the salience of a particular concern" (2011, p. 25).

While affect grounds the processes of meaning-making in corporeal phenomena, this does not take away from discourse analysis as a way toward understanding how meanings are generated intersubjectively. Emotions occur both between and inside people, but their activation toward advancing a particular political agenda takes place as a performative activity. In this sense, the political deployment of affect is preserved in the form of recorded discourse. Admittedly, discourse analysis that seeks to explore mobilization of emotions as a political resource is faced with epistemological challenges, since affect is generally not a topic of conversation and is unobservable directly. Yet, inferences can be drawn by means of a critical analysis attentive to communicative conditions that typically produce emotional impact.

An understanding of how affect and sign both participate in the processes of meaning making requires a more nuanced understanding of their conjuncture. Indeed, they can be seen as two intertwined dimensions of a discursive performance. While discourse activates emotions, it does not stand independent of them. Affect both guides the deployment of semiotic elements and infuses them with meaning. As John Brewer argues, the enactment of emotions follows the intersubjectively available scripts:

When emotions become behavior, they are transformed into standardized actions, forms of language and interaction rituals that are culturally recognized by people with the same social learning as the appropriate ways for acting and talking emotionally (2010, p.105).

Albeit there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the performances and raw feelings, Brewer emphasizes that emotional tendencies are intersubjectively instantiated in the form of the deployed discursive assemblages. The available semiotic commonplaces serve here as vehicles for what Andrew Ross (2013) has termed the circulation of affect, or conscious or unconscious exchanges of emotions within a social environment. A discursive act circulates sensibilities by intersubjectively communicating the desires, passions, loves and hatreds of a performer and activating those in an audience. This activated affect shapes the perceptions of the discursive material that constitutes the act.

Moreover, the role of affect in the discursive processes of meaning-making must be analyzed with attention to paralinguistic components of a performance. In recent years, many researchers in the field of cognitive neuroscience have grounded the exchange of affect in neural structures responsible for imitating the behavior of others. They claimed to identify mirror neurons, which “mirror” the actions of others as if the observer were itself performing the act.

The mirroring refers to an innate ability to relate to and even experience the sensibilities of others. As we listen to others speak, this capacity for emotive simulation is activated not only through the linguistic content but also through facial expression, hand gesture, tone of voice, staging visuals and other paralinguistic channels. The transmitted affect here is not a carbon copy of the original, both because of the gap between raw emotions and their external manifestation, and since people interpret sensibilities through different cognitive frameworks. While neural structures simulate physical and emotional suffering of all humans, for example, empathy may be countered by other affective dispositions that serve to justify the suffering of some as somehow necessary or less human than that of others. Yet, the subconscious, neurological potential to emotionally process gestures, expressions, pitch, volume, rhythm, intonation and other paralinguistic stimuli highlights the need for exploring the various images and sounds that add meaning to linguistic assemblages.

But, how does this intersubjective mobilization and circulation of affective sensibilities participate in the transformative processes that alter the established modes of understanding? At stake here is not only the recycling of pre-existing sensibilities. Since humans do not comprehend the world independent of the field of discourse, emotions should not be seen as some innate biological functions that automatically assign meaning to worldly encounters. Indeed, affect is both mobilized and constituted discursively. It participates in the processes of meaning-making by anchoring to the discursive system of difference. When subjects are linguistically taught socially acceptable practices and dominant modes of understanding, they are also socialized into pairings between the semiotic commonplaces that they encounter and particular affective sensibilities. The image of a national flag thus comes to trigger a sense of pride, while a spoken name of a historical villain may mobilize fear or anger. In this sense, the sensibilities are not a mechanism for interpreting the worldly experiences in some pre-determined fashion, but generalized corporeal capacities whose meaning-making relevance is constituted through attachment to discursive stimuli. Moreover, the affective pairings are always underway, adapting to the perpetual shifts and lurches in the open-ended discursive environment. While emotional patterns are highly malleable in early socialization and become more entrenched in adulthood, they are never entirely rigid. Keith Woodward sees both internal and external developments that alter the existing sensibilities:

Affects tend to shape-shift- sometimes making our worldly doings easier, sometimes harder,- via internal transformations driven by thought, imagination, and distraction, but also through “external” encounters with social bodies or technical objects (2014, p.4).

Woodward’s distinction here between affect, thought and external encounters is artificial however. The thoughts and affect both shape and are shaped by external stimuli, while affects infuse our thinking in ways that escape conscious attention. The notion of a semiotic commonplace here reflects both internal and external processes- the thought/affect symbiosis that makes a sign a widely recognizable commonplace, and an external encounter that happens when a deployed sign activates corresponding sensibilities.

This understanding opens up to a discussion of how agents are able to generate affective transformations in pursuit of a political goal. Important here is the ability of agents to select, transfer, mix and mutate the already existing emotional phenomena by creatively deploying the discursive material to which the sensibilities are paired. Such action can alter the existing discursive landscape, and the corresponding experiences of emotions, in ways that undermine the established modes of understanding and alter the pairings between emotions and signs. When semiotic commonplaces are assembled in a novel manner, they can synthetically bring together various affective states to which they are paired, intensifying some emotions and downplaying others. A historical memory can thus be activated through performative reminders in ways that combine the pre-existing affect with contemporary experiences. As Antonio Damasio has observed “education and experience become folded into brain processes in ways that alter the nested system of emotions” (1994, p.179). Many citizens of Yugoslavia have experienced this when the disintegrating processes of ethno-politicization altered the meaning of “Yugoslav” from a sign that represented a national self to the one that came to signify a threat from an ethnic “other”.

While discursive structures can serve as indicators of the relatively stable types of affective investments in semiotic elements, the intensities of these affective states are highly contextual and responsive to social action. Indeed, emotional ebbs and flows are crucial for understanding discursive transformations. The affectively salient experiences of ethnicized war thus create opportunities for radical “othering” of all individuals falling into a particular ethnic category, a frame that may find little resonance in a prewar and postwar climate of economic and cultural exchanges. Moreover, semiotic commonplaces may be paired to diverse, even

contradictory sensibilities, with discursive stimuli deciding which of these prevails at a particular contextual moment. A range of sensibilities that the deployment of a commonplace may activate can be understood by exploring its historicity, which speaks of the various sign-affect pairings that had been performatively produced in the past. A signifier “Yugoslav”, for example, has acquired historicity through a diversity of previous deployments, signifying both an affectively pleasing category of the self and a disturbingly profane and dangerous “other”. In the societies that emerged from the collapse of Yugoslavia, this historicity means that the deployment of “Yugoslav”, as well as related signifiers, could trigger emotional states as different as nostalgia and animosity. The contextual deployment, established through relations between elements both within an act and to the wider discursive landscape, delimits which of these states is more likely to prevail.

This intersubjective life of affective sensibilities has crucial implications for understanding the constitution of collective identifications. Indeed, collective solidarity springs not out of some self-apparent commonalities but through exposure to similar patterns of affective stimulation that generate shared sensibilities. While group loyalty may appear as willful conformism to social roles, the affective assimilation prepares subjects to desire it in the first place. The shared affect becomes a tissue that brings together dispersed individualities. It harmonizes shared beliefs, norms, and symbols, which then serve as resources for distinguish the collective self from the out-group other. Yet, collective understandings vary in relation to the shifting discursive landscape, which never interlocks a single system of meaning and always include contrary elements. There may be multiple shared emotions that give rise to alternative axes of collective solidarity. Which of these has the most political relevance at particular times-places is a function of discursive stimulation. Agent capabilities here vary across cultural fields. In isolated tribal societies, the reservoir of semiotic commonplaces, and the corresponding group sentiments, is relatively homogenized by tribal traditions and cultural discourses, thus favoring their reproduction. In others, the commonplaces may be more diversified, and cultural differentiations diffused with alternative self-identifications.

The discursive landscape, and the corresponding affective landscape, is not only a function of tradition and competition in the marketplace of meanings, but also of power that imposes the borders of permissible discourse. Hegemonic political regimes are able to affect broad changes that produce new and marginalize old self-understandings. In Yugoslavia, the

communist rulers had both propagated identities that transgressed ethnic divides and codified the pre-existing ethnic identifiers into the state's administrative categories. By 1990, the Yugoslavs had experienced 45 years of the communist socialization in schools, workplaces and through the mass media. Furthermore, industrialization and urbanization had displaced many from ethnically segregated villages and provided new sites of interethnic interaction. The effect was the diversification of semiotic commonplaces and the corresponding field of socialization. A single individual raised in the communist Yugoslavia could have developed an emotional attachment with any or all of the "Serb", "Yugoslav", "working class", "Bosnian" and other selves. The ethnic commonplaces were themselves specified or joined to the communist commonplaces of class struggle and *Jugoslovenstvo*<sup>3</sup>. Thus, a "Serb" may have referred to an adherent of the Serb Orthodox Church, but also to a communist champion of the proletarian struggle and south Slav unity. The intense, emotionally salient World War II divide between *Partizan* and *Cetnik* Serbs ensured that the Serb ethno-national category would not correspond to a primary political loyalty.

The point here is that a regime's negative power that exiles discursive rivals may enhance its productive power that works by anchoring to brain processes. By shaping the field of socialization, a hegemonic agent produces new networks of emotional associations that then guide political preferences. A political regime seeks here to establish what Michel Foucault has called a "regime of truth" in which previously contested discursive framings are taken as widely accepted forms of knowledge. It is worth citing Foucault at length here:

Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint... Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements... the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (1980, p. 131).

"Truth", then, is the effect of the dominant agency's discourses of legitimation and affective thinking produced in educational systems, workplaces, through the media and a multitude of other sites. 'Truth' is a set of stabilized meanings with a 'life of its own' that reproduces power relations and delimits what can be said and done meaningfully. As with all meanings, 'truth' is

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<sup>3</sup> Jugoslovenstvo is typically translated into English as Yugoslavism, which roughly signifies a sense of belonging to a common Yugoslav nation and belief in Yugoslav (South Slav) unity.

never fully stabilized and is a subject to transformations. An elite dispute becomes an ethnic conflict when ethno-nationalist parties establish a regime of truth by mobilizing sensibilities that shape perceptions in ways that make their ontological position on ethnicity appear as a natural order of things. Since these perceptions are intimately linked with the affective dispositions, we can understand a regime of truth here to correspond to a particular regime of feelings that political actors seek to establish and reproduce. As David Campbell puts it, those seeing conflicts through a lens of bounded ethnic groups “inject ontological presumptions into their claims of actuality without disclosing their complicity in the representational process” (1998, p. 23). In this sense, the task of studying ethno-nationalist agency is to both disclose this complicity and trace the processes through which it was concealed.

### **Political Parties as Discourse Coalitions**

How should SDS BiH and the Georgian National Movement be conceptualized here to reflect their roles as agents in discourse? The commonplace definitions do not meet the task. The theorists have struggled to coin definitions that distinguish parties from movements, and this task remains largely incomplete. First, there is considerable definitional overlap between the two. Alan Ware, a scholar of political parties, defines a party as an institution that (a) seeks influence in a state, often by attempting to occupy positions in government, and (b) usually consists of more than a single interest in the society and so to some degree attempts to aggregate interests (1995, p. 5). This definition does not differentiate political parties from social movements, as both parties and movements too seek influence in a state and may involve more than a single interest. Social movement theorists fare somewhat better but do not resolve the issue. Snow and Soule (2010), for example, define movements in terms of five traits: (1) Challengers or defenders of systems of authority, (2) Collective actors, (3) Extra-institutional challengers, (4) Social movements as organized activity and (5) Movements as existing with some temporal continuity. At first glance, traits 1 and 3 may seem to belong exclusively to movements. However, the official parties sometimes seek constitutional changes, secessions and other institutional changes. Some parties, such as the two studied here, may also resort to extra-institutional challenges.

Indeed, both SDS BiH and the official parties that sprang out of the Georgian National Movement are examples of formalized organizations that possess all traits of social movements as identified by Snow and Soule. Their origins can be traced to the activities that were informal, extra-institutional and even illegal. In both cases, the parties operated in the context of

institutional crises and rapid social transformations. The collapse of the party-state system and the establishment of political pluralism created opportunities for dissidents to pursue nationalist aims by means of new institutional avenues. Yet, the institutions were merely one of the resources. The two ethno-nationalist parties resembled many conventional social movements in their frequent disregard of official rules and procedures both during the pre-election campaigns and once they occupied the highest institutional posts following electoral victories. These were also the incipient parties springing out of informal groups that, aside from the victories of 1990, did not campaign for another election; rather, they were involved in the development of paramilitary formations and ultimately helped fight a war.

Another, more serious conceptual problem is that of actorness of collective agents such as SDS BiH and the Georgian National Movement. In the mainstream literature, there is a tendency toward over-aggregation of various actors that constitute a party or a movement. This neglects important variations and internal struggles that may be consequential in the constitution of party politics. The party decisions are often a product of internal compromise or marginalization of dissenting voices. Bakke, Cunningham and Seymour (2012) think of three concepts useful for disaggregating political movements and exposing their internal dynamics. These are (1) the number of organizations in a movement; (2) the degree of institutionalization across these organizations and (3) the distribution of power among them. In the case of ethno-nationalist parties, the three dimensions can be related to intra-party interest groups and cliques, the relevance of the official hierarchy, and the distribution of informal power relations. The cleavages here may reflect differences over strategy and ideology as well as personal and regional rivalries. The task of understanding ethno-nationalist parties as agents requires a synthesis of external political dynamics that enable and constrain collective agency with these internal dynamics that shape the character of the parties as agents.

I conceptualize the political parties and movements in this study not to meet an idealistic aspiration for identifying some stable and unified collective subject, but to correspond to commonalities that bring together the organizations' heterogeneous members into a unique agent. A political organization is not seen here as a sharply differentiated category defined by formal membership, but a fluid social network that can be distinguished by a general commitment to a shared political agenda and participation in a distinct set of social relations that coordinates and informs collective activities. While members may have varying degrees of

commitment to the network, these shared understandings are a tissue that brings them together into a recognizable agent. The conceptualization is issue-oriented, since the same individuals that constitute the network may belong to rival organizations in some other political context or realm of social life. Furthermore, the boundaries of the network are porous, varying across time-space as membership expands or parts break off to form separate entities. Power relations that inhere in the network are highly uneven and shifting, as some individuals or sub-groups have a greater degree of influence in the production of collective action than others. Yet, the elites and the masses should not be rigidly separated here, as the two are intertwined in the interpenetrating and reciprocal exchange of sensibilities and practices. Indeed, when the elite politics produces mass collective action, whether in the form of voter mobilization, street protests or armed struggle, the masses become part of the same political agency initiated by the elites. The challenge, then, is to understand the inner workings of the agency and trace its evolution across time.

So what does this mean for defining SDS BiH and the Georgian National Movement as political agents? First, it calls for identifying a set of shared meanings that constituted the two organizations. Both SDS and the Georgian National Movement brought together people who saw an ethnic nation as a natural group and a dominant axis of political identification. Important here is an “ethnic”, essentialist understanding of a nation as a default community whose membership is based on descent or heredity, in opposition to a more inclusive, voluntary and political civic understanding of a nation. Both agents sought to establish a ‘regime of truth’ in which ethnicity was a primary collective identity, a defining trait of all members of society, and which was consequently to be present and visible in all segments of social life. They aspired to ‘revive’ an ethnic nation after what they saw as decades of neglect, and claimed to act on behalf of the perceived nations. Their actorness is thus grounded in the promotion of this discourse, which they aspired to stabilize into particular ‘regimes of truth’. In this sense, SDS BiH and the Georgian National Movement are understood here as discourse coalitions. Second, these coalitions are distinguished from others that pursued the same or similar agenda in that its members were connected through a web of social relations that served as avenues for coordinating collective action. These relations constituted the diverse capacities for action within the coalition, defining who is authorized to speak, on whose behalf and from what sites, as well as who can participate in the production of policies and who is expected to implement them.

Third, the conceptual framework is informed by the level of analysis necessary to answer the research question of how political organizations participated in the processes of ethno-politicization in BiH and Georgia. It is indeed possible to identify actorness both below and above the level of the studied collective agents. Each individual member of a coalition can be seen as an agent in its own right, while a coalition may be conceptualized as one part of a broader agency. SDS BiH was one such entity of a Yugoslavia-wide Serb nationalist coalition, and it needs to be situated vis-à-vis this larger agency. Yet, since this study deals with the leading agents of ethno-politicization in BiH and Georgia, its focus is on the two discourse coalitions that brought together the Serbs of BiH and Georgians in the Republic of Georgia.

### **Mode of Inquiry: The Three-fold Approach**

I base my framework for understanding collective political agency on the concepts offered in the social movement literature. The approach here makes use of a three-fold differentiation that David Romano (2006) developed drawing on the earlier work of McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996). Romano identifies three dimensions for understanding social movements, consisting of (1) opportunity structures, (2) resource mobilization, and (3) cultural framings. Opportunity structures refer to both windows of political opportunity for challenger movements and structural constraints to which movements must continually adopt. The opportunities may come in the form of a legitimization crisis of the existing ‘regime of truth’, or in the weakening of coercion mechanisms through which a regime was able to monopolize public discourse. The pressures against the existing structures are applied by a variety of developments, which may be concentrated in a single domain of social life or dispersed throughout the social field. A monetary crisis could undermine the dominant economic logic, new generations of political elites may opt in favor of new progressive politics, technological advances may open avenues for dissemination of alternative discourses, or military interventions could rearrange power relations. These shifts may be large and fast progressing, as in the periods of revolution, or smaller and more akin to evolution. While some developments may lead to confined, localized changes, others may cascade into the collapse of an entire ‘regime of truth’ that produces widespread fluidities.

In his study of nationalist mobilizations in the Soviet Union, Mark Beissinger (2002) discusses the political opportunity structures in terms of how they change, and are changed by the perceptions of what is politically possible:

Over time the mobilization of identity is facilitated by the unraveling of compliance systems and the “thickened” pace of challenging acts, allowing movements to take advantage of the successful example of others (2002, p. 149).

In Bosnia and Georgia, these periods of ‘thickened’ challenges had corresponded to the acceleration of ethno-politicization. Ethnic affiliations quickly evolved from ambiguous commonalities into distinct primary groups with incompatible political interests.

After decades of stability under communism, the eruptions of ethno-nationalism in BiH and Georgia were indeed novel developments. William Sewell (2005), after Sahlins, sees this breakdown of old regularities as constituted by ‘conjunctures of structures’ that create an inherently unpredictable situation:

When people act in a situation in which previously existing structures are newly conjoined, the consequences of their actions will be deflected from what the actors intend. The situation will have the effect of suppressing certain actions and suggesting new possibilities for the elaboration of others (p. 221).

This conjuncture, then, produces fluidities and opens new terrain for discursive competition. It presents various actors with opportunities to get involved in interpretation of events and stabilization of new meanings. This means an opportunity for the production of new neural pairings, or novel associations between semiotic commonplaces and emotional states. A bloody crackdown against a mass ethno-nationalist demonstration, for example, may create a new, tense convergence between communist military and political structures and those that give rise to ethnic solidarity. The tension between the two may be resolved in multiple ways. The crackdown may generate existential fears that discourage further nationalist activities, but it could also create resentment as an emotional resource to be exploited by ethno-nationalists for gaining new recruits. The conjuncture of structures is thus an unstable configuration whose resolution largely depends on skills and resources of agents.

The second dimension, resource mobilization, refers to mobilization of social networks, institutional structures, communication sites and technologies that enable people to come together into a social movement and gain collective political capabilities. Resources may be the local sites of interaction, such as religious sites and cultural organizations, as well as money, printing presses, weaponry and other material goods. I reformulate these here as dissemination modalities, or the various organizational and material resources that discourse coalitions seek to mobilize in order to disseminate their discourse as widely and frequently as possible. The dissemination avenues can be both those established by an agent, and social networks that

already exist for other purposes. Agents are typically able to mobilize the latter for their own purposes if they establish a set of shared meanings. People organized into a cultural club are more likely to be deployable as human resources if a movement shares similar values and cultural traits with the club. Armed forces that pre-exist a movement may provide material resources if the two share the same goals.

This leads to cultural framings. Important here are cultural stocks of meanings, values and practices available to party elites to engage in interpretation and social construction of issues and events. Since the framings also make use of administrative categories, institutional doctrines, hegemonic economic discourses and numerous other semiotic commonplaces that exceed any single cultural field, the notion of cultural framings is here expanded to that of discursive framings. The focus thus expands to trace the movements' active production of the various forms of meanings. The concepts of 'master frames' and 'collective action frames' are useful here for analyzing the processes of interpretation through which movements seek to gather support and demobilize challengers. Snow and Benford (1992) define "master frames" as large-scale modes of interpretation that promote and constrain a relatively wide range of movements. They argue that the success or failure of a movement is largely a function of the appeal and flexibility of these master frames. In the case of ethnonationalist parties, a master frame refers to a broad set of understandings that see ethnicity as a primary axis of identification. This is that common discursive denominator that brings various actors into a discourse coalition. Collective action frames are more specific derivatives of master frames and refer to the action-oriented mediums for interpreting more immediate contexts and developments. Moreover, this relationship is that of mutual reinforcement, as collective action framings serve to naturalize master framings.

While the discursive framings, opportunity structures and dissemination modalities are discussed here as three distinct concepts, they are also interconnected and mutually constitutive. A discussion of this mutual constitution is necessary for understanding how they are distinct. Political opportunities should thus be seen a function of framings that interpret a particular context as an opportunity. As McAdam et al. (1996) observe:

At a minimum people need to feel both aggrieved about some aspect of their lives and optimistic that, acting collectively, they can redress the problem. Lacking either one or both of these perceptions, it is highly unlikely that people will mobilize even when afforded the opportunity to do so" (p. 5)

The political opportunities, then, do not impose themselves as opportunities on the observer, but are a product of interpretative action that shapes *perceptions* of a particular configuration as an opportunity. The same is true of the dissemination resources. Discursive effort is required for identifying the potential resources, making them accessible, and finally deploying them toward the achievement of a movement’s goal. New political opportunities may expand the dissemination repertoire. Conversely, the acquisition of dissemination resources may open new possibilities for political action.

Yet, each dimension has distinct properties that are not shared by the other two. The existence of opportunities and dissemination resources cannot be reduced to perceptions. A perception of an opportunity for rebellion when the mechanisms of coercion are firmly in place is likely to lead to failure. A false recognition of an external network as an ally does not make it an organizational resource. The discursive framings refer to unique, agent-specific assemblages of semiotic elements. Since they address an agent’s own creativity, as manifested in the performative structure of the advocated discourse, this dimension can be identified as a site of agency. Yet, the agency can be understood only in the context of political opportunities and dissemination avenues, which are two dimensions of the structural context that delimit the productive power of advocated discourse. The three-fold distinction is thus analytically informative, and, as such, constitutes the data interpretation framework for analyzing the two collective agents studied here. Table 1. summarizes how the three dimensions are both interpenetrating and distinct.

**Table 1.** *Three-Fold Approach*

	<b>Political Opportunities</b>	<b>Dissemination Modalities</b>	<b>Discursive Framings</b>
<b>How they are distinct</b>	Political context that shapes availability of resources for discursive action, thus enabling and constraining agency.	Avenues for dissemination of agents’ discursive acts. Organizational repertoire and material resources.	Discourse advocated by an agent, uniquely assembled from available discursive elements.

<p><b>How they are mutually constituting</b></p>	<p>Availability of dissemination resources defines whether a contextual development can be seized as an opportunity, or imposed as a constraint.</p> <p>An agent’s discursive action participates in the shaping of the broader context, and hence, own political opportunities and constraints.</p>	<p>Avenues for dissemination of a discourse vary in relation to political opportunities and constraints.</p> <p>Agents make decisions on activating and developing specific organizational and material resources.</p>	<p>The discursive resources are both relatively-stable elements from a cultural storehouse and those that are made available or unavailable by a political context at particular time-places.</p> <p>The availability of dissemination avenues can affect framing tactics.</p>
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**Data Gathering**

The primary data gathering method in this study is archival research. I obtained useful information for focusing the research on specific events and actors from a wide array of the existing literature, including previous academic research, political memoires, media publications, and intelligence reports. I analyzed records of court decisions to trace legal acts that liberalized public discourse and opened new terrain for political activism. In the case of SDS, I also reviewed thousands of publicized documents from the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) cases against the *Republika Srpska* political and military leaders, which provided a wide array of valuable information pertaining to the party. This ranged from confidential internal records, phone intercepts and transcripts of meetings that provided insight into organizational modalities, distribution of power and collective action frames that circulated between the activists, to transcripts of public speeches not published in the mass media. The documents from the ICTY were also used to identify and discuss the distribution of weaponry and preparations for armed mobilization.

When it came to the analyses of discursive framings, I considered various forms of public discourse record. The approach was informed by recognition that the studied discourses were constituted by a multitude of performative acts occurring in dispersed localities. I collected data on discursive framings as they appeared in newspapers, magazines and video and audio recordings during the period from January 1990 until April 1992. Yet, the emphasis was placed on the performances that were published in the widely circulated media, and which consequently

reached the largest audiences. In the Bosnian case, I reviewed all reports on SDS and broader BiH Politics published in *Oslobodjenje*, the most prominent newspaper in Bosnia at the time. I also systematically reviewed *Politika*, a Serbian newspaper with a large readership in Bosnia. I analyzed each edition of SDS's publication *Javnost* for the period since its inception until the onset of war. For the same period, I also reviewed the publications of two other ethno-nationalist parties, *Muslimanski Glas* of SDA and *Herceg-Bosna* of HDZ, which helped situate the frames of SDS vis-à-vis those of its ethno-nationalist counterparts. Since many early controversial activities of SDS occurred in the area of Banja Luka, the analysis also included a systematic review of Banja Luka's *Glas* newspaper, as well as a selected review of *Kozarski Vijesnik*, a newspaper published in the town of Prijedor. When it came to the widely-read weekly magazines, I analyzed Belgrade's *NIN* and Sarajevo's *Slobodna Bosna* and *Dani*. I also systematically reviewed the publication of Yugoslav People's Army (*Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija- JNA*), *Narodna Armija*, in order to analyze the army's framings of Bosnia's political developments. Additionally, I reviewed selected editions of Belgrade's *Osmica*, a newspaper affiliated with the regime of Slobodan Milosevic, as well as *Pravoslavlje*, a publication of the Serbian Orthodox Church. A liberal youth magazine *Walter* was also selectively analyzed to trace the shifts in public discourse in the early 1990s that culminated in the legalization of ethno-nationalist parties. In order to supplement the printed records and gain greater insight into the paralinguistic aspects of SDS's performances, I also looked at hundreds of video clips pertaining to the activities of SDS available online.

In the Georgian case, I reviewed records of political discourse for the period beginning with first large nationalist protests of November 1988 until the August 1992 outbreak of war in Abkhazia. The records of the Georgian dissident discourse are relatively scarce, due to a tight communist monopoly that existed with varying intensities until November 1990. Yet a systematic review of the daily Georgian paper *Komunisti* (renamed "New Georgia" in December 1990), as well as the periodicals *Akhalgazrda Komunisti* (Renamed Akhalgazdra Iverieli in April 1990) and "People's Front" yielded hundreds of relevant statements and reports. I also reviewed foreign media reports on the developments in Georgia available in a LexisNexis database, as well as the video recordings of nationalist activities in Georgia accessible on YouTube.

In addition to archival research, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 leading political activists from the 1990-1992 who were familiar with the conditions of emergence and operations of SDS in the period from 1990 to 1992. These included former members of the highest executive and legislative organs of BiH and Yugoslavia, military/police commanders at the level of BiH, presidents of parties that competed against SDS in the 1990 election, prominent grassroots activists who participated in the earliest activities on organizing a Serb party in BiH, and former leading officials of SDS at both the regional and the republican level. The latter included five former members of the party's Main Board. The interviews provided information that complemented, clarified, confirmed or denied archival data. I also drew insight from additional informal conversations with individuals who participated in nationalist mobilizations in BiH and Georgia.

**Organization of chapters.** The three-fold conceptualization of political opportunities, dissemination modalities, and discursive framings is the basis for the organization of the chapters that follow. Chapters 2 to 4 discuss separately these three dimensions as they pertain to the agency of SDS BiH in the period from the party's inception until the escalation of the Bosnian War in the summer of 1992. Chapter 2 discusses several key conjunctures of structures that created opportunities for SDS to emerge as a political factor, come out victorious in the elections, pursue goals of ethno-national separation and create an exclusively Serb statelet. The first part deals with the developments that came together to allow for the emergence of ethno-national movements in BiH in the first place. This includes a conjuncture of the economic crisis that undermined the Yugoslav federal government, the rise of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia, the democratization processes, and a nationalist surge that originated outside of BiH but intensified ethnic sentiments within the republic. The second part discusses the evolving contextual developments within which SDS had to operate once it was formed. The discussion identifies four distinct configurations of political opportunities; the dynamics of the 1990 election campaign, the failing negotiations on the future of Yugoslavia, the secessionist moves by the governments of Croatia and Slovenia, and the decision of international actors to grant recognition to Yugoslav republics.

Chapter 3 deals with organizational and material resources that were available to SDS, and which the party mobilized toward disseminating its nationalist discourse. The organizational resources are here both those formed by SDS, such as local and regional boards, as well as

cultural, religious, state and other organization that shared the same ethno-national sentiments with the party and contributed to the dissemination of its discourse. Indeed, these entities are treated as organizational modalities of the same discourse coalition. The chapter discusses how and why SDS was able to gain access to these organizational forms, as well as their role in the constitution of SDS's agency. It also aspires to provide a nuanced account of the distribution of power within the coalition. When it comes to material resources, the chapter identifies financing, mass media technologies and weaponry.

Chapter 4 analyzes the performative structure of SDS's discourse. It synthesizes the findings of the previous two chapters into an account of how SDS's skillful discursive framings and extensive dissemination resources came together in times of discursive fluidity to stabilize new meanings and impose a regime of truth. The discourse of SDS is analyzed by deploying several conceptual tools of discourse analysis. It discusses a master frame and collective action frames, and evaluates discursive acts for the purpose of exposing implicit assumptions and affective impact. While the master frame is analyzed in a synchronic fashion, the discussion of the collective action frames has a diachronic dimension. It is bracketed to correspond to four distinct configurations of political opportunities discussed in chapter 2.

Chapter 5 compares the role of SDS in Bosnia with that of the Georgian National Movement in Georgia. The three dimensions of political opportunities, dissemination modalities and discursive framings are used here as parameters for comparison. The comparison finds a most consequential difference in that the Georgian National Movement had greater discursive resources stemming from the pre-existing national sentiments, but considerably fewer dissemination avenues. The implication is that ethno-structural dispositions carried more weight for explaining nationalist mobilizations in Georgia than in BiH. Yet, the aspects of ethno-politicization that led to the conflict in South Ossetia had less to do with mass sentiments and more with discursive manipulation by the political elites.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by discussing the implications of the findings. It argues that shared affective sensibilities are a tissue that enables the development of national imaginaries. Yet, the sensibilities are recognized as multifarious, cross-cutting, of different intensities and malleable to social action. This in itself suggests that any treatment of a nation as a stable category, as in the "ethnic conflict" paradigm, is analytically superficial, glib, misleading and deeply flawed. Following Chapter 6 is an Epilogue that illustrates this argument with a

personal story of the author's own evolution of ethno-national understandings during the period covered in the research.

*“Until two or three months ago we were hoping to be able to play the ‘Yugoslav card,’ ...This is slipping out of our grasp. That’s why we started on another track: Serbian Bosnia and Hercegovina.”- Radovan Karadzic, February 1992*

## **Chapter 2**

### **Interacting with the Field: SDS BiH and Political Opportunity Structures**

The political opportunity structures are a constitutive dimension of agency in dual ways. They both delimit the possibilities for engaging in performative action, and shape the meanings of the acts that are performed. The latter function implies that meanings escape the intentions of a performing agent. Indeed, agent intentionality can never fully correspond to the structural heterogeneity of a social field. When an act meets the uneven terrain of affective commitments, the resultant perceptions are always to some degree unexpected. The agents also cannot neatly isolate the targeted audience, since an act may reverberate across a diversity of interconnected social fields. Nationalism in one area can provide discursive resources for nationalist movements elsewhere. On the other hand, the capacity to modify a structural landscape is the condition of possibility for any agency. A multitude of individual and collective social activities continuously mobilize affective sensibilities in ways that produce new semiotic commonplaces and marginalize others. As the reservoir of discursive resources evolves, it imposes new sets of possibilities for assembling performative action. To understand the emergence, internal relations, decision-making and sociopolitical effects of any single discourse coalition, one must situate the agency within an account of how the activities of agents elsewhere made available new raw discursive material for the construction of the affectively resonant narratives, and took others away. The story of agency, then, is as much about what agents do as about how their actions are shaped by the broader configurations of political opportunities and constraints.

This chapter situates the agency of SDS within an account of the political opportunity structures that shaped the coalition’s emergence and political capabilities from inception until the outbreak of the Bosnian War. It focuses at rather narrow spatiotemporal slices in order to account for the contribution of the various dispersed developments that came together at particular time-spaces. It also exposes the role of human decision-making in creating this convergence, which structural determinism often conceals. The focus resists the structuralist tendency to situate the emergence of new movements within an account of the evolution of longstanding ethnic tension, which often assigns excessive explanatory weight and temporal stability to ethno-nationalist

discontent and grievances. In contrast, the agent-centered approach chosen here treats the longstanding ethnic tension as a variable that ebbs and flows without necessarily mounting to the point of eruption. Consequently, it seeks to situate the tension within the shifting discursive surroundings that heighten or lower the salience of issues across time-space. Indeed, the history of social movements is too volatile to be properly explained by a longitudinal study of dissident activism or the slowly evolving structural tension. The identity-related grievances and discontent exist to some degree in all societies even in times of relative stability, but only at certain times do they become significant enough to produce widespread structural transformations. These moments are typically produced not through evolution of a few longstanding political variables but through a convergence of many diverse and dispersed social activities that give rise to affective intensities conducive for turning occasional dissent into a mass mobilization. As Sidney Tarrow observes, social movements appear to take advantage of opportunities “when a system is challenged fundamentally by a range of social movements and not when individual movements or organizations mount challenges which are easily repressed and isolated” (Tarrow, 1996, p. 60).

In addition to explaining how the various developments come together to open the discursive terrain to dissident movements, the concept of political opportunity structures is also useful for explaining how broader discursive shifts and affective imperatives shape the locus of agency throughout its duration. As the discussion in this chapter will show, SDS BiH emerged as an agent in discourse at a time when the sociopolitical space in BiH was more than merely in transition. It was also under ethnicization, a process that provided discursive material for the assemblage of the affectively resonant ethno-nationalist narratives. In times of transition, marked by the absence of a hegemonic power that imposes meanings and silences alternatives, the availability of such discursive resources gave the agents of ethno-nationalism an advantage in the marketplace of meanings.

A concept of the political opportunity structures, then, is understood here as an analytical tool for situating a particular agency within the broader discursive environment. It should not be envisioned as a concrete and rigid structure with independent existence, but a discursive configuration whose structuring properties are produced by a multitude of agents, dependent on social reproduction, and malleable to future agency. Opportunities and constraints that constitute it are meaningful as such only in relation to the aims of an agent that is the object of analysis. A

particular shift in the discursive resources may be an opportunity to some, a constraint to others, and entirely meaningless for yet others. Furthermore, the relationship between agency and its opportunity structures is reciprocal, as political activism itself has the capacity to shift the reservoir of semiotic commonplace in the favor of advocated meanings.

The chapter is divided in two main parts. The first part discusses the evolution of political opportunity structures that produced new possibilities for Serb nationalist activism, and led to the founding of SDS BiH. It first offers a background understanding of the convergence of structures that ended the communist discursive hegemony in Yugoslavia. It then moves on to a more targeted discussion of the discursive evolution in BiH that led to the emergence of political pluralism in the republic. This is followed by an analysis of the levels of ethnic groupness in BiH that the party inherited at its founding. The section concludes with the narrative of how various dispersed activists took advantage of these structural conditions by allying into SDS BiH. The second part analyzes the mutual constitution of SDS's collective action and the coalition's political opportunity structure from its inception until the outbreak of the Bosnian War. Since this was a time of transition, marked with frequent structural shifts, the analysis is bracketed into narrower spatiotemporal zones. These are four periods of relatively distinct configurations of political opportunities and constraints: (1) the 1990 election campaign (2) the post-election disintegrative processes (3) The Croatian declaration of sovereignty and the outbreak of war in Croatia and (4) the European Community's decision to recognize Yugoslav republics. As an autonomous dimension of political opportunity structures, nationalist excesses and violence in BiH are discussed separately for each of the four periods.

### **New Opportunities and the Emergence of SDS BiH**

**From Yugoslav party-state to nationalising states.** An appropriate point of departure for understanding the times of transformation is a discussion of the sources of preceding stability. As Max Weber argued, the compliance of the masses rests on an inner source of justification, or conviction that authority is morally right and legitimate. When a regime is perceived as legitimate, its agents follow rules and enforce laws not only because of the threat of punishment but also because it is a morally right thing to do. The erosion of legitimacy undermines not only the perceptions of justice but also other sources of compliance, such as fear, apathy, habit and material benefit. The legitimacy crises destabilize a hegemonic discursive framework that informs peoples' moral evaluations, definitions of public issues and demands for

social action. The weakening of these macro-scale discursive structures opens multiple new possibilities for expression of the suppressed or marginalized dissident discourses. Crisis conditions may stimulate the previously apathetic individuals to reassess their social position and engage in political activism. They can also intensify sentiments of discontent and anger in ways that erode support for a regime and overpower fear of repression, eventually threatening constitutional arrangements even if they are backed by force. Law enforcement officials, judges, media censors and other regime agents may increasingly lose moral incentive to conform to the political regime. As alternatives gain credibility, they may look to build credit with the opposition (Obershall, 1996, p.100).

In this sense, a regime's stability is a function of the productive power of its legitimization discourse. A regime is perceived as legitimate when its discourse is associated with positive affective sensibilities, such as trust and admiration, on a mass scale. When such affective pairings are widespread, the dissenting voices have few discursive resources for assembling resonant challenges. While the open-endedness of any field of meanings ensures that the possibilities for dissent can never be foreclosed, a single-party regime can deprive challengers of discourse dissemination outlets, and threaten them with a crackdown. An affective mix of diverse sensibilities, such as trust, admiration and fear, thus comes together to produce compliant subjects. The continuous discursive reproduction of these affective pairings crystallizes over time into habitual conformism. Indeed, for four and a half decades, the Yugoslav communist regime had both enjoyed substantial legitimacy and tightly controlled national self-expression. Its monopoly over the marketplace of collective identifications prioritized class solidarity, promoted a common Yugoslav sense of belonging, and stigmatized ethno-nationalism. These hegemonic discourses absorbed cultural, scientific, educational, informational, professional and other dimensions of public life. The decades of endless performances served to internalize the advocated meanings in the desires, passions, needs and beliefs of Yugoslav subjects. The dominant discourses were producing neural pairings between semiotic commonplaces and emotions of their inhabitants, which then acted as stimuli that shaped their more rational and deliberate thinking. For the many Yugoslavs born in this period, this was the only field of meanings they knew. Put shortly, the communist discursive monopoly was shaping the discursive landscape, which was in turn producing compliant subjects who could themselves rationalize the exclusion of alternatives as legitimate.

Yet, the Yugoslav communists were anything but anti-national. Since they sought to legitimize themselves as a genuine Yugoslav movement, the communists had to rely on the affective commitments that pre-existed them. This included acknowledgment of the 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalist projects that left a legacy of strong Serb, Croat and Slovene sentiments of ethno-national belonging. The communist regime institutionalized these national categories and helped create new ones by organizing Yugoslavia as a federation of six republics, each with a titular nation or, in the case of BiH, multiple titular nations. The communists themselves were organized into a League of Communists of Yugoslavia that brought together the six republican organizations. Somewhat paradoxically, the reservoir of discursive resources that could be used for construction of collective self-identifications diversified during the communist political monopoly rather than contracted. The coats of arms of Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia included both traditional ethnic and new communist symbols. History books celebrated both epic ethnic heroes and Yugoslav partisan victories of World War II. The republican divisions reinforced Montenegrin, Macedonian and Bosnian distinctness. The Muslims of Bosnia were recognized as an official national category.<sup>4</sup> This was paralleled by the processes of urbanization and industrialization that created new sites of interaction between peoples previously living in mono-ethnic villages. The traditional modes of self-identification were displaced, but the new never entirely broke with the old. A sense of *Jugoslovenstvo* was being produced by linking with and reinterpreting the sentiments that pre-existed it.

During the four and a half decades of Communist discursive hegemony in Yugoslavia, the party-state dealt with a variety of grievances pertaining to the state of economy, democratization and conflicting ethno-national aspirations. These would surface in inter-party struggles, occasional dissident activities and student protests. The regime dealt with challengers and maintained hegemony through crackdowns and internal purges, but also adapted to the pressures by adjusting its own organizational form and the Yugoslav constitutional order. At different times, the latter involved both centralization policies and the delegation of powers to the republics. For ethnic Serbs, the most populous and geographically dispersed Yugoslav nation, a centralized Yugoslavia also meant greater ethno-national unity. Indeed, Serb ethnic grievances intensified during the 1970s, a time when the ruling party carried out several

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<sup>4</sup> While this “Muslim” national name was changed to that of “Bosniak” in 1993, in this study I retain the term “Muslim”. To resist presentism, I seek to maximize the usage of terms that informed sociopolitical understandings at the time covered by the study.

decentralizing reforms that broadened the competencies of the six republics and Serbia's two autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo. The 1971 constitutional amendments established the institution of federal presidency, which was to be made up of representatives of the two provinces as well as the six republics. A new constitution that came in effect in February of 1974 further strengthened the powers of the republics and conferred a status to Vojvodina and Kosovo that was a near equivalent to that of the republics. These changes were lamented among Serb political and intellectual circles for what they perceived to be a fragmentation of the Serb nation into several republic-states, and the distancing of the provinces from the rest of Serbia. Among the most active intellectuals in this regard were several individuals that would a decade and a half later spearhead Serb nationalist mobilization. One was a celebrated Serb writer Dobrica Cosic, who served as president of the Serbian Literary Cooperative (*Srpska Knjizevna Zadruga*) at the time of the 1971 amendments. Two other leading Serb nationalists of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Vojislav Kostunica and Kosta Cavoski, were thrown out of Belgrade's Law Faculty in the 1970s for criticizing the reforms (Biserko, 2006, p.19).

Despite the persistent troubles with satisfying diverse national aspirations, popular legitimacy and repression against nationalist dissidence jointly ensured the stability of the regime. It was not until the affective upheaval of the late 1980s that the habitual compliance to the hegemonic discourse was overpowered by the sentiments of anger, distrust, frustration and doubt in ways that created an opening for disputing the legitimacy of the hegemon. The disturbance was generated by a convergence of two related developments. The first one was a prolonged economic crisis and the consequent decline in the living standards of Yugoslavs. The repeated failures of economic policies led to a progressive accumulation of discontent and grievances that the dominant discourses could not effectively absorb. The available semiotic commonplaces appeared increasingly inadequate for maintaining the legitimacy of the socialist economic orientation. More importantly, since the economic field was densely interconnected with the widely diverse Yugoslav field of collective identifications, the conditions of economic crisis had a potential to destabilize much broader structures. In times of crisis, people increasingly identify with the more immediate, smaller fields of meaning, which consist of both their specific economic conditions and a set of cultural symbols and practices. In Yugoslavia, this meant a heightened solidarity at the level of one's republic or imagined ethnic community. The uneven development of the republics ensured that their diverging economic interests would

sharpen political divisions between party organizations favoring decentralization and those in favor of a stronger federal state. The economic fragmentation was thus turning a political conflict over economic resources into constitutional conflicts over jurisdiction and sovereignty.

A second set of developments was the transformation of macro-scale socioeconomic structures that altered power relations at the global level. In particular, the successful democratic revolutions across the communist Eastern Europe provided democratic dissidents in Yugoslavia with new discursive capabilities. As Anthony Oberschall observes, political liberalization elsewhere “can set the terms of new debate and contention, create expectations of reform, and provide models that were unthinkable earlier” (Oberschall, 1996, p.95). Indeed, the Yugoslav communist discourse shared some of the same semiotic commonplaces with other regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. With the collapse of these states, it lost the echo of this joint resonance machine of communist narratives, myths and symbols. Moreover, the revolutions across the communist bloc provided specific resources to Yugoslav ethno-nationalists. The rise of Czech, Polish, Estonian, Georgian and numerous other ethno-national movements amidst the demise of communist hegemony called for reassessment of who one sympathized with and who one had cultural and historical commonalities with. The TV images of resilient popular uprisings against communist party-state regimes circulated affective sensibilities of steadfast masses who demanded freedom from what they saw as illegitimate political monopolies. They thus served a source of both models for collective action and affective energies that could be deployed toward challenging the dominant narratives in Yugoslavia. Furthermore, in the new international environment Yugoslavia lost its Western economic partners at a time when its ailing economy needed them the most. For four decades, Yugoslavia had held special access to Western aid in exchange for neutrality and military capacity to deter the spread of the Warsaw Pact (Woodward, 1995, p. 104). With the dramatic weakening of Soviet influence, this Cold War role diminished in relevance.

The mounting crisis-generated sentiments of discontent constituted new affective opportunities for dissident activism insofar as they could be channeled toward amplifying the resonance of challenging acts. Yet, since the regime maintained its coercive capacities, this did not mean that the dissidents could freely voice their agenda. Indeed, the new affective climate was most significant as a source of opportunities for specifying the already available semiotic commonplaces in novel ways. A campaign for republican independence was premature, for

example, but nationalist agents could specify the rhetorical commonplaces of “economic sovereignty” and “democracy” to demand further expansion of the republican capacities. The Slovene activists thus began to demand the creation of ethnically homogenous units in the Yugoslav army, and the confinement of Slovene recruits within the boundaries of their own republic (Woodward, 1995, p.75). A more consequential discursive turn toward ethno-nationalism occurred in Serbia with the September 1986 publication of a draft memorandum by Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU- *Srpska Akademija Nauka I Umetnosti*). The content of the memorandum radically violated the boundaries of permissible discourse by challenging the existing constitutional order and linking the Yugoslav socioeconomic condition to ethno-national grievances. It claimed that the 1974 Yugoslav constitution served as the ideological prerequisite for separatism and fragmentation of the Serb nation. It also laid blame for economic decline in Serbia on economic exploitation at the hands of Slovenia and Croatia (Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1986). The excerpts of the memorandum reached a broad audience by being published in *Vecernje Novosti*, a daily newspaper with one of the highest circulations in Serbia. The document became a subject of official condemnations but also of widespread public reactions in Serbia, many of which were positive.

But why was the dissident opinion of a group of intellectuals so important for shaping the public mood in Serbia in ways that undermined the stability of the existing discursive structures? The structural landscape here contained the seeds of its own transformation in the enunciative modalities that recognized SANU as the highest authority in Serbia on scientific and educational matters. To understand how this recognition could have such broad political relevance, it is useful to first complement and deepen the notion of enunciative modalities with Pierre Bourdieu’s (1997) concept of cultural capital, which offers another view of the social processes that delimit who can speak, and with what performative capacities. Bourdieu sees cultural capital in forms of knowledge, skills and education that are convertible into a social recognition of legitimate competence. In this sense, an investment in education is not only about obtaining a desired occupation, but is also about moving into a discursive slot from which one can speak with authority. Bourdieu defines the learned skills and abilities as embodied cultural capital, or as property of its bearer. This is opposed to an objectivized, autonomous form of cultural capital, which refers to the socially constituted academic qualifications and other certificates of cultural competence that produce sharp differentiations between the most minor differences in the

embodied capital. This objectivized cultural capital makes a difference between the comparable embodied education of an autodidact and that which is academically sanctioned by legally guaranteed qualifications. The latter, as Bourdieu puts it, institutes the cultural capital by “collective magic” (1997, p.54).

In Serbia, SANU was an institution of such “magical” powers *par excellence*. Formed in 1886 under the name of the Serbian Royal Academy, and promulgated by the then-Serbian king Milan Obrenovic, SANU had been recognized as the highest scientific and educational institution in Serbia for a century. The Academy’s status conferred large cultural capital on its members, distinguishing them as leading authorities in a variety of scientific and artistic disciplines. SANU membership included some of the most celebrated figures in Yugoslav history, including a world-famed inventor Nikola Tesla and Nobel laureate Ivo Andric. The enunciative modalities of the 1986 draft memorandum, produced by SANU’s 16-member committee, thus ensured that the publication would be broadly legitimized as coming from a foremost expert authority. Moreover, the interconnectedness of social sciences, economics, philosophy and literature with the political realm meant that the political preferences of SANU-member historians, philosophers, economists and writers could be resonantly framed as an objective, scientific reality. When made by leading economists, philosophers and historians, a political interpretation of the general economic condition in terms of the alleged exploitation of Serbia, or a performative amplification of the plight of Kosovo Serbs as “genocide”, come across as mere descriptions. The immense cultural capital of the group translates into a performative ability to mobilize the sensibilities of admiration, trust and intrigue that both draws exceptional attention to the group’s performances and shapes the more deliberative interpretations of them. Indeed, the memorandum’s narratives of Serb national victimization and the political imperative of national unity would continue to constitute the performative structure of Serb nationalist discourse as it began to produce mass mobilization in the years to come. SANU-member dissidents thus constituted an embryo of what would become a much broader coalition. As chapter 3 will discuss, this included Dobrica Cosic, Jovan Raskovic and Milorad Ekmečić, the distinguished members of SANU who did not directly participate in the drafting of the memorandum but were heavily involved in the creation of SDS BiH.

While the disquieting tone of the SANU memorandum changed the affective climate in ways that affected public opinion in Serbia, greater political opportunities were needed for Serb

nationalism to emerge as a dominant force in the Yugoslav discursive space. After all, the regime typically silenced mono-ethnic political interpretations that assigned blame on other Yugoslav nations, for such discourse constituted a severe violation of its policy of Yugoslav “brotherhood and unity”. The regime also cracked down on the criticism of its policies. A crucial moment in the conjuncture of structures occurred when the dissidents found allies within the highest ranks of the party-state. As with human resources of any social structures, the communist party consisted not of a homogenous group of like-minded people but of unique human personalities with multiple desires, goals, loyalties and varying degrees of belief in the party’s discourse. The legitimization crises of the mainstream narratives expanded the terrain for competition within the dominant coalition. In Serbia of the late 1980s, the increasing dissatisfaction with economic policies, charges of corruption leveled against the bureaucrats and the spread of the themes of national victimization had produced a discursive opening for emergence of a savior. Stepping into this slot was not a dissident activist, but the communist party’s apparatchik Slobodan Milosevic. As the events would show, SANU-member dissidents did not have to overcome the regime’s coercive capacities to broaden their activism. Milosevic turned those same capacities in service of Serb nationalism.

It was not a coincidence that Milosevic’s rise as a Serb national leader began in 1987 with mobilization of grievances of Kosovo Serbs, and only months after the publication of the SANU memorandum. In Kosovo, the Yugoslav ethno-national categorizations had perhaps the most palpable referent in local self-understandings and lived experiences, as they were underpinned by sharp linguistic and cultural differentiations between Serbs and Albanians. The differences had been deeply politicized, with the constitutional status of Kosovo being the most ethnicized issue in Yugoslav politics. The 1974 Yugoslav constitution had produced a widespread sense of frustration in Serbia for giving broad powers to the provincial government of Kosovo, which, as they alleged, allowed the Albanian majority to discriminate against Serbs living in the province. These included Serb communists within the structures of power whose expressions of nationalist grievances over the status of the province had been creating tension within the Yugoslav League of Communists for decades, even in times of relative stability (Dizdarevic, 2000, p.185).

In December of 1987, Milosevic was elected president of the League of Communists of Serbia. By then, he had aligned his interpretation of the political moment in Serbia and

Yugoslavia with the views of the nationalist intelligentsia as stated in the SANU memorandum. With Milosevic in control of the media, nationalism gained a large advantage in the Serbian marketplace of meanings. In the next two years, Milosevic used his growing popularity to launch what became known as the anti-bureaucratic revolution. His regime joined forces with grassroots activists in organizing mass protests against political opponents who occupied the highest offices of Serbian provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, as well as the federal republic of Montenegro. Indeed, the mobilizing power of Milosevic's discourse was constituted through a reciprocal affective exchange between the Serb leader and the masses of discontented Serbs. As Nebojsa Vladislavljevic (2008) observes in his study of Serbia's anti-bureaucratic revolution, elite engineering and grassroots activism contributed to protest activities in Kosovo in roughly equal amounts. Milosevic did not begin his rise by introducing new grievances or bringing back historical national aspirations. Rather, he mobilized the existing frustration among Serbs regarding the constitutional status of Kosovo, and performatively amplified it to gain support for radical solutions that departed from the party-state's established methods of dealing with popular discontent.

By 1989, the strategy of protest politics succeeded in forcing resignations of governments of Vojvodina, Kosovo and Montenegro, and replacing them with Milosevic's loyalists. The autonomies of Kosovo and Vojvodina were rolled back, while at the same time the two provinces retained seats in the federal presidency. This allowed Serbia's president to control four out of eight seats in the presidency, an arrangement that radically and dangerously disturbed the interrepublican balance at the federal level. This was a critical moment in ethnicization of Yugoslav politics, as it raised stakes in the debates over sovereignty rights. Problem definitions shifted from the themes of the competing economic logics to those of national domination. Since the issue of sovereignty implicated ethno-national rights, the political conflict produced a spike in the levels of Serb and Slovene national solidarity. In 1989, Serbia's regime initiated a process of economic disintegration of Yugoslavia by announcing a boycott of Slovenian merchandise in response to the latter's opposition to Milosevic's policies in Kosovo.

Milosevic's popularity, however, could not be reduced to his embrace of nationalism. Many protesters were mobilized by issues unrelated to nationalism, such as the unaccountability of high officials, industrial relations and popular participation in politics. Indeed, Milosevic's regime gained legitimacy not by dropping the old semiotic commonplaces, but by expanding the

existing party discourse to absorb a wider variety of them. The grievances over the status of Kosovo were sometimes framed as a struggle for Yugoslavia and against Albanian secessionism, and at other times in terms of a Serb national revival. The protesters joined ethno-national grievances to the semiotic commonplaces of the socialist Yugoslavia, displaying the Yugoslav flags, Tito's pictures and singing the Yugoslav national anthem (Avtokefalis, 2013). These framing tactics, along with support from the mass media and parts of the ruling elites, served to delegitimize any use of coercion against the protestors. The mobilization of diverse affective sensibilities also helped Milosevic win support of many pro-Yugoslav Serbs and even non-Serbs.

With Milosevic's embrace of alternative meanings and increased dissident activities in Slovenia and Croatia, the party-states discursive hegemony in Yugoslavia began to rapidly erode. Nationalism, criticism of the ruling officials, and even calls for political liberalization were no longer taboos. The prohibitions were weakening, the inter-elite conflict escalating, and the non-regime discourse coalitions emerging across Yugoslavia. By 1989, proto-political groups, such as the environmentalists, pacifists, and public debating clubs emerged in several republics. The conjuncture of structures favored the rise of nationalist alternatives, however. The rising discourse of Serb national victimization was expanding its register of grievances and national enemies. In addition to the alleged plight of Kosovo Serbs and Serbia's economic exploitation at the hands of Slovenia and Croatia, the Milosevic-controlled media also began to allege discrimination and mistreatment of Croatian Serbs. In a newly liberalized environment, this Serb nationalist offensive provided an affective opening for the ascent of Croatian nationalism. In 1989, Croatian dissidents led by Franjo Tudjman were forming the Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ). With HDZ's emergence, Serb nationalists gained a formidable rival, a legitimization resource, and a partner in ethnicization of Yugoslav politics. At the end of the decade, the main political debates remained those of constitutional arrangements, but the arguments were increasingly made using the polarizing nationalist language rather than economic logic. The governments of Croatia and Slovenia began to openly call for a confederation, while Serbia rolled back the autonomy of its provinces and demanded a strong federal government. Yet, it would be incorrect to interpret the developments in the 1980s as a decisive and irreversible turn toward a self-reinforcing, autonomous dynamic of Serbo-Croat ethno-nationalist rivalry that would devastate the Yugoslav state. As late as 1989, the locus of nationalist activity in Yugoslavia was still on the competing claims of Serb and Albanian ethnic

politics pertaining to the issue of Kosovo. In 1989, JNA registered 550 nationalist activities, 315 of which pertained to Albanian nationalism. It also recorded 39 illegal groups, 35 of which were Albanian (“Armija Mora Sacuvati Opstejugoslovenski Karakter”, 1990).

The crisis of the party-state culminated at the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of Yugoslav League of Communists held in January of 1990. It ended along the same lines of tension where it began—the conflicting visions of Yugoslav future between the party organizations of Slovenia and Serbia. As the Slovene delegation walked out of the congress, eventually followed by the Croatians, the second Yugoslavia had all but ceased to exist. In the coming months, the republican elites would formally permit political pluralism and organize multi-party elections. The discursive era of relatively stable and fixed meanings was replaced by fluidities of open competition between a diversity of new political movements and their advocated meta-narratives. For the first time in decades, Yugoslav political leaders competed for votes of their constituencies. Yet, this was not an even race. The preceding years of ethno-politicization had given an advantage to ethno-nationalists. As the end of the communist hegemony created new possibilities for political activism throughout Yugoslavia, the escalating nationalist rivalry between its two largest republics, Serbia and Croatia, would have a decisive influence on the structure of political opportunities in the rest of the republics. This included Bosnia-Herzegovina, the republic that largely stood on the sidelines of the inter-republican conflict but whose stakes in the rise of nationalism were the greatest.

**From Yugoslavisation to ethnicization in Bosnia-Herzegovina.** The expanding Serb ethno-nationalist discourse coalition, which would establish SDS BiH by mid-1990, sought to heighten Serb ethno-national solidarity across Yugoslavia. However, Yugoslavia was a highly uneven social terrain, as the republics had their own social dynamics, a separate party-state organization, and a distinct discursive landscape. The emergence of SDS thus must be situated within an understanding of the more specific configuration of political opportunities for BiH. The decades of communist discursive hegemony had produced palpable effects on collective self-understandings in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Bosnian party organization was both the most conservative one in Yugoslavia, and the one most deeply rooted in the society. As the only republic with multiple titular national categories, its leadership had taken great care to close off the field of public discourse to any activities that could be interpreted as nationalist. It was also implementing a policy of equal national representation in the leading government posts,

colloquially known as the “ethnic key”. Ethnic self expression was accepted for individuals, but not for organizations and social networks. While the “ethnic key” was a principal consideration for electing top officials, the elites acted as representatives of BiH as a single political community (Donia & Fine, 1994). Until the late 1980s, there was no record of confrontation between leaders on any ethnic issue. One could hardly find instances of ethnic political grievances (Andjelic, 2003, p.41).

Yet, the effects of the communist regime of truth on national self-understandings of Bosnians varied considerably across space. The hegemonic performativity interacted with the uneven micro-structures at the local level, thus encountering varying degrees of resistance. In general, the sense of Yugoslav “brotherhood and unity” had taken a firmer hold among the population of urban areas than in the traditionally mono-ethnic villages. The counter-discourse that invited regime’s repression was particularly resilient in the localities that harbored ethnic resentment stemming from the World War II-era ethnically motivated atrocities. At the local level, such counter-discourse was often fostered by religious leaders, and it occasionally erupted during the instances of highly charged individual feuds. From late 1959 until mid 1962, for example, the BiH authorities registered an average of 8 acts per day across the republic involving chauvinistic comments deemed detrimental to “brotherhood and unity”(Bergholz, 2013, p.691). These occasional situations testify to the ongoing presence of the ethnically based mental schemas, or cognitive/affective counterparts to the official ethno-national categorizations. Notwithstanding the moments of individual excesses, however, the lived experiences of rural Bosnians were characterized by both preservation of ethnic differentiations and dense social interaction with the ethnic “other”.

Furthermore, the Bosnian field of collective identifiers was not only being transformed by the discursive politics of “brotherhood and unity”, but also by the parallel processes of industrialization and urbanization. In the Yugoslav economy, Bosnia was responsible for production of raw materials. The development of large industrial plants, coupled with free housing construction, accelerated the migration from villages to urban centers. The deeply agricultural society was being transformed. In 1948, 72 percent of the economy was in agriculture. By 1971, that number was cut in half, to 36.6 (Andjelic, 2003, p.29). The literacy rate rose steadily. Industrial workplaces became sites of interethnic interaction and cultural exchange. Life in the increasingly ethnically diverse towns and cities was providing new,

personable experiences of the ethnic “other” that challenged the pre-existing affective investments in the essentialist stereotypes. Urban schooling, easy access to printed press and mass media technology served as outlets for dissemination of the hegemonic discourse. The census data confirm that these dynamics created distance from the pre-communist forms of national self-understandings. In the 1981 census 7.91 percent of Bosnians bypassed the choices of a “Serb”, “Croat” or “Muslim” to declare “Yugoslav” as their ethno-national community, despite it not being offered as an official national category (Meier, 2005, p.21). This number was the greatest of all Yugoslav republics, and was more than 5 times higher than a decade earlier. Moreover, the trend of transgressing old ethnic boundaries was likely to continue. In 1981, 16.8 percent of all marriages were between partners belonging to a different ethnic heritage (Gagnon, 2006, p.42).

However, this trend was dependent on the reproduction of the communist discourse. With its erosion in BiH at the end of the 1980s, the course would be reversed from de-ethnicization to renewed ethnicization. Yet, the BiH party-state did not decline as a result of nationalist dissidence within the republic. It was a result of the conjuncture of several massive corruption scandals within BiH and the developments outside of BiH that destabilized the broader Yugoslav discursive order. The process that led to the regime’s thorough de-legitimization began in 1987 with a massive corruption scandal involving the highly successful *Agrokomerc* agricultural conglomerate based in the town of Velika Kladusa. The investigators uncovered that the conglomerate financed its activities through thousands of promissory notes that could not be refunded. *Agrokomerc* owed money to dozens of banks, in the amount that roughly equaled two and a half years of profit of the entire Bosnian economy (Andjelic, 2003, p.57). The size of the scandals had deeply damaged the party, creating internal divisions and rapid erosion of legitimacy at a time of the already heightened economic discontent. As a result, a group of leading Bosnian communist politicians, headed by a widely respected vice-president of federal presidency Hamdija Pozderac, were forced to resign. Many observers have identified the resultant leadership vacuum as decisive for defeat of the communists in the 1990 elections. Neven Andjelic went so far to conclude that “had this not happened, there would have been a very different situation in Bosnia in 1990 when the multiparty elections took place” (Andjelic, 2003, p.20). A similar assessment came from a high-ranking member of the BiH League of Communists of the time who is currently a leading Serb advocate of the “ethnic conflict”

paradigm and ethnic partition of BiH. Amid his otherwise structuralist understandings, the academic assessed that the League could have deflected nationalist challenges had it not experienced the scandal-induced leadership changes that brought to the forefront “third-tier”, less experienced, and less ethnically balanced leaders (Research Interview, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014).

The party-state’s eroding legitimacy was evidenced by the increasing dissidence. In September of 1987, economic grievances drove Sarajevo students to the streets. This was a first public challenge of official policies in decades (Andjelic, 2003, p.81). Strike activities spiked, and the media grew more independent. Youth organizations created newspapers whose reporting was distanced from official discourse, such as *Nasi Dani* and *Valter*. The ruling discourse coalition itself cracked, as the elites engaged in mutual criticism and blame. The discursive space evolved from the most tightly controlled to the most liberal one in Yugoslavia. The scandal-driven discontent weakened the power relations that had been linking the party to the affectively pleasing resonant rhetorical commonplaces of “democracy”, “working class”, “equality”, “prosperity” and “*Jugoslovenstvo*”. From the state of tentative fixation, these commonplaces began to float. This was an opportunity for dissident actors to produce novel meanings by linking them in new directions. Yet, despite the discursive liberalization, there was no organized nationalist activism until the spring of 1990. The general mood of anger and disenchantment was directed at the undifferentiated corrupt elites.

**Political pluralisation and expansion of opportunities in BiH.** The emergence of new discourse coalitions in Yugoslavia that stood in opposition to the League of Communists did not wait for the lifting of the ban on non-communist political organizations. Legal provisions were secondary to the de-legitimization of the discursive hegemony that underpinned them. The first alternative political movement to be formed in Yugoslavia was the Slovene Peasants’ alliance, formed as early as May of 1988. In 1989, Croatian nationalists organized a response to the Milosevic-led Serbian nationalism by forming the HDZ of Croatia. By December of 1989, 18 alternative parties and organization had emerged in Serbia (Djindjic, 1990). In BiH, the first non-communist organization in BiH was a Green Party, formed in July 1989 by a group of professors and students from the Sarajevo Law Faculty.

The diversifying field of meanings was directing the thinking of Bosnians in novel directions, and progressively eroding all rationales for maintaining the political monopoly of the communist party-state. In a poll conducted in May 1989 by a BiH Institute for Interethnic

Relations Studies, 58 percent of Bosnians declared in favor of maintaining the single-party system (Sarac, 1990a). In a similar poll published by a Zagreb-based Center for Marketing Research in January 1990, that number had dipped to 34 percent (Zadravec, 1990). After the Yugoslav party-state's final demise at the January 1990 14<sup>th</sup> Congress, the lifting of the ban became a mere formality. By the end of that month, the Croatian parliament drafted a law providing for a multi-party system. On February 21st, the BiH Parliament made a similar move by adopting the Law on Citizens' Association. Due to sensitivity to ethno-nationalism, however, the BiH Law continued the ban on political associations that were based on ethno-national identity.

Among the new parties that emerged in early 1990 several would grow into principal agents of ethno-politicization that was still to come. On February 17th, Serbian Democratic Party of Croatia was founded in the town of Knin. The first public appearance of the party, and the psychiatrist Jovan Raskovic as its president, was attended by a crowd of 7,000 (Cetnik, 1990). The leadership of the Croatian SDS had dense ties with the intellectual and political elites in Serbia. Raskovic was both a member of SANU and a close friend of its most celebrated member, Dobrica Cosic. Forming at a time when the Milosevic regime embraced SANU's narratives of the sociopolitical moment, the SDS of Croatia served as little more than an organizational embodiment of a much broader Serb nationalist discourse coalition. While this coalition shared a common master frame, the party's distinctness came from its collective action tasks that targeted specific issues of Croatian Serbs. Its future sister party, SDS BiH, would have the same role for Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Croatian SDS had only six weeks between its founding and the first Croatian elections to develop its organizational infrastructure, eventually losing the campaign for Serb votes to the reformed Croatian League of Communists (SKH-*Savez Komunisti Hrvatske*). The party was victorious in only three municipalities. However, as Yugoslav ethnicization escalated, the role of Croatian SDS would correspondingly rise.

BiH's new pluralist scene initially lagged behind the other republics. The first official political organization in BiH was a Democratic Party based in Montenegro, which established a branch in Mostar on March 12. By the end of that month, six official political parties were active in BiH, three of which were based in the republic. In contrast, there were twenty parties in Croatia, and 17 in Serbia (Petrovic, 1990). Also by the end of March, there was a first public gathering of activists with the intent to create an ethno-national party in BiH. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, a

group of Muslim activists held a meeting of the initiation committee for forming a Muslim party in BiH (Idrizovic, 1990a). In order to circumscribe the ban on ethno-national parties, the group decided to avoid any ethnic identifiers in the nascent party's name, naming it the Party for Democratic Action (SDA). There was little doubt that the party was Muslim, however. The 38 names on the initiation committee included mostly Muslim political dissidents and religious leaders. Among them were the future first president of independent BiH Alija Izetbegovic and the top imam of the Islamic community, Mustafa Cerić (Alihodzic, 1990). Two months later, SDA held its founding assembly in Sarajevo, attended by 1,500 people. The long-time Muslim dissident Alija Izetbegovic was elected president.

Several ethnically-based civic organizations also emerged in BiH during this period. While these organizations proclaimed a non-political character, they contributed to the sharpening of ethnic boundaries by applying an ethnic interpretative frame to social issues and cultural practices. One such association was the gathering of Muslim intellectuals into a Forum for Protection of Human Rights of Muslims. Its leader, renowned academic Muhamed Filipovic, was also affiliated with the nascent SDA, although he turned down proposals to become the party's leader (Research Interview, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013). A group of Sarajevo-based Serb academics initiated renewal of a Serb cultural society of Prosvjeta. The leader of the initiative, Professor Vojislav Maksimovic, was at the same time engaged in early activities on forming a Serb political party in BiH.

The activities of a variety of new agents were eroding the ban on ethno-national parties in BiH of any legitimacy it may have still had in early 1990, and thus expanding opportunities for further ethno-national activism. Powerful ethno-national parties emerged in other republics, mono-ethnic cultural and intellectual organizations within the BiH attracted publicity, and Muslim ethno-nationals successfully formed a party under a non-national name. Furthermore, independent media, such as *Dani*, published heavily against the ban. In May of 1990, the Constitutional Court of BiH initiated the proceedings for reassessing the legality of the ban, finding it unconstitutional on June 12 (Zivkovic, 1990b). In August, the BiH parliament officially permitted the formation of ethno-national parties, aligning the law with discursive realities.

**The dynamic of initial ethno-politicization in BiH.** By the time of SDS's emergence, Bosnians had already experienced significant exposure to ethno-nationalist discourse. This

section discusses the initial ethnicization of the Bosnian field of meanings, which was largely the effect of nationalisms elsewhere in Yugoslavia. The section identifies five distinct avenues of ethnicization: (1) the ethnically divisive Milosevic's policies, (2) the lexical expansion of Serb and Croat ethno-nationalist discourse to BiH, (3) the resonance of HDZ's victory in Croatia, (4) the rise of SDA within BiH, and (5) first cases of nationalist excesses and violence.

*Anti-bureaucratic revolution as an axis of ethno-differentiation.* Prior to 1990, an unambiguous display of ethno-nationalism was likely to be condemned by a majority of Bosnians of all ethnic backgrounds. The performative structure of Milosevic's discourse was designed to avoid this backlash by moderating its principal ethno-nationalist orientation. Two characteristics of this structure are significant for understanding Milosevic's ability to sharpen BiH's then-pale and intermittent ethnic boundaries. First, Serb nationalism was intertwined with the family of semiotic commonplaces of *Jugoslovenstvo*, whose positive emotional associations could obscure, dilute and compensate for the introduction of stigmatized nationalist symbols and narratives. Despite their largely mono-ethnic character, the 'meetings of truth' that constituted Milosevic's 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' were dominated by Yugoslav symbols, and framed as defense of Yugoslavia. Milosevic himself was portrayed not as a nationalist, but an alternative to it. As Serbian right-wing nationalists formed Serb National Renewal (SNO- *Srpska Narodna Obnova*) in December of 1989 and HDZ emerged as a force in Croatian politics, Milosevic's ruling discourse coalition was equally critical of both nationalisms. Serbian media took care not to portray Tudjman as Milosevic's nationalist rival, drawing instead parallels between Tudjman and the then-SNO leader Vuk Draskovic. Second, Serb nationalism was initially directed toward the status of Kosovo, and the protection of the allegedly endangered Kosovo Serbs. Strong pro-Yugoslav sentiments in BiH, coupled with the perception of Kosovo as a cradle of Albanian separatism, provided rich resources for effective legitimization of Milosevic's crackdown to the Bosnian audience.

Indeed, the initial differentiation over Milosevic's policies did not produce neat ethnic divisions. There were more than a few non-Serbs who sympathized with Milosevic's 'defense' of Yugoslavia as well as Serbs who criticized him for nationalist excesses. Yet, in addition to *Jugoslovenstvo*, ethnic Serbs could also identify with Serb ethno-national commonplaces and the narrative of the plight of their co-nationals in Kosovo. They were thus more likely to give support to Milosevic. First significant cracks within the BiH party-state that had a strong ethnic

component occurred in September of 1988 regarding an attempt by Kosovar Serbs to hold a ‘meeting of truth’ in the Bosnian town of Jajce. The Central Committee of SKBiH prohibited the meeting, citing the rule against mono-national gatherings. The top leadership remained united around this decision, reflecting a united stance of keeping BiH out of reach of Milosevic’s policies (Research Interview, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013). However, signs of division emerged at the local level, with some local party organizations with a Serb majority expressing dissent.

The divisions became more serious in the aftermath of the collapse of the 14<sup>th</sup> congress. The demise of the Yugoslav League of Communists had left SKBiH in an awkward position. If it continues participation in the rump Yugoslav league, it submits to the domination of Milosevic-led League of Communists of Serbia. If it does not, it follows in the footsteps of Slovenia and Croatia and accelerates the disintegrative processes. Ethno-differentiation within SKBiH escalated at rump meeting of the Central Committee of Yugoslav League of Communists held at the end of March 1990. The BiH delegation opposed Serbia’s proposal for continuation of the rump 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Yugoslav League of Communists, putting forth several of its own proposals on the future of the Yugoslav League of Communists. After being outvoted on each proposal, then-leader of SK BiH Nijaz Durakovic and five other members of the 18-member BiH delegation walked out. In the aftermath, BiH party membership became divided between praise and condemnation of the walkout and policies of its leadership. Although the division still did not neatly follow ethnic lines, ethnicity was its principal determinant. Local organizations disapproving Durakovic’s move were in Serb-majority areas. Some even stepped out of their municipal committees in protest (Sarac, 1990b). In areas with preserved strong ethnic differentiations, such as Gacko, the divide of opinion was fully consistent with ethnic affiliations (Karabeg, 1990). This internal ethnicization dramatically weakened the party ahead of the upcoming multi-party elections. As Durakovic, himself of Muslim ethnic background, led the transformation of SKBiH from a party-state to an incumbent in the multi-party elections, many of its members, sympathetic to Milosevic, began leaving the party. Some would find a new political organization fully aligned with Milosevic’s policies in the coming months- SDS BiH.

*Discursive agitation from Serbia and Croatia.* While the ethnicization in BiH initially corresponded to policy differentiations, this was not a matter of simple automaticity. Both the Serbian regime and the leading Croatian nationalists also actively intervened in BiH’s discursive field to promote it. This included a discursive offensive to stabilize the messages of “interethnic

rivalry”, “incompatibility of civilizations” and “dangerous ethno-religious other” into rhetorical commonplaces. These were preferably to replace, or at a minimum marginalize the existing commonplaces of “neighborliness”, “togetherness”, “brotherhood and unity”, “*Jugoslovenstvo*”, a regional Bosnian sense of belonging, and other discursive material that had either produced dense and peaceful inter-ethnic interactions or entirely moved Bosnia beyond ethnicity as a primary category of belonging. A person of a different ethnic background was to be perceived less as a neighbor, a colleague, a friend, or a fellow Yugoslav, and more as an object of suspicion that harbored a desire for ethnic domination. In late 1989, Serb victimization discourse was thus increasingly absorbing the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina into its lexical register of threats against the Serb nation. The periodicals *Intervju* and *Duga* published multiple articles alleging that radical Islam was on the rise in BiH, and existentially threatening non-Muslims (Cigar, 2001). In November, BiH representative in Yugoslav Presidency Bogic Bogicevic learned of secret activities by Serbian State Security in eastern Bosnia during an argument about the situation in BiH with Serbia’s representative, Borisav Jovic. The latter angrily threw on the table a report stating that Serbs were moving out of the eastern part of the republic as a result of Muslim domination (Research Interview, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

As their nationalist rivalry escalated in early 1990, the Serbian regime and Croatian HDZ radicalized the activities at influencing the opinions of co-nationals in BiH. Serbian media gave large publicity to meetings in support of Milosevic’s Kosovo policies that were occasionally held in the predominantly Serb areas of BiH. *Politika* reported heavily on the splits within the SKBiH, frequently providing space for Durakovic’s critics. Yet, the locus of this discursive agitation was not so much on directly mobilizing the suppressed sentiments of the ethnic “self” as on creating anxiety about the ethnic “other”. *Politika* commentators engaged in paranoid cartography, speculating that the Islamic Community of BiH was working on a global Islamic agenda to create a “Green Transversal”, or a contiguous Muslim state from Indonesia to BiH (Djurcic, 1990). The discourse of the Serbian intellectuals also increasingly referenced the Islamic threat. Dobrica Cosic thematized it in his widely publicized commentaries. *NIN* serialized parts of a book by an academic Vojislav Lubarda, *Svileni Gajtan* (Silk Cord), which presented the status of Serbs in BiH as that of silent torture and exodus in face of an Islamic desire for domination. The rising HDZ intensified activities at raising the levels of Croat ethno-national solidarity in BiH. Tudjman and other leading HDZ officials were making multiple public claims that the BiH was a

Croatian land. HDZ was also rapidly expanding its organizational infrastructure in BiH by creating the informal initiation committees. According to HDZ estimates, the party had 40 initiation committees and up to 50,000 members in BiH by April (Sarac, 1990d).

*The ethnicizing victory of HDZ.* HDZ's victory in Croatia's elections of April 1990 signified a decisive shift of power relations in favor of ethno-nationalism. The extensive overlap between the two fields of meaning ensured that the shift in Croatia would also create ethnicizing pressures in BiH. The new regime utilized the newfound power to ethnicize the Croatian state through adoption of new symbols and constitutional changes, which had the effect of accelerating ethno-differentiation in BiH. For many Croats living in BiH, the newly adopted checkerboard Croatian flag was associated with national history, collective belonging, and, ultimately, a sense of self. For Serbs, it was associated with the World War II-era fascist Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatska*- NDH) whose *Ustase* forces had committed mass killings of their co-nationals.

HDZ's victory was all the more important considering that the party's ambiguous views of NDH had already placed it into the slot of an existential threat in Serb nationalist discourse. In February of 1990, Tudjman had provoked widespread condemnations with a statement that "NDH was not merely a quisling creation, but also an expression of a thousand-year old aspiration of Croat people to have an independent state" (Zadravec, 1990b). In the aftermath, Serbian media began to replace complex narratives of discrete discrimination against Croatian Serbs with simple, but dramatic messages of a palpable existential threat. For weeks afterward, *Politika* published reactions to the statement that portrayed HDZ as the new *Ustase*. It also published feuilletons about World War II atrocities against Serbs. Belgrade's weekly *NIN* featured a knife with letters "NDH" written on the handle (Knezevic, 1990) (See figure 1). Moreover, HDZ officials made explicit their claims to the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, thus raising the stakes for its population in Croatian politics. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, in the aftermath of HDZ's electoral victory, the party's newly elected deputy to the Croatian Parliament, Sime Dodan, made a triumphant statement that Bosnia was a Croatian land, and that Croatian flag would wave on top of the eastern Bosnian mountain of Romanija (Zanic, 2007, p. 215). The statement was sure to provoke emotional upheaval among the population of Romanija, whose ethnic mix was that of self-identifying Serbs and Muslims, with very few Croats.

**Figure 1. A Knife With Letters “NDH” Written on The Handle Superimposed on the Map Of Croatia, Published in NIN on Page 10 of the March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1990 Edition. The Article Reported on the Assembly of HDZ.**



**The rise of SDA.** In the weeks prior to the formation of SDS BiH, SDA was quickly establishing itself as a political force. The party attracted considerable publicity for having well known dissidents, renowned academics, Islamic clergy and even popular folk singers among its leading ranks. With the emergence of SDA as an agent of Muslim national mobilization, the

processes of ethno-homogenization expanded to a discursive terrain unreachable to Serb and Croat nationalisms. It also created discursive asymmetry that invited the formation of a Serb ethno-national party in BiH. The rise of Muslim and Croat parties had made the absence of a similar party for the third, Serb ethno-national category increasingly palpable. This was the sensibility that the existing Serb nationalist discourse coalition radicalized by escalating its ethnic “othering”. The mainstream Serbian media portrayed the nascent party’s leader Alija Izetbegovic, a longtime Muslim dissident, as both a leader of an entire Muslim ethnic nation and personification of the rising Islamic threat (Duric, 1990a). As two senior SDS leaders of the time have estimated, without the formation of SDA and HDZ, the support of self-identifying ethnic Serbs for SDS would have been significantly lower (Research Interviews, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 & November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

*Ethnically Motivated Incidents as Political Opportunities and Constraints.* Unrest is a distinct dimension of the political opportunity structures for two related reasons. First, it typically refers to emotionally-charged events that bring their own set of dynamics. Violence escalates the emotions that trigger it, turning mistrust into fear or animosity into hatred. In the crudest instance, it leads to simple dichotomization of friends and enemies. The radicalizing attitudes make further violent response more likely. Second, politically motivated violence is not always instrumentalized by political elites. The elites may not desire violence, yet it can be triggered by individual local non-elite actors. Conversely, local actors may reject violent intentions of the elites. In this sense, unrest has its own causal autonomy, and deserves a distinct discussion.

Despite several years of rising nationalisms in the neighboring republics, there were few publicized cases of nationalist excesses in BiH prior to 1990. In 1989, the most significant incident with clear ethno-religious connotations was the throwing of a dead pig in front of a mosque in Trebinje (Andjelic, 2003, p.71). The first mass expression of nationalism occurred on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1990 at an ecological protest in the Croat-majority town of Duvno (now Tomislavgrad) in Western Herzegovina. The gathering acquired a Croat nationalist dimension when the crowd protested the arrival of BiH’s special police forces with chants “this is not Kosovo”, “this is Croatia” and “long live Croatia”. Another incident occurred in Western Herzegovina on July 2<sup>nd</sup> when a column of fans celebrating a Yugoslav win at the 1990 World Cup drove from the ethnically diverse town of Capljina to a nearby mono-ethnic Croat town of

Ljubuski. 400 to 500 people confronted them, resulting in a mass brawl with multiple injuries and a burned Yugoslav flag (Bekan, 1990a). Yet, the divide was not fully ethnicized, since the supporters of Yugoslavia included individuals belonging to all ethno-national categories.

The first incidents in Bosnia's ethnically heterogeneous areas that brought local residents in direct conflict were an outcome of workplace ethnicization. On March 2<sup>nd</sup> in Foca, the employees of a local transportation company *Focatrans* went on strike demanding resignation of the company's director, accusing him of nepotism and arrogance. Within a day, most Muslim employees stopped the strike amid rumors that Serb employees targeted the director because of his Muslim background. (Lucic, 1990a). Serb employees continued to demand the director's resignation, while Muslims now mobilized in his defense. This was the start of a prolonged conflict that would produce palpable ethnic divisions in the Foca area.

There were multiple other, smaller excesses in the ethnically diverse areas during the first half of 1990 that served to heighten ethno-national differentiations at the local level. 72 Muslims from the settlement of Skelani wrote a widely publicized letter to the governments of all six republics alleging a series of ethnically-motivated verbal and physical assaults by Serb perpetrators against local Muslims (Smajlovic, 1990). In Vlasenica, unsubstantiated rumors circulated regarding the presence of armed Serb *Chetnik* formations ("Cetnici iz mase", 1990). In Sarajevo, someone spray-painted "Serbs out of Bosnia" on one of the downtown buildings. In Brcko, a student spray painted Muslim nationalist messages on the monument of a Partisan war hero of Serb nationality ("Otkriveni autori nacionalistickih parola", 1990). He later publically apologized. In Janja, tombstones were desecrated in an orthodox cemetery (Rifatbegovic, 1990). While these incidents could have been committed by narrow groups of extremists or lone individuals, in times of ethno-politicization their potential consequences far exceeded the local scale. Indeed, they show that BiH was not free of ethnically based animosities and excesses. Yet, the excesses did not significantly harm the overall relations between Bosnians, which at this time appeared resistant to the processes of ethno-politicization.

At the ICTY trial of Radovan Karadzic, the majority of the defendant's witnesses assessed that there were no ethnic problems in their localities prior to the November 1990 victory of national parties, contradicting SDS's description of the conflict as rooted in longstanding animosities. Indeed, the case of *Focatrans* was the only episode that clearly produced significant ethnicization 'from below', and even then its effects were primarily local in scale. The

distribution of incidents also suggests the importance of microdynamics and spatial variance for the study of ethnicizing unrest. The cases predominantly occurred either in Western Herzegovina or the Drina valley of eastern Bosnia, both of whose discursive microstructure, as manifested in local sets of affective dispositions, made them particularly responsive to ethnicizing pressures. The former was a mono-ethnic area contiguous to Croatia whose population had maintained strong Croat ethnic self-understandings. The latter had been a site of some of the worst atrocities of World War II, which were in 1990 still in the living memory of many of its inhabitants. Considering that the communist-era taboos had all but collapsed by the spring of 1990, however, these cases offer little as evidence of suppressed ethnic tension in BiH. Generally, the republic was uneventful. Consequently, there is little to suggest that the non-elite nationalism significantly affected the political opportunity structures at this time.

The polling data provides additional insight into perceptions of ethnic groupness in BiH in the first half of 1990. A poll of 1,100 Bosnians published by the republic's Institute for Interethnic Relations Studies in March of 1990 found that 88 percent of respondents blamed leaders for the political situation, and only 16 percent predicted that ethno-national parties would have a significant influence on the developments (Sarac, 1990a). In April the same institute published the findings of a survey of randomly chosen 842 Bosnians, in which only 23.6 percent of Muslims and 19.8 percent of Serbs believed that religion was important when choosing a marriage partner. 11.4 percent of Serbs, 20.7 percent of Muslims and 14.1 percent of Croat supported the idea of a common Bosniak nation, while 24.5 percent of Muslims, 27 percent of Serbs and 19.3 percent of Croats supported abolition of all nations (Caric, 1990). Despite years of ethno-politicization in Yugoslavia, it appeared that there was still a wide discrepancy between the sentiments of much of BiH's population and the ontological order advocated by ethno-national discourse coalitions. By the time of SDS's founding in July of 1990, the discursive evolution had certainly made the homogenization of Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina around a single political party a more realistic political agenda than a year earlier. However, reaching this goal required further discursive/affective transformations.

*Path to the emergence of SDS BiH.* More specifically, the direction of Serb activism BiH was affected by the activities of Serb nationalist agents who initiated the formation of the Croatian SDS. The most influential were a group of SANU-member Serb academics who set out to expand the Serb nationalist discourse coalition from Serbia to Croatia and BiH by organizing

and supporting local activists. The initial conversations about forming a Serb ethno-national party in Croatia were held in Belgrade in the winter of 1990, a time of rapidly expanding opportunities for the emergence of new political movements. In addition to Dobrica Cosic and Jovan Raskovic, this circle included a Lawyer and Philosophy Professor Ljuba Tadic, as well as a Croatian-born writer and historian Dejan Medakovic (Djukic, 2001, p.168). These early discussions also involved several Croatian Serb activists, the most notable of which was president of a Serb Cultural Club *Zora* (Dawn) Jovan Opacic. In the aftermath, Raskovic and Opacic transformed the function of *Zora* into that of an organizational base of the political party of Croatian Serbs, which they decided to name Serb Democratic Party.

The rise of the Croatian SDS decisively shaped the emergence of a Serb ethno-national movement in BiH. Its leader, Jovan Raskovic, publically stated the intent of the Croatian SDS to extend into BiH as soon as its ban on ethno-national parties was lifted (Smajlovic & Habul, 1990). However, BiH's Law on Citizens' Organizations also prohibited parties based in other republics, requiring a future Serb party in BiH to have a separate organizational infrastructure. Indeed, several informal groups were formed within BiH by spring of 1990 with intent to politically mobilize Serbs of BiH. Yet, as chapter 3 will discuss, this activism was not entirely separated from that of the Croatian SDS. Jovan Raskovic and Dobrica Cosic coordinated the development of these groups into a single Serb party for BiH, which came to bear the same name as Raskovic's party in Croatia. The influence of these agents would fade over time, however, as the separate hierarchy for BiH served to build the stature of leading personalities of SDS BiH.

### **Political Possibilities and SDS as an Agent**

The second part of the chapter focuses on the interaction between the political opportunity structures and the agency of SDS. The structures weighed heavily on the decision-making of the party's leaders, shaping their tactics and strategies across time and space. They also affected the party's achieved proximity to the ultimate objective. In contrast to the more malleable and transitory tactics and strategies, this objective is a relatively stable, but distant and often highly abstract ideal-type sociopolitical scenario. In the case of SDS BiH, this scenario had two distinct dimensions. The first one was the transformation of a Serb ethno-national category in BiH into a palpable, well-bounded political group. The second one was the project of ensuring that all or a vast majority of Serbs continued to live in a single state. The discussion that follows traces the evolution of opportunities and constraints that the party encountered in pursuit of these goals.

**The political opportunity structure in the 1990 election campaign.** SDS's first large task was to gain general legitimacy as a representative of the Serb nation by winning a clear majority of Serb votes in the first multi-party elections scheduled for November 19<sup>th</sup>. Once in power, the party would gain new instruments for continuing the ethnicization and controlling the future political status of BiH. SDS's elections prospects were directly proportional to the level of ethnicization of BiH's discursive space. The ability of SDS BiH to elevate these levels was conditioned by four dynamic dimensions of the political opportunity structures of the time: the changing legal environment, the campaign behavior of other large parties, the escalating crisis in Croatia, and the ethnically motivated excesses.

*Legal opportunities and constraints.* While the Constitutional Court of BiH found the ban on ethno-national parties unconstitutional on June 12<sup>th</sup>, it *de jure* remained in place for another 7 weeks. It was only on July 31<sup>st</sup> that the BiH assembly passed the revised Election Law that officially lifted the ban ("Stranke i na nacionalnoj osnovi", 1990). In the meantime, the law enforcement practice attempted to balance between the letter of the law and the rapidly liberalizing political discourse. The BiH Secretariat of Internal Affairs (RSUP) allowed the initiation committee of SDS BiH to hold the party's founding assembly on the grounds that it was up to a registering court to determine whether the party was national or not ("Domacinu dozvoljeno, 'gostima' zabranjeno", 1990). Yet, the activities of SDS BiH on establishing local and regional branches were deemed illegal since the party held the assembly but was not yet registered. However, SDS BiH successfully worked around the ban. The party continued to expand its organizational infrastructure at the municipal level by establishing informal initiation committees. In Han-Pijesak, it held the founding assembly for the municipality under a modified name, adding the temporary prefix 'independent' before SDS. In Trebinje, the regional assembly for Herzegovina was held despite the ban, prompting the secretary of interior to threaten organizers with persecution ("Domacinu dozvoljeno, 'gostima' zabranjeno", 1990). Such vibrant ethno-national activism was rapidly eroding any justification for the ban, making it nearly obsolete before it was officially lifted. By the time SDS BiH was officially registered on August 18<sup>th</sup>, its leaders claimed membership of 312,000.

In July of 1990, the BIH assembly passed a series of constitutional amendments that effectively reduced the institutional capacities of any single ethno-national party. The most significant one was Amendment 60, which made slight but politically consequential changes to

the definition of the Bosnian state. The BiH had been previously defined as a “state of sovereign and equal citizens, Muslims, Serbs, Croats and others who lived in it”. Amendment 60 revised the wording to “a sovereign state of equal citizens, Muslims, Serbs, Croats and others”, thus shifting the bearer of sovereignty from the ethnically differentiated peoples to the institutions of the state (“Amandman LXX (10) na Ustav Socijalisticke Republike Bosne i Hercegovine”, 1990). The changes also included amendment 70, which provided for the establishment of a Council of National Equality. The Council was envisioned as a safeguard against ethnic outvoting, which referred to a concern that simple majoritarianism would allow the combined votes of deputies belonging to two of BiH’s official ethnic nations to impose their will on the third nation. However, it was left up to the future parliamentary decisions to specify the Council’s functions (Stanisic, 1990a). Due to the various delay tactics of SDS’s opponents the Council was never established. The July legislation also turned down SDS’s demand for the creation of the House of Peoples in the BiH assembly that would have equal ethno-national representation and make decisions by consensus. While the legislation established a bicameral BiH Assembly, both chambers were based on a territorial principle. Its provision for ensuring national equality was a mandatory cancellation of election results in the case of a discrepancy between the national composition of the delegates and that of the population at large that exceeded 15 percent (Stanisic, 1990a).

Considering that institutional provisions are usually secondary to the structure of the broader field of meanings and exist as sediments of discursive hegemony, the July 1990 legislation can be seen as untypical. It applied a civic principle of majoritarian decision-making at a time when the broader affective trends were intensifying ethnic solidarities and dissolving citizen individualities into the imagined *ethnos*. As ethnicization progressed, it also absorbed the principle. Civic majoritarianism came to signify not so much individual liberties as ethnic outvoting that would allow the more numerous nations to dominate the demographically smaller ones. For SDS, the July legislation meant that even the votes of all self-declared Serbs would not be enough for the party to have veto powers with which to control the future status of BiH. In response, it increasingly turned to creating an avenue for overcoming institutional constraints. In October, it established an extra-legal Serb National Council (SNV-*Srpsko Nacionalno Vijece*) whose self-declared capacities included striking down any law it deemed to violate Serb interests. Through SNV, SDS thus endowed itself with powers superior to those of the legal

framework of BiH. The future events would show that this was the first step of SDS's broader strategy of creating separate institutions whenever the existing ones blocked the achievement of the party's goals.

Prior to the November 18<sup>th</sup> elections, the Constitutional Court of BiH passed another decision that affected the election prospects of SDS. It struck down the 6-month residency requirement for voter eligibility. The decision created a new situation in which individuals could come to BiH, report residence, and register to vote as late as a day prior to the elections. The decision represented a new opportunity for ethno-national parties. As rising popular movements, they had the greatest resources to mobilize co-nationals from the neighboring republics to come and vote in BiH. In the days leading up to the elections, Belgrade's *Politika* published SDS's calls to all Serbs living in Serbia who had any family connections to Bosnia to immediately travel to BiH and vote.

***Political Rivals and Partners.*** The principal opponents of SDS in the election race were the non-national parties. SDS did not count on votes from non-Serbs, and hence, SDA and HDZ were not its campaign rivals. Moreover, each had a motive to help others gain new followers. The growth of SDA was generating suspicion among ethnic Serbs that Muslims would vote for their ethno-national party, a sentiment that SDS could amplify and channel toward a reactionary argument that Serbs should do the same. The converse was also true, as SDA could use the rise of SDS to make the same argument to Muslims. The dilemma thus had a self-reinforcing and self-fulfilling quality.

Indeed, all three ethno-national parties identified their principal rivals in the two largest non-ethnic parties, the communist incumbents and the nascent SRSJ. The Durakovic-led League of Communists had entered the campaign with a reformed leftist program and a name modified for the pluralist race, League of Communists of BiH- Socialist Democratic Party (SKBiH-SDP- *Savez Komunista Bosne I Hercegovine- Socijalisticka Demokratska partija*). Despite massive erosion of membership, Durakovic had the advantages of an incumbency and managed to consolidate the party in a reduced form. Its rallies were well attended, and the party led in the majority of early polls. The second rival emerged in late July with the official launch of SRSJ. Colloquially known as 'the reformists', SRSJ were led by a highly popular Federal Prime Minister Ante Markovic. Markovic owed his popularity to the success of his program of economic liberalization, which had created a stable currency, better imports and a boom of

private business initiatives. In some polls, his BiH approval rating registered at 92 percent, higher support than any ethno-national leader enjoyed among co-nationals (Zivkovic, 1990a).

Both the communists and the reformists had major vulnerabilities, however. The SKBiH-SDP brought to the race the burden of corruption scandals and failed economic policies. The liberalization of political discourse had made visible the repressive character of the communist regime. Bosnians were learning of the previously tabooed historical events, long-lost ethnic past, and marginalized religious practices. The three national parties wasted no opportunity to amplify the perceptions of the communist era as corrupt, oppressive and deceptive. Each party filled in the narratives of the regime's corruptness with elements from its specific repertoire of national victimization, describing both the traditional communists and the reformed SKBiH-SDP with dramatic character labels such as "Serb-haters", "anti-Muslim" and "Croatophobes". The principal weakness of SRSJ was its lack of a clear program for resolving the Yugoslav political crisis. The party offered a generalized support for the preservation of Yugoslavia, focusing the campaign on its program of economic liberalization. In the climate of polarization around the issues of state sovereignty and national rights, SRSJ's rational economic arguments were drowned out by the simpler, affectively charged identity messages. Markovic himself became a target of these messages, as Serb nationalists mobilized his Croat ethnic background and the timing of SRSJ's emergence, which occurred only after the elections in Croatia, to suggest an anti-Serb motivation of his political agenda.

Furthermore, ethno-national parties exploited the infrastructural weakness of the non-nationalists in rural areas. One fifth of the villages did not have communist organizations even at the height of the party-state regime, and hence, thousands of Bosnians had experienced relatively little of the direct, personable dissemination of the party's discourse (Andjelic, 2003, p.68). Both the reformists and the communists focused their campaigns on urban areas, only occasionally sending the lower echelon activists to the villages. In contrast, SDA, SDS and HDZ deployed grassroots strategies to heavily agitate in the villages, which had largely preserved a strong ethnic character. This translated into a campaigning style that allowed the three parties to transmit affective qualities that appealed to the values of rural BiH in a direct, personable manner. The audiences could at close proximity experience paralinguistic qualities, such as the tone of voice, eye contact, body language, or a handshake. They could also express their own doubts, confusions and concerns through a reciprocal exchange with the activists. Indeed, the

results of the elections indicate that the parties managed not only to gain support of this silent but large population of voters, but also to ensure their high turnout at the polling stations.

Maintaining the alliance of ethno-national parties was not a simple matter. Considering the BiH's long tradition of neighborliness, the strong presence of non-ethnic and trans-ethnic collective understandings, and stigmatization of nationalism, the parties looked to maximize support by portraying themselves not as nationalists, but as merely the revivalists of a suppressed identity. At the same time, the agenda of national unity demanded a firm national stance that appealed to the aspirations of the radicals. All three parties sought to resolve these tensions by expanding their repertoire of semiotic commonplaces. For its part, SDS BiH appealed to radical Serb nationalists by avoiding any negative reference to the vilified World War II Chetnik movement. A potential source of cleavages between the parties, the question of what constituted political interests of the respective ethno-national political communities, was at this time secondary to the immediate objective of winning the elections. Moreover, the differences would matter only in the case of a potential future scenario of Yugoslavia's disintegration. In the existing context, both SDS and SDA supported federal Yugoslavia and BiH's status as its constituent unit. The parties thus had every incentive to downplay the differences.

*Escalation in Croatia as a Framing Opportunity.* The conflict between the Croatian SDS and the HDZ-led government of Croatia escalated in the summer of 1990, with decisive effects on the concurrent election campaigning in BiH. In July, SDS of Croatia unilaterally decided to join the three municipalities it controlled into an association of municipalities of Northern Dalmatia and Lika. The party also organized a large gathering of 120,000 Serbs, termed as a 'Serb Assembly', at which a Serb National Council (SNV) was established as the supreme authority of Croatia's Serbs (Novo, 1990a). In August, the SNV organized a successful Serb-only referendum on the Serb autonomy within Croatia. The autonomy was declared in October. Initially, these challenges to the authority of Croatian government did not have solid support of Serbs in the Serb-majority areas won by SKH-SDP. As the dispute radicalized, however, the members of SKH-SDP of Serb ethnic background began leaving the party in large numbers (Vurusic, 1990).

The progressive ethnicization in Croatia served as an opportunity for accelerating ethno-differentiation in BiH. The positions of SDS and HDZ were fully aligned with those of the SDS of Croatia and the Croatian government respectively. The affective dispositions ensured that

Serbs and Croats living in BiH would tend to deliberate in favor of the narratives advocated by their co-nationals. The tension in Croatia was an opportunity for ethno-nationalist agents in BiH to infuse the frame of the threatening ethnic “other” with a sense of immediacy and palpability. Yet, the three ethno-national parties portrayed the threat as coming from agents outside of BiH, thus refusing to implicate their local partners in ethnicization. They said little about the affiliation of HDZ BiH with Tudjman’s party in Croatia, about close ties between SDS and Milosevic’s regime, and about SDA’s occasional show of support for the Croatian government.

***Ethnically motivated unrest.*** The tense discursive competition in the pre-election period did not produce a large-scale outbreak of nationalist unrest. Some incidents did occur, but they remained local in character. On August 9<sup>th</sup>, a group of several dozen people, mostly Muslims, disrupted a 40,000 strong SDS rally in Bijeljina by chanting the name of the deceased supreme leader of communist Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito (“Razlicita skandiranja mitinga”, 1990). On August 20<sup>th</sup> a group of Muslims stoned a column of cars returning from an SDS rally in Potocari near Srebrenica (“Razbijeni autobusi I glave”, 1990). At several SDS rallies in Eastern Herzegovina, militant groups shouted death threats to Muslims (“Jastrebovi’ otvaraju stare rane”, 1990). While these events caused local disturbances, they did not have clear consequences for the overall processes of ethno-politicization or a sustained impact on local dynamics. The exception was the ethnicized *Focatrans* strike that had continued into the fall of 1990. The ethnicization had spread from the workplace to Foca’s population at large, as Serb and Muslim Focans homogenized in support of their respective co-nationals. The relations between the two sides were rapidly deteriorating, and leading to multiple cases of property destruction, fights and even reports of armed clashes (Andjelic, 2003, p.176). The *Focatrans* events thus autonomously affected the levels of ethno-national solidarity, although this principally referred to Foca and the surrounding settlements.

Overall, it can be concluded that the political opportunity structures during the election campaign favored further ethnicization. The political space was dominated by ethnicizing discourses coming from multiple agents with different, even rival, political aspirations. Amidst their bitter ethnopolitical differences, SDS BiH, SDA, HDZ BiH, Serbia’s regime, the new Croatian government and the leaders of the Croatian Serbs constituted a single discourse coalition insofar as they shared the same goal of mobilizing and amplifying ethno-national sentiments of Yugoslavs. Nationalist rivalry in Croatia served only to bolster the ethnicizing

effect in BiH. In October, SKBiH-SDP, SRSJ and HDZ BiH released a joint statement calling for early elections after the upcoming ones. Their rationale was that in the existing “overheated” political atmosphere voters tended to vote emotionally rather than rationally (“Nakon izbora-prijevremeni izbori”, 1990). The three parties, one of them ethno-national, thus acknowledged the importance of political opportunity structures as generators of an affective setting that defined election outcomes. Indeed, the “overheated” atmosphere favored the emotionally-loaded simple nationalist messages, and consequently the electoral prospects of ethno-national parties. Their convincing electoral victory inaugurated the return of ethnicity to BiH as a dominant political identity; over three-quarters of Bosnians who went to the polls voted for an ethno-national party.

**Yugoslav disintegrative processes and the post-election dynamics in BiH.** The elections victory moved SDS BiH into a discursive slot of greater political abilities. Its newly won legitimacy as a representative of Serbs provided political capital, while institutional presence ensured participation in legislation and policy making at both the municipal and republican level. Indeed, the outcome of elections represented a significant shift of political opportunity structures in the party’s favor. However, different configurations mattered for different objectives of SDS, and the discussion must be disaggregated accordingly. Much of SDS’s objective of producing the Serbs of BiH as a palpable ethno-national political group had already been achieved. At least 80 percent of BiH’s population who identified as Serbs had voted for SDS. However, the continuous intervention upon the variable of ethnic groupness had remained one of the party’s imperatives for two related reasons. First, ethnic solidarity is a reflection of the intensity of particular affective sensibilities, which are variables that have to be discursively re-produced in order to remain at desired levels. Second, the higher the levels of ethnic groupness, the more discretion the group’s leaders have to define its political interests. In the aftermath of the elections, the locus of SDS’s activities shifted from ‘national awakening’ to pursuit of ‘national interest’. The ambiguity of what constitutes political interest threatens to create in-group contestation. If SDS continued to intensify Serb groupness, however, the discursive slot of a group leader that it occupied would gain greater political discretion. A heightening of solidarity makes power relations within groups more vertical. Considering that ethno-homogenization is always constituted in relation to an ethnic or non-ethnic “other”, dissent may appear as treasonous.

The continuous ethnicization was thus no less important for SDS than before. Since SDS shared this goal with the two other winning parties, it now had institutional resources to legally sediment the newly sharpened ethnic differentiation through legislation. The winning parties took advantage of the favorable power relations to underline every possible ethnic difference. In this process, each had the other two to help them construct the ethnic “other”. The parties worked together to remove the communist symbols, slogans and other discursive sediments of the previous regime from state institutions and legal acts. They also decided that staffing of all state institutions, from republican offices to local governments and publically-owned companies, should be guided by the principle of equal ethno-national representation. The victor’s vision of this equality was the sharing of staffing appointments amongst each other, which entirely excluded the communists and neglected the population that did not identify with any of the three constituent ethnic peoples (Bibin, 1990). Indeed, the electoral victories of SDA, SDS and HDZ led the processes of ethnicization into a distinct new phase; that of deepening ethno-partization. The election results not only served to add legitimacy to the parties’ claims that they represented ethnic nations, but the new capacities allowed their discursive equivalence of the nations and the parties to penetrate all public institutions. It was not enough that self-declared Muslims, Serbs and Croats were equally represented in the government, in schools, or in public enterprises. To qualify as “genuine” Muslims, Serbs and Croats, they were also expected to be members or loyalist of SDA, SDS and HDZ. Otherwise, they could not claim equal membership in an ethnic community.

When it came to SDS’s goal of keeping Serbs of BiH in a common state with Serbia, the political opportunity structure was more dynamic and ambiguous. The party’s leaders were continuously adapting their immediate tactics and reassessing mid-range objectives. In the period from winning the elections until the declaration of independence by Slovenia and Croatia in the summer of 1991, two related but distinct developments were affecting SDS’s political abilities. These were the weakening prospects of Yugoslav survival and the deterioration of the security situation in BiH.

*The effects of broader Yugoslav disintegration.* SDS’s strategy for keeping the Serbs of BiH in the common state with Serbia was highly reactive. The BiH was already in federal Yugoslavia, and the party’s task was to prevent any attempt at secession. However, since SDS’s position rested on the principle of ethno-national sovereignty, it acknowledged the right of BiH’s

Croats and Muslims to choose differently. In the case that they chose to leave the union, the locus of SDS's policy would shift to the narrower version of the status quo, which called for ethno-territorial demarcation that would keep 'Serb' territories in the rump Yugoslavia. Opposing this were most other parties at the Bosnian political scene. SDA, SKBiH-SDP and HDZ BiH all advocated BiH's state sovereignty and territorial integrity regardless of the outcome of the Yugoslav crisis. Furthermore, SDA had declared in favor of an independent BiH in the case of Croatian exit from Yugoslavia. Yet, in early 1991, all parties with the notable exception of confederal HDZ shared with SDS BiH the political objective of preserving a six-member federal Yugoslavia. Since the differences were directed at a possible future scenario, their political relevance would be almost entirely determined by the evolution of the broader political opportunity structures.

As the future of Yugoslavia looked increasingly uncertain in early 1991, the divisive issue of republican versus ethno-national sovereignty gained in tangibility and immediacy. The sovereignty issue escalated with unilateral activities of the republics that resulted in a renewed downturn in the Yugoslav economic condition. This time, ethno-nationalist republican governments purposely sabotaged the reforms of Ante Markovic by making independent incursions into the Yugoslav payments system. The largest of these was the January 1991 incursion by the People's Bank of Serbia. Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia were effectively exercising economic sovereignty at the expense of breaking up the federal framework, thus foregrounding the debates on the status of BiH in relation to the Yugoslav disintegrative processes. Against this background, SDA proposed in January 1991 that the BiH parliament adapt a declaration affirming the republic's sovereignty. The initiative was a legally unnecessary political move amidst the crisis of the Yugoslav state, since the existing BiH constitution already defined the republic as a sovereign state. Yet, it triggered a month of heated debates, ultimately failing at the February 27<sup>th</sup> session of the parliament amid objections from SDS. SDA responded the following day by withdrawing support for the Yugoslav federation and declaring in favor of the confederation. The sovereignty issue thus initiated a process of deterioration of relations between SDA and SDS that would transform the two parties from political partners into war enemies. It also raised new institutional constraints for SDS, as two out of the three ruling ethno-national parties now declared for a confederation.

However, the constructive role of SDA's leader and president of Bosnian presidency Alija Izetbegovic in the negotiations over the future of Yugoslavia showed that this escalation of differences within BiH did not greatly alter SDS's political opportunity structures at this time. The future of Yugoslavia almost entirely hinged on the ability of Serbia and Croatia to compromise between the positions that had been formed within the narrow frames of ethno-national interest. In the first half of 1990, the leaders of all six republics held a series of six meetings, colloquially termed 'YU-summits', in which they negotiated the future shape of the Yugoslav union. Slovenia and Croatia entered the negotiations deeply entrenched into their positions that Yugoslavia could survive only as a loose union of sovereign states. On the other hand, Serbia and Montenegro were just as rigid in their advocacy of a strong federal state. The summits showed that only Izetbegovic and Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov made serious attempts at saving the six-member Yugoslavia. Izetbegovic advocated a middle-way solution of a decentralized union that would have more functions than the one advocated by the northwestern republics, including the joint army, currency and central bank (Caric & Muharemagic, 1990). As the initial meeting failed to produce progress, Izetbegovic and Gligorov made several proposals for an asymmetric union in which some republics would have closer ties with each other than others. All were turned down by one or both of the two rival camps.

By spring of 1991, the prospects of Yugoslav survival appeared dim, as neither of the two principal agents was willing to compromise to preserve the six-member union. On the contrary, they were seeking the modus for the union's dissolution. Milosevic, who had just convincingly won the December 1990 Serbian elections, recognized the Slovenes and Croats as exclusive identity groups with a right to national self-determination, including secession. However, Milosevic's principle for exercising this right was in direct conflict with the one advocated by Croatian leaders. His definition of national self-determination involved the right of all Serbs to live in a single state without regard to the existing republican borders. In contrast, Slovenia and Croatia pursued independence from the position of the existing Yugoslav republics rather than ethno-territories. Since Serb nationalists did not have territorial aspirations toward Slovenia, the dispute was effectively about the status of Serb-majority areas in Croatia. By March, Tudjman

and Milosevic had also agreed on a principle of dividing parts of BiH between Serbia and Croatia.<sup>5</sup>

As the two sides were failing to find a modus for the preservation of the union or politically resolve the status of Serbs in Croatia, the dominant discourse in Serbia intensified the portrayal of the Croatian side as an existential threat to Serbs who lived in the republic. In Croatia, Yugoslavia was increasingly framed as a codeword for Serb domination. Indeed, the ethno-politicization continued to deepen the affective schism. This would further escalate as each side ignored the sensibilities of the other and ventured to unilaterally create realities on the ground that corresponded to its political objectives. In April, Croatia held a successful independence referendum. Its government expressed intention to declare sovereignty on June 27<sup>th</sup>, the same date Slovenia had set for its declaration of independence. On the other hand, Serb leaders in Croatia radicalized their measures at separating from Croatia what they perceived as Serb ethnic areas. On December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1990, the Community of Municipalities of Krajina was declared a Serb Autonomous Region of Krajina (SAO Krajina). In the coming months, SAO Krajina absorbed four additional Serb-majority municipalities and a number of Serb villages in other municipalities. The federal units and self-declared ethnic representatives were thus making decisions independent of the federal center. At the end April, the President of Yugoslav Presidency Borisav Jovic described the legal order of Yugoslavia as broken up (“Kritična tacka međurepubličkih sukobljavanja”, 1990).

Against this background, SDS BiH launched first in what would become a long series of steps toward the creation of Serb areas in BiH. As the escalating Yugoslav crisis was bringing the issue of BiH’s sovereignty to the political forefront, the party began fragmenting the republic’s monopoly on legitimate use of force. On April 10<sup>th</sup>, several municipalities of the Bosnian Krajina region governed by SDS unilaterally decided to step out of the existing regionalization and join into the Community of Municipalities of Bosnian Krajina (*ZOBK-Zajednica Opština Bosanske Krajine*). Following ZOBK, SDS led municipalities in other parts of the republic also joined into new regional units. Thus created were the communities of municipalities of Romanija and Old Herzegovina. While initially SDS BiH claimed that the motives for this new regionalization were purely economic, the party also stated that the

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<sup>5</sup> Several high-profile witnesses, including the future president of Croatia Stipe Mesic and Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic, testified that the two leaders discussed the partition of BiH into three parts at a secret meeting held in Karadzordzevo on March 26<sup>th</sup>. See *Oslobodjenje* 27 March 1991 p.5

communities could acquire political functioning if the developments continued in the direction of confederation and republican sovereignty.

By mid-1991, the survival of a six-member Yugoslavia hinged on its international status and the support of foreign actors. International actors were still united in the declarative support for the preservation of Yugoslavia. This included Germany, which would later emerge as a leading lobbyist for recognition of Slovenian and Croatian independence. In mid-March, German ambassador to Yugoslavia had stated that the right to national self-determination was not absolute, and that Germany supported the Yugoslav state (Dmitrovic, 1991). Yet, these positions would evolve in the coming months as political negotiations between the Yugoslav parties gave way to armed confrontation.

*Security deterioration in BiH and violence in Croatia.* While there was no major outbreak of ethnically motivated violence in BiH in the first part of 1991, first cases of mass migration suggested that ethno-politicization was giving rise to a fear of the ethnic “other” in several parts of BiH. Yet, this was not a direct outcome of elite politics. Two intervening factors can be identified as significant; the spread of rumors, and the escalation of violence in the neighboring Croatia. Furthermore, it appeared that their effect was bolstered by local micro-dynamics, as the migration predominantly happened in two types of localities. One was Eastern Herzegovina, a site of numerous World War II-era atrocities. The others were the localities most responsive to the conflict in Croatia, namely the border areas of BiH cohabited predominantly by Serbs and Croats.

As early February of 1991, the rumors of unknown origin were producing widespread fear of the ethnic “other” in several areas of BiH.<sup>6 7</sup> The rumors that Serbs had made lists for execution of Muslims and vice versa were unsettling the population of Eastern Herzegovina. In parts of the municipality of Capljina, rumors that JNA was arming Serbs, and that Croats were preparing an attack had created temporary migrations of people of all ethnic backgrounds (Bekan, 1990b). SDS claimed that Serb apartments were being marked in Sarajevo, and that

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<sup>6</sup> The timing of the rumors corresponds to the release of a Yugoslav army intelligence video on primetime TV that shows the Croatian Defense Minister Martin Spegelj attempting to secure a shipment of weapons to be used for attacks against the Yugoslav Army. The resultant scandal heightened the fear of a conflict in Yugoslavia, and may have contributed to the rumours.

<sup>7</sup> A leading member of MUP BiH has claimed that a group of psychologists hired by Milosevic’s regime held a meeting in Nis, Serbia, in 1990 on best strategies for heightening ethno-homogenization in BiH. Allegedly, the meeting concluded that the goal could be advanced by spreading fear through rumours of existential threats (Research Interview 13).

‘Bartholomay’s night’ against Serbs was a real possibility (“Srbi I oficiri obilježeni u Sarajevu”, 1990). Reinforcing this warning and perceptions of insecurity was a May 20<sup>th</sup> attack by unknown assailants on the BiH Minister of Information and a high ranking member of SDS Velibor Ostojic. There were also multiple cases of property damage with implications for ethno-national relations, such as the inscriptions of graffiti with nationalist messages on public surfaces. While Bosnia remained peaceful, the anxieties that these incidents produced were autonomously contributing to the rise of ethnic groupness in BiH.

In Croatia, the conflicting political agenda of Serb and Croat nationalists was leading to mounting cases of physical confrontation, which further intensified the sentiments of Serb and Croat ethno-national solidarity. On the last day of March, there was a first incident with fatalities. One Croatian policeman and one Serb gunman fighting on the side of SAO Krajina were killed during a firefight at the Plitvice Lakes. A month later, an incident occurred in the Serb-majority village of Borovo Selo near the Eastern Croatian town of Vukovar whose distressing affective shockwaves reduced the chances of a peaceful resolution of the Yugoslav crisis to a minimum. The Croatian police units seeking to establish the writ of the Croatian government in the village were ambushed by Serb paramilitaries, resulting in the deaths of twelve Croatian policemen and three Serb gunmen. The events further consolidated the two sides as Serb and Croat ethnic nations. As the SKH-SDP now rallied behind the HDZ-led Croatian government, all Croat political options were now united against Serbia’s regime (“Podrska republikim organima”, 1991). The Croatian State TV adjusted to the newly charged climate by increasingly using the term “*Cetniks*” to refer to the Serb rebels (Glover, 2001, p.130). With “*Ustase*” being used by Serb media and “*Cetnik*” by the Croatian ones, the airwaves were now filled with everyday usage of World War II terminology.

**Croatia’s *de facto* independence and the divisions in BiH.** A distinctly new configuration SDS’s political opportunity structures was generated by the June 25<sup>th</sup> Slovenian declaration of independence and the Croatian declaration of sovereignty. Their impact on the political context in BiH was dual. First, by altering the character of the federal government, the declarations further accentuated the divisive issue of BiH’s sovereignty. The declarations effectively ended the presence of Yugoslav institutions in Slovenia and most of Croatia, and initiated an exit of Slovenian and Croatian representatives from federal organs. Second, the decisions triggered an escalation of violence in Croatia, turning armed skirmishes and isolated

firefights into a devastating war. The war in turn accelerated the disintegrative processes, and contributed to a deterioration of security in BiH.

Since federal institutions had already lost much of their capabilities in Slovenia and most of Croatia, the most consequential aspect of the declarations was their effect on the status of JNA. From the Slovenian standpoint, the JNA was now a foreign force. From JNA's perspective, the Slovenian decision violated the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia that the army was tasked with protecting. Immediately after the Slovenian proclamation of independence, JNA moved to seize Yugoslav border crossings from the Slovenian territorial defense units. Ten days of armed confrontation ensued, resulting in the first publicized instance of internationalization of the Yugoslav disputes. The European Community (EC) intervened as a mediator, brokering the signing of the Brioni Accords that provided for a three-month moratorium on all moves toward Slovenian and Croatian independence in exchange for a withdrawal of JNA troops to the barracks. Soon thereafter, it became apparent that JNA's behavior would be fully aligned with that of Serb nationalists. Yugoslav presidency decided to entirely pull out the army from Slovenia, but its four members from the republics controlled by Serbia's regime would pursue a sharply different approach for Croatia. Acting under the pretense of supporting the nations that wanted to remain in Yugoslavia, the army sided with SAO Krajina. By the end of the month, JNA, SAO Krajina forces and Serb paramilitaries jointly launched large-scale operations intended to expand the territory of Croatia envisaged to remain in Yugoslavia as a Serb Krajina state. The war in Croatia had begun.

***The divisions exposed.*** The Slovenian and Croatian declarations constituted a significant step toward the materialization of Croatia's exit from Yugoslavia, which would launch SDA on a policy of pursuing BiH's independence. Yet, SDA's leader Izetbegovic was still expressing hope that such a move would not be necessary. Croatia's declaration didn't have international recognition, and Tudjman remained willing to negotiate the creation of a new union of sovereign states. Indeed, Izetbegovic opposed the decision of the Yugoslav presidency to pull JNA out of Slovenia on the grounds that it contributed to the breakup of the country ("Konacno rusenje Jugoslavije", 1991). However, with Croatia's rejection of federal authorities, the JNA's alliance with SAO Krajina, and Serbian domination in the federal institutions, the BiH appeared to already be in the *de facto* rump Yugoslavia.

The leading parties in BiH interpreted the new situation in a manner consistent with their radically different views on the republic's sovereignty. When the decisions of the republican institutions came in conflict with those of the federation, the differences led to institutional fragmentation. The first axis of fragmentation was the mobilization of JNA reservists that the Federal Secretariat for Peoples' Defense ordered in early July. The BiH Presidency demanded the cessation of mobilization, declaring it illegitimate in the absence of a foreign enemy ("Obustaviti Mobilizaciju", 1991). The BiH Minister of Defense, a HDZ member Jerko Doko, ordered municipal secretariats for peoples' defense not to turn over military documentation that the JNA needed to carry out mobilization at the local level. While SDA and HDZ cadres in the republican institutions were numerous enough to pass majority decisions, SDS could block their implementation at the municipal level. Indeed, SDS-controlled municipalities chose to comply with federal decrees, thus refusing to implement Doko's order. Moreover, ZOBK instructed its member municipalities to mobilize territorial defense forces and even create volunteer units that would assist the JNA operations in Croatia. The divisions also occurred over BiH's representation in the rump federal institutions. The delegates from BiH in the federal assembly were divided between those who wanted to continue participation and others who saw them as no longer legitimate. The political opportunity structures thus brought to the forefront the cleavages between the ruling parties. With this shift, the rival narratives of what the republic of BiH represented in the new situation began to inundate the discursive space. For SDS's rivals BiH was a cherished homeland and a sovereign state, while SDS saw it as an artificial creation that signified little more than an administrative category and a toponym. With the political divides thus performatively foregrounded, their affective counterpart became more somatically palpable.

The differences would further escalate with the expiration of the three-month moratorium, after which the Slovene and Croatian members permanently exited all federal organs. In October, they led to an institutional split at the republican level. The trigger event was the reappearance of the memorandum on BiH's sovereignty to the floor of the republic's parliament, which had been struck down by SDS in February. The proposing parties explained the memorandum's revival by citing a "new legal and factual situation" created by the Slovenian and Croatian decisions, as well as the declaration of independence that the Macedonian parliament had passed in September (Duric, 1991c). The memorandum was adopted at an

October 13<sup>th</sup> session of a rump BiH parliament, which was held despite the opposition of SDS and without the presence of SDS's deputies. The Serb national party responded by decisively shifting the locus of its activities from the status of BiH as a single geopolitical unit to the creation of a separate Serb state. In the aftermath of the October 13<sup>th</sup> session, SDS deputies formed a separate Serb assembly. Throughout the fall of 1991, the party was also renaming the existing communities of municipalities into Serb autonomous regions (SAO), and creating several new ones. As a token of legitimization, SDS held a Serb Plebiscite in November in which Serbs overwhelmingly voted to stay in Yugoslavia.

*Escalation of violence, security dilemma, and ethno-homogenization.* The security situation in BiH continued to deteriorate throughout the summer and fall of 1991 for two overlapping reasons. The first one was the overflow of violence from Croatia. Since JNA used the territory of BiH for launching operations in Croatia, some border towns became target of Croatian artillery. Unrest was also produced by the arrival of thousands of undisciplined JNA reservists from other republics, mainly Serbia and Montenegro. The reservists often provoked residents by waving Serbian flags and shouting Serb nationalist slogans (Bojanic, Behram & Zujo, 1991).

The second dimension was the escalation of violent incidents between Bosnians themselves. In Eastern Herzegovina, tension amid the creation of a community of Serb municipalities had prompted local villagers to establish night-time watches. In late June, there were several incidents of shooting between Serb and Muslim villages near Nevesinje (Zerajic, 1991). In September, an incident at a Serb checkpoint in the village of Kravica near Bratunac resulted in the deaths of two Muslims from a neighboring village. This was the first recorded case of ethnically-motivated murder in BiH since World War II. The event triggered a temporary exodus of about a thousand Serbs, who escaped into nearby Serbia in fear of retaliation. Many Muslims also migrated, moving to areas with a greater concentration of their co-nationals (Hodzic, 1991a). The following month, a Muslim was killed by Serb paramilitaries in Sipovo, triggering the flight of much of the town's Muslim minority to nearby Jajce. As people migrated in search of safety to areas where the majority of the population fell into their own ethno-national category, ethnic background came to signify more than shared symbols, culture, history or even political ambitions. In some areas, it was clearly becoming a primary safety consideration. Adding to insecurities was a general deterioration of law and order. In the

first half of 1991, the Interior Ministry recorded a spike in crime rates, with a particularly dramatic increase in road robberies (“Novi ‘gospodari’ puteva”, 1991). Yet, the most vocal reaction of Bosnians of all ethnic background at this time was neither ethno-homogenization nor armed mobilization. Rather, it came in the form of massive expression of antiwar sentiments. In towns across the republic, there were numerous concerts, protests, and strikes that called for a peaceful resolution. The largest one was the July 28th concert for peace organized in Sarajevo by a popular newscast Yutel, and attended by a crowd of approximately 100,000 (Djapo & Kurtovic, 1991). The escalation of violence thus produced two principal reactions among Bosnians- pacifism, and fear-induced ethno-homogenization. Neither of the two suggested the presence of hidden longstanding ethnic animosities. As violence continued to escalate, however, the feelings of fear and resentment would begin to increasingly overpower pacifist sentiments. The outbreak of war in Croatia represented the culmination of several years of ethnicization. The conflict itself was rapidly turning JNA into a Serb army, as its non-Serb members began deserting in large numbers. Yet, the war also made manifest the difficulty of transforming ethno-politicization into an armed ethnic mobilization. Thousands of Serbs were also deserting or rejecting calls for mobilization (Engelberger, 1991). This was particularly the case with Serbs from Serbia, who were not directly affected by the dispute in Croatia. It appeared that, for many, defense of an imagined national community was not a motive enough for risking lives in another republic.

**International termination of Yugoslavia and the path to war.** Beginning with the sponsorship of the Brioni Accords, the role of international agents in the Yugoslav crisis had been progressively increased. By September, all Yugoslav parties had agreed to participate in a Conference on Yugoslavia brokered by EC. While the conference was intended to find a compromise between the warring parties, the reality on the ground had all but eliminated the possibility of preserving a strong Yugoslav union. Three republican governments were entering the talks from the position of *de facto* independence, and the proposal advocated by the EC envisioned only a loose union of sovereign states. However, the violence had hardened the differences to an extent that even a loose union was difficult to achieve. The Croats had homogenized around a goal of independent Croatia, while SAO Krajina rejected any solution that would reintegrate it into Croatia. In BIH, the charged ethnopolitical context translated into intense affective commitments to Serb state unity on the one side, and a sovereign BiH on the

other. However, the EC's December 1991 response to this situation managed to change the calculus of all agents in BiH in ways that set the republic on the path of independence, and pressured SDS into channeling the affective energy it had rallied in support of a rump Yugoslavia to new, modified political objectives.

In late November of 1991, the international conference on Yugoslavia formed a commission of internationally renowned lawyers to provide legal advice regarding the status of Yugoslavia. The commission was led by president of French Constitutional Court Robert Badinter, and also consisted of presidents of constitutional courts of Spain, Germany, Italy and Belgium (Smajlovic, 1992a). Over the next several weeks, the commission handed several opinions that decisively undermined the capacity of SDS for keeping the Serbs of BiH in the state union with Serbia. The commission concluded that Yugoslavia was in the process of dissolution, and that any future Yugoslav union could only come from the position of independent republics that desired to integrate (Smajlovic, 1991a). Furthermore, the commission determined that interrepublican boundaries should be deemed as borders subject to international law, and that they were changeable only by agreement of all sides. Therefore, in the view of the commission, the Serbs of BiH could not simply stay in Yugoslavia. Rather, they would have to re-establish a new union with Serbia, which would be possible only with consent of other major actor in BiH.

Another process that accelerated the legal termination of the Yugoslav union was occurring within the EC. German officials had announced intent to recognize independence of Slovenia and Croatia by Christmas of 1991, and were intensely lobbying other EC members to join them. By mid-December, they gained support of diplomats from Italy, France and Austria (Pudar, 1991). However, Great Britain, Greece as well as the EC's overseas partner United States expressed concern that such a decision could aggravate the situation. On December 17th the EC reached a compromise resolution establishing a December 23<sup>rd</sup> deadline for submitting a petition for independence of all republics that desired to do so, which would then be considered on January 15th (Smajlovic, 1991b). Having only a week to decide or lose the opportunity, the BiH Presidency decided by majority decision December 20<sup>th</sup> to submit the petition. That the structure of political opportunities was crucial in making this decision is evidenced in Izetbegovic's January, statement that the presidency "didn't want to rush with demands for recognition, but the

EC was moving ahead of us in that regard” (Zivkovic, 1992). Even in this situation, Izetbegovic continued to advocate the creation of a new Yugoslav union of independent states (Duric, 1992a)

Indeed, the EC’s decision profoundly changed SDS’s calculus. In mid-December, the party proposed a complex solution that would create an independent BiH as a confederation of three ethnic units, and at the same time enable the Serb unit to establish a federal arrangement with Serbia. Thus, under the pressure of opportunity structures, SDS for the first time opened to the possibility of some type of Bosnia’s independence, albeit without giving up the goal of a Serb state union. At the same time, the party actively sought to create new political opportunities. The intercepts of phone conversations available at the International Criminal Tribunal reveal that the private conversations between Radovan Karadzic and Slobodan Milosevic overwhelmingly focused on how to adjust policies to international pressures. The adjustment here primarily referred to efforts at creating a reality on the ground that would either discourage international recognition of BiH, or force the greatest possible internal decentralization within the framework of an independent BiH. Rather than following its own timetable, SDS’s most consequential actions came in response to or in anticipation of action by others. Immediately after the presidency’s decision to petition for independence, the SDS-led Serb assembly decided to unite the existing SAOs into a Republic of Serb Bosnia-Herzegovina (RSBiH). The institutions of RSBiH were intended to exist parallel to those of BiH until the resolution of the crisis, superseding them as the highest representative of Serbs in BiH. The declaration of RSBiH was scheduled for January 9<sup>th</sup>, a day prior to the date that EC had initially set for issuing a decision regarding the BiH’s independence petition. That the date was carefully set to adapt to the EC’s timetable is evidenced in Karadzic’s statement that SDS “rushed to declare the republic because there was a possibility that the EC declare recognition of independent BiH on January 10<sup>th</sup>...every one of our actions after that recognition would have a greatly diminished effect” (Caric, 1992a).

The Badinter Commission was tasked to make a determination if BiH’s application met the conditions for independence. Considering the lack of an internal consensus on the issue, the commission decided in January to condition its support for BiH’s recognition with an independence referendum. On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, the EC decided to respect the opinion of the Badinter commission, and recognize BiH after a successful referendum (Smajlovic, 1992b). By the end of

the month, SDS appeared to further yield to the EC's pressure. Karadzic now talked about BiH's sovereignty as acceptable as long as the republic was transformed into a union of ethnic regions. While SDS's attempt of preventing independence was failing, the party was winning the battle for ethno-territorial demarcation within the republic. In mid-February, the EC organized a conference on the future of BiH at which all leaders agreed in principle that the BiH would be an independent state in its historical borders ("BiH- nepodjeljena, samostalna I suverena", 1992). However, the EC's peace proposal, authored by a British diplomat Lord Carrington and Portuguese Ambassador Jose Cutilliero, called for ethnic power-sharing at all administrative levels and devolution of central authority to several regions, each of which would have a titular ethnicity. While the position was problematic from the standpoint of human rights, as it would effectively create mono-ethnic units on an ethnically diverse territory, the international mediators legitimized it by evoking the actual divisions on the ground. The SDS-engineered fragmentation was thus influencing the positions of international agents, and consequently expanding the party's political abilities. Contributing to the victory of ethno-territorialism was also HDZ, whose priorities now shifted from securing the republic's separation from the rump Yugoslavia to the demarcation of Croat ethnic areas. As early as November 1991, HDZ-led municipalities in Herzegovina began organizing into a Croat Community of Municipalities *Herceg-Bosna* under the pretense of protection from Serb expansionism (Kozar, 1991). The process was now spreading to Croat-majority areas in central BiH, and further contributing to ethno-territorial realities. The SDA, which had proposed regionalization on economic, geographic as well as ethnic considerations, was now under pressure from SDS, HDZ and the EC to concede to the superiority of the ethnic principle.

Despite the objections from most of its Serb deputies, the BiH parliament passed a decision to hold the referendum on the republic's independence on February 29<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>. Although SDS decided to boycott the referendum in the absence of an internal deal, the vote passed with the support of nearly 63 percent of the republic's electorate. This was sufficient for the European parliament to announce on March 12<sup>th</sup> that the BiH had met conditions for recognition. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the US also expressed intent to recognize all republics that had petitioned for independence ("Uskladjeno do priznanja", 1992). The policy of the sole global superpower was thus aligned with that of the EC, creating additional pressures on local agents to seek solutions within the framework of an independent BiH. Furthermore, the US specifically

underlined its support for BiH's territorial integrity. The stance affected Izetbegovic's perceptions of political possibilities, encouraging him to withdraw support to the ethnic regionalization envisioned in the Carrington-Cutilliero Plan to which he had given consent earlier. The SDS-led Serb assembly replied on March 27<sup>th</sup>, two days after the withdrawal, by adopting the constitution of RSBiH (Rakocevic-Novakovic, 1992b). Despite this, the EC recognized BiH on April 6<sup>th</sup>, setting in motion the process of the republic's broader international recognition. The Serb assembly reacted immediately by declaring independence of RSBiH from BiH.

*From violent incidents to war.* Parallel to political developments, the security situation continued to deteriorate. Numerous scandals with illegal arms shipments and frequent incidents involving the use of firearms had made it apparent that Bosnians were rapidly arming themselves. Yet, the incidents remained localized. When large clashes did occur, the participants were primarily the Serb-dominated JNA and various units of armed Croats. The first of such clashes on the territory of BiH occurred in October, and resulted in the destruction of the Croat village of Ravno in Southern Herzegovina.

Yet, the months of violent incidents did not progressively mount into a full-scale war. The records suggest that the escalation into war was driven primarily by political instrumentalization rather than the autonomous logics of violence. In the aftermath of the independence referendum, violence shook the Capital of Sarajevo. The trigger event was the murder of a Serb by a Muslim assailant at a wedding procession in Sarajevo, which occurred on the same day as the referendum. In response, SDS organized the blockade of the city and several localities in other parts of the republic ("Barikade kod Foce...i na prilazima Rudom", 1992).<sup>8</sup> While the party agreed to remove the roadblocks two days later, the event had achieved an immediate political impact. On March 6<sup>th</sup>, ahead of the new round of negotiations, Cutilliero cited the worsening situation on the ground to argue that recognition of BiH without an internal deal would be irresponsible (Smajlovic, 1992c).

Throughout March, explosions and armed skirmishes increased in frequency across the republic. However, the incidents were still not setting in motion an expanding spiral of violence, and in some areas the security situation improved after intervention by political leaders. A partial

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<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the transcript of an intercepted phone call between Karadzic and president of SDS's executive board Rajko Djucic reveals that blockade was not a spontaneous event. In the transcript, Karadzic gives instructions on how to block the city (19920301).

exception was the persistent exchange of fire between local Serb units and the predominantly Croat forces in Bosanski Brod, which resulted in the first massacre of civilians in BiH. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, armed Croats entered a Serb-majority area of the village of Sijekovac, executing several unarmed Serb civilians (“Masakr u Sijekovcu”, 1992). While the executions were carried out by Croat paramilitaries and may not have been politically ordered, even this massacre did not trigger a spontaneous escalation of reciprocal violence. Rather, the situation in Bosanski Brod improved with a political agreement to send the BiH special police forces to separate the two sides. In the neighboring Bosanski Samac and Derventa, which had a similar ethnic structure, the situation remained tense but peaceful throughout the clashes (Bikic, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1992).

Indeed, the consistent and widespread violence that would characterize the Bosnian war for three and a half years broke out as a continuation of politics by other means. SDS adapted to BiH’s international recognition by deploying military capacities in service of its ethno-territorial engineering. In early April, the RSBiH leadership launched them to gain control of large swaths of BiH’s territory. Since the predominantly Serb areas were already under their control, this primarily referred to a takeover of ethnically mixed areas. On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, paramilitaries from Serbia, acting under the instructions from Serbia’s political leadership and with assistance from local Serb units, launched an operation at taking over Bijeljina. After two days of fighting, the town was captured and joined to RSBiH (“Strah porobio grad”, 1992). Two days later, first mortar shells were fired on Sarajevo by SDS’s forces on the surrounding hills. On April 7<sup>th</sup>, armed units of the Serb republic and volunteers from Serbia jointly attacked and captured Foca. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, Serb paramilitaries, backed with the JNA artillery, captured Zvornik. The Bosnian War had begun.

SDS’s ability to pursue military outcomes was also affected by the cessation of the war in Croatia. Serb nationalist war efforts in Croatia had been plagued with weak morale, desertion and poor response to mobilization. The intercepts of phone conversations show that the issue weighed heavily on SDS leaders. As early as November 18<sup>th</sup> 1991, Karadzic had argued that it UN “Blue Helmets” should be invited to separate Serb and Croat forces as a way of protecting the gains in Croatia. Later that month, on November 29<sup>th</sup>, Karadzic and Milosevic agreed that a confrontation in BiH would be a better solution than in Croatia because of the more favorable military balance. The superior military capabilities, it thus appears, were a contributing factor in the constitution of SDS’s policies. These capabilities were further enhanced by a January 2<sup>nd</sup>

cease-fire agreement that called for demilitarization of the territory of Croatia controlled by JNA, and deployment of UN Peacekeepers in their place. While the agreement was plagued with implementation issues, it reduced the intensity of the conflict in Croatia and effectively froze JNA's gains. Rather than overstretching on two fronts, the agreement allowed the Serb nationalist coalition to focus military hardware and mobilization efforts toward achieving its goals in BiH.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The rise of SDS BiH was a story of opportunities. The delegitimation of the BiH communist regime, which itself occurred through a convergence of several developments, lifted constraints for the emergence of a multi-party system. The ethnicization of Yugoslav political space created opportunities for the emergence of effective ethno-national parties in the BiH. The formation and growth of Muslim and Croat parties shifted the discursive landscape in favor of SDS. The outbreak of ethnicized violence in Croatia created further pressures for ethno-homogenization. The party's inability to keep the Serbs of BiH in the same state with Serbia was the story of constraints, the largest of which came from international actors. As they terminated Yugoslavia's international existence and recognized its internal boundaries as subject to international law, the party could no longer rely on status quo. While the political opportunity structures shaped the agency of SDS, the converse was also true. The SDS coalition actively worked on modifying the structures by expanding opportunities and undermining constraints. During the election campaign, the party joined forces with two other ethno-national parties to undermine the non-national axes of collective identification. It also exploited the events in Croatia for creating perceptions of an imminent threat to Serbs in BiH. The party worked around EC's position by creating realities that the EC could not ignore. When the negotiations failed, it used military prowess to continue creating a more favorable political opportunity structure.

*“Not a single Serb house must be left without contact with the party” Radovan Karadzic, February, 1992*

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Disseminating Discourse: Organizational Repertoire, Technological Mediums, and SDS BiH**

Much has been said in the social movement literature about mobilizing structures and resource mobilization. As categories of analysis, however, these concepts lack clarity and precision. The concept of resources is a multifarious one, and means little without specification. It is thus typically used with prefixes, as in human, organizational, material or discursive resources. A political opportunity may be seen as a new resource, and vice versa. Regarding the concept of mobilizing structures, both parts of the term can be analytically misleading. The malleability and ad hocness of organizational forms often renders the “structure” metaphor inadequate. The term “mobilization” has limited utility, as movements do not merely mobilize; they also advocate and persuade. Indeed, the rise of SDS BiH was a function not only of mobilizing the pre-existing discourse-emotion complexes, but also of the party’s active production of neural pairings that give rise to them. The success of the latter came in the varying degrees that were directly proportional not only to political opportunities and the content of advocated discourse, but also to the level of exposure to the coalition’s discursive acts. In fact, when referring to “mobilizing structures” one thinks of not only organizational structures that allow an agent to order a mobilization or bring together individuals willing to mobilize, but also to the more general avenues through which a discourse is communicated both between the members of a coalition and to larger audiences. When thinking of “resource mobilization” one typically refers to resources for disseminating a discourse as frequently and as widely as possible.

The following discussion deploys this understanding to analyze the avenues through which the discourse of SDS BiH was communicated to the Bosnian audience. These avenues came in a variety of modalities that delimited the extent and frequency with which the party’s discourse reached the targeted audiences. The chapter also analyzes communication avenues between the activists, which structured the growth of SDS from a core circle of activists to a mass movement. Rather than speaking of “mobilizing structures” or resources *per se*, it brings these concepts closer to their principal analytical utility- as tools for understanding the

dissemination of a set of advocated meanings. It is thus useful to rework the terminology and think of dissemination modalities, a concept that better accounts for the activation of pre-existing and the creation of new organizational networks for the purpose of maximizing discursive exposure. This conceptual framework also avoids the vague term of “material resources”, and focuses on material objects that serve as technological mediums for maximizing dissemination. Indeed, the dissemination modalities are a crucial dimension of agency, since the frequency and the breadth of exposure delimit the productive power of a discourse. Prior to proceeding with a discussion of SDS’s dissemination modalities, however, the concept needs further development.

The current social movement literature can provide useful starting points for moving from mobilizational structures to dissemination modalities. One of them is Tarrow’s definition of mobilizing structures as resources that “bring people together in the field, shape coalitions, confront opponents, and assure their own future...” (1998, p.123). These resources, however, involve more than mobilization, as people do not simply “come together” but also exchange opinions and sensibilities. Even when this exchange produces mobilization, the producing discourse has to be continuously disseminated in order to maintain the achievement. This study avoids the mobilization/non-mobilization binary to focus on the communicative processes that internalize advocated meanings conducive to mobilization to varying degrees. Moreover, while the availability of Tarrow’s resources does “shape coalitions”, it is also the coalitions that constitute the resources. Organizational forms, whether they refer to informal family and friendship networks, hierarchical top-down institutions, or a diversity of organizations that support a movement, are resources primarily for their capacity to disseminate the advocated discourse. On the one hand, these can be shaped by organizational choices of an agent, and are resources only in relation to an agent who identifies them as valuable and seeks to acquire them. On the other hand, the dissemination modalities are autonomous vis-à-vis agency. Friendships, professional organizations, state institutions and many other networks exist independent of any single agent, individual or collective. They may provide dissemination avenues to a movement by virtue of commonalities between the two, or a movement may actively seek to establish an alliance between them by adjusting its framing tactics. Furthermore, the collective agent’s own organizational structure is a function of the available dissemination repertoire. Whether a coalition follows a grassroots model or a more hierarchical model depends on a variety of considerations autonomous from its mission and discourse, such as the available organizational

forms in a given society, the social, cultural and financial capital of individual members and the extent of friendship or kinship networks between members.

The activists' dynamic interaction with the pre-existing repertoire produces a variety of modalities of organizational forms and networks that contribute to the mission of a movement. Each of them, whether in the mode of an official party, a cultural organization, or informal clubs, contributes to the structuring of relations between the coalitions' members, and constitutes a component of dissemination modalities that delimit the levels of exposure to the advocated discourse.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, when the dissemination modalities are diverse, both the frequency and the breadth of exposure are intensified. If the same or related set of meanings is disseminated through a variety of political, religious, cultural, professional, state, humanitarian and other organizations, the audience will be exposed to them more often than when disseminated only in the mode of a political party. Moreover, the discourse will reach wider audiences. The politically uninitiated individuals may encounter it at diverse organizational sites, such as sporting events, book clubs, folklore nights and religious ceremonies. They can also be exposed through various forms of intervention into the immediate living environment, such as legal decisions that affect workplace relations and grassroots activism that comes at one's door.

When thinking of dissemination modalities, it is useful to treat the technologies of mass dissemination as a distinct dimension. Technological mediums have capacities to provide an advantage in the marketplace of meanings beyond those of human networks. The human networks have an advantage of the more personable affective transmission, involving not only one-directional sights and sounds but also the accompanying scents, touches and reciprocal participation of an audience. Yet, the breath of the exposure is far inferior to those of TV and radio broadcasts, which have the capacities to instantly expose mass, spatially dispersed audiences to the sounds and images of single discursive act. Popular newspapers can do the same in one day with the textual forms. The levels of exposure can also be affected by the exclusion of alternative discourse from the intersubjective space. The technological mediums for disseminating a discourse include the technologies of force that silence or marginalize the alternatives. The dissemination technologies in their extra-discursive material existence, whether

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<sup>9</sup> The structuration of a movement also affects framings and enunciative modalities. These are discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.

as guns, antennas, printing shops, or other material, are always already situated within some discourses laying claim on them. A weapon is thus part of a military organization, and a TV transmitter of a media network. In other words, the surfaces of these technologies are already inscribed with discourses. When one sees a tank or broadcast equipment, the experience itself does not impose meanings on the observer, but is mediated through the intersubjective field that the observer inhabits. A tank is never merely a green vehicle with cannon, but is also an asset of “national defense”, or a “Yugoslav”, “Serb” or “Croat” tank. Similarly, broadcast equipment never stands alone in its materiality, but is property of “TV Sarajevo”, or “Radio Belgrade”, a friendly asset to be protected or an enemy weapon to be destroyed. Therefore, the analytical task for understanding the dissemination technologies of a movement does not begin by merely inventorying them and describing their functions. It also requires an understanding of the processes of discursive reinscription that placed them in the service of a movement.

At this point, it is useful to reflect on the relationship between the discussion in this chapter and the one in chapter 2. The overlap between political opportunity structures and the dissemination modalities is considerable. The political context shapes not only framing possibilities and strategies, but also the organizational repertoire and access to dissemination technologies. The relationship works in the opposite direction as well, since opportunities and constraints for successfully advocating a set of meanings are meaningful as such only when a movement has avenues for communicating them. However, Chapter 2 has focused on identifying the patterns of mutual constitution between the performative structure of SDS’s discourse and the broader discursive environment, thus saying little about the role of dissemination avenues. This chapter focuses on the interaction between the organizational decisions of SDS and structural possibilities that delimited the party’s ability to disseminate its discourse. The accent is thus not on the discourse advocated to the Bosnian audience nor on the political context, albeit these are also discussed insofar as they affected the dissemination modalities. That the topic of this chapter warrants a separate discussion is evidenced by the collapse of several smaller parties that advocated the same or similar master frame in a similar political context, but lacked avenues for its distribution and, consequently, for self-promotion. Few people today remember the Yugoslav Independent Democratic Party, which advocated Serb autonomy in Croatia as early as February 1990, but was eventually entirely marginalized by the rise of Croatian SDS.

The analysis of dissemination modalities is bracketed here into separate discussions for organizational avenues and dissemination technologies. The first section analyzes SDS's interaction with the available models of organization. If SDS's attempt at producing Serb ethnic homogenization was to succeed, the party's organizational forms and strategies had to at least partially overlap with organizational models embedded in the society. In short, the party had to conform to the socially and legally acceptable practices and conventions of interaction and communication. The second part of the chapter discusses SDS's acquisition and deployment of technologies that served as mediums for dissemination of the party's discourse. These refer to mass media technologies, such as printed press, radio and television, congregation sites such as offices, buildings and public squares, and a variety of propaganda items. It further refers to finances, as these can be quickly transformed into material items, or material incentives for gaining new members and activists. Since SDS pursued military solutions to forcibly remove the discursive alternatives, the chapter also deals with access to weaponry.

### **Organizational Repertoire**

During the era of the communist party-state, there were virtually no organizations in Bosnia-Herzegovina that could function independently of the Yugoslav league of communists. The communist discourse infiltrated all aspects of public life, from workplaces and educational institutions to cultural societies and sports clubs. The first signs of civil society emerged only in the late 1980s with the erosion of the regime's legitimacy. In 1987, students of the Sarajevo University won the rights to form a students' organization that could independently influence decisions concerning university issues. Later on, students set up several other organizations that would constitute the core of a civil society in BiH during the late 1980s (Andjelic, 2003, p.82). Yet, as late as March of 1990 the emergent citizens' associations had little utility as avenues for setting up a Serb party in BiH. They had little political influence, and none of them had an ethno-national agenda. While the appeal of ethnic politics among self-identifying Serbs in BiH was on the rise, it was still in the form of dispersed, politically unorganized sensibilities (Andjelic, 2003, p. 128).

The organizational repertoire within Bosnia-Herzegovina for the earliest Serb nationalist activists thus included little more than personal ties, or small circles of friends, colleagues and neighbors. Yet, their organizational capabilities were much greater than the state of BiH's civil

society suggests. By 1990, the discourse that would constitute the SDS coalition had already produced nationalist organizations in the neighboring Serbia, and was increasingly resonant with the Croatian Serbs. Indeed, the support that came from outside of BiH shaped the emergence and rise to prominence of a Serb party in BiH. As the party grew and its agenda evolved with the shifting political context, the organizational repertoire also changed. This discussion covers seven distinct organizational networks that gave rise to SDS and disseminated its discourse: (1) the initial informal networks (2) supporting networks from outside of BiH (3) the Serb Orthodox Church (4) the formalized internal structure of SDS (5) Associations formed by the movement (6) the BiH institutions and (7) parallel institutions established by SDS.

**From informal relations to political mobilization.** The initial resources for establishing a discourse coalition are individuals willing to devote time and labor to political advocacy. Yet, individual roles are highly uneven. The activism of a villager is typically far less consequential than that of someone who possesses high cultural capital, such as a well-known university professor. The professorship also comes with greater social capital, or a web of social connections whose members are inclined to do things for each other. A professor is more likely to have connections with other intellectual elites, student organizations and even political circles.

Indeed, much of the early activism on forming a Serb party in BiH was initiated by a group of distinguished university professors based in the republic's capital. Milorad Ekmecic, Nikola Koljevic, Vojislav Maksimovic, Aleksa Buha, Slavko Leovac and Radovan Vuckovic were all professors at the Faculty of Philosophy of University of Sarajevo. As this circle began to discuss the possibilities for politically mobilizing Serbs in the spring of 1990, it established collaboration with a group of like-minded Sarajevo Serb poets. These included Rajko Nogo, Vladimir Nastic and Branko Cucak, as well as the future leader of SDS Radovan Karadzic, a psychiatrist who had also published several books of poetry. The professors and poets were connected with friendship ties, such as those of Ekmecic and Nogo, and of Koljevic and Karadzic. By early 1990, they had come to share a common, ethnicized narrative of the Yugoslav political moment, and willingness to commit time toward organizing a Serb political party in BiH. As the communist political monopoly collapsed, this network became a site of organizational planning that would make such a party a reality. It began holding meetings on the topic in the downtown Sarajevo apartment of Radovan Karadzic, located at Sutjeska Street no. 4.

One of the earliest Serb nationalist activists in BiH, Vladimir Srebrov, also had personal ties to this network of intellectuals. Srebrov had been a chief librarian at the Faculty of Philosophy, and a close friend of Vojislav Maksimovic. In January 1990, Srebrov became involved in perhaps the first publicized case of Serb nationalist activism in BiH. He collaborated with the newly established Board of Serb Students at the University of Sarajevo to issue a public declaration calling for a forcible crackdown on separatism in Kosovo and the expulsion of Albanian immigrants (“Pravo ime za tu ‘demokratiju’ jeste- Genocid”, 1990). In spring, Srebrov’s ambition to politically organize Serbs linked up with those of Maksimovic, Karadzic and other leading intellectual activists. By June, he emerged as vice-president of the Sarajevo-based SDS initiation committee, which was headed by Karadzic. After the formalization of the party, Srebrov was elected as leader of *Mlada Bosna*, the youth wing of SDS that absorbed the Board of Serb Students at the University of Sarajevo.

The Sarajevo network of intellectuals also served as an embryonic organizational base for rallying possible collaborators. As distinguished professors and poets, the intellectuals enjoyed high social capital that linked them to a broader web of personal and professional acquaintanceships. In spring of 1990, this web became an avenue for disseminating the word of the activism to other Serb intellectuals in Sarajevo who shared similar sentiments. An example of a sociology professor and future secretary of the SDS executive board, Trifko Komad, is the case in point. Komad heard of the activities of Ekmečić, Karadžić, Buha and others from Ilija Guzina, a well-known TV Sarajevo journalist acquainted with Buha (Komad, 2013). Komad subsequently contacted Buha, and the latter invited him to a meeting held in Karadžić’s apartment.

This is not to say that all or most leading Serb intellectuals in BiH shared ethnicized interpretations of Yugoslav politics at this time. The Sarajevo group of intellectual activists should be seen as one part of a broader web of Serb professors and poets, some of which rejected ethnic politics. Indeed, this broader network was a site of exchange of diverse political narratives and unique personal sentiments that defined the boundaries between those Serb intellectuals who would form the leadership ranks of SDS, and those who chose to stay out. Nikola Koljević himself briefly contemplated joining the non-nationalist SRSJ before opting for the Serb party (Research interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Several ethnically Serb professors who had dense

professional ties with Ekmecic, Koljevic, Buha and others turned down an invitation to join the Serb movement. Nenad Kecmanovic, a professor at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Sarajevo, rejected an offer to preside over the nascent Serb party in favor of taking over the top spot of the BiH branch of SRSJ. Another Serb intellectual, surgeon Dragan Kalinic, also elected to join SRSJ ahead of an offer to head what was initially envisioned as a social democratic wing of SDS (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Mirko Pejanovic, Kecmanovic's colleague at the Faculty of Political Science, chose to remain in Socialist politics, leading the Democratic Socialist Alliance in the November 1990 elections (Pejanovic, 2002). There were also Sarajevo-based poets of Serb ethnic background who were acquainted with Karadzic, Nogo and other poet activists but did not share their enthusiasm about Serb ethnic politics. Todor Dutina decided to join SRSJ at this time, albeit he would later participate in SDS's ethno-separatist activities. Poet Marko Vesovic was initially supportive of the post-communist national revivals, but would later emerge as a vocal critic of SDS's ethno-separatism. Other distinguished Serb intellectuals rejected any form of political involvement. One of them was a better known elder brother of Nikola Koljevic, a SANU member academic Svetozar Koljevic. In late 1991 and early 1992, Sarajevo-based Serb poets Dusko Trifunovic and Stevan Tontic became disenchanted with the deepening ethnic divisions, refused to take sides and eventually left Bosnia altogether.

Parallel to the activities in the republic's capital, there were also grassroots activists who worked independently on engaging the ethnically Serb population at various localities across BiH. The affective spillover of nationalist mobilization in Croatia and the surfacing of Muslim and Croat political activism in BiH were motivating the politically animated individual Serbs to gather friends, colleagues and neighbors into organizational precursors of a Serb national movement in BiH. Occurring in the first half of 1990, a time when ethnopolitical parties were still outlawed in BiH, these initial organizational forms were tightly circumscribed by legal constraints. One of them was an informal group that aspired to establish a branch of the Croatian SDS in the Bosnian town of Drvar, but was unable to do so due to legal prohibitions. The leader of the group, Slavko Grahovac, circumvented the ban by registering his committee under a non-national name, Yugoslav Democratic Party (Report on Political Parties in Yugoslavia, 1990). For the same reason, a group of friends, family members, colleagues and neighbors from the town of Nevesinje, led by Boro Zerajic, registered a Party for Human Rights and Democracy (Research

Interview, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013). In the nearby Mostar, a small group of Serb nationalists registered a Democratic Party of Freedom. Another group of local Serbs formed the Party for Democratic Unity in Bijeljina, in what they claimed was a response to the rise of SDA and HDZ (Simic, 1990). In the village of Kukulje near Srbac, local activists Vojo Kupresanin and Vid Janjic spearheaded the formation of a Yugoslav Democratic Party-Fatherland Front. This party was formed as early as March 1990, with the initial mobilization vector being a demand for return of the land that the communist regime had expropriated from large landowners. Its leadership estimated membership at up to 5,000 people from the Srbac area, most of whom, but not all, were ethnic Serbs (Research Interview, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013). In July, the Fatherland Front became part of the broader SDS movement, whose programme linked with specific sensibilities of the landowners by calling for the abolition of landowning maximums.

Besides these formalized organizations, there were a number of informal initiation committees that met in private homes across BiH. One such committee existed in Ljubinje, and was led by Dusan Kozic. The committee coordinated activities with the formalized Party for Human Rights and Democracy, with members of one participating in the meetings of the other (Research Interview, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013). In Banja Luka, the initiation committees were formed by an engineer Boro Sendic and lawyer Bozidar Bojanic. In an eastern Bosnian settlement of Milici, local businessman Rajko Dukic organized a committee that consisted of a couple of dozen people (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Another committee was organized in Eastern Herzegovina by a professional truck driver from Trebinje Bozidar Vucurevic, who was also known locally for writing several poetry books and skillfully playing the Serb folk music instrument of *gusle*. It consisted of local auto-repairmen, bee-keepers, as well as economists and engineers (Cirilovic, 1990). Another group of activists formed in Pale. It included several acquaintances of Radovan Karadzic, who had a house in the town. The committees also existed in Sarajevo suburbs of Vogosca and Nedzarici (Research Interview, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Thus, individual Serbs did not wait for the official lifting of the ban on ethno-national parties to come together into small activist groups. Yet, since this activism was disseminated by means of local personal contacts with friends, neighbors and colleagues, it initially had only local relevance.

These rudimentary activist organizations would acquire significance for the development of a single Serb party in BiH after linking up with activist intellectuals who had the ability to establish coordination between the dispersed groups. Two of the most relevant individuals in this regard were outside of BiH. One was Dobrica Cosic, the most celebrated member of SANU. Cosic was directly involved in the activities of the Sarajevo-based network of Serb intellectuals, with whom he had personal ties. Milorad Ekmecic, a distinguished historian, was a fellow member of SANU. Radovan Karadzic had met Cosic at an event in the 1960s. In the spring of 1990, Cosic held several discussions in his Belgrade apartment with Ekmecic, Koljevic, Buha, Karadzic and other leading Serb intellectuals on the topic of politically organizing Serbs in BiH (Delalic & Sacic, 2007). As the developments would show, his involvement was decisive for the constitution of the leadership of future SDS.

While Cosic possessed the greatest cultural capital and dense social ties to the intellectual circles, his close friend and SANU-member psychiatrist Jovan Raskovic had personal links to various grassroots activists dispersed across BiH. Raskovic's cultural capital among Serbs had been rapidly accumulating in the winter and spring of 1990 through his energetic and widely publicized engagement as president of the Croatian SDS. His web of social connections in BiH included acquaintanceships with a number of early Serb activists. Raskovic was a friend of a fellow psychiatrist Radovan Karadzic, whom he had met at a professional conference. He also knew Vladimir Srebrov, who had initiated contact with him in early 1990. At grassroots level, Boro Sendic and Bozidar Bojanic of the Banja Luka initiation committees and Vid Janjic of the Patriotic Front knew Raskovic prior to their political engagement (Research Interview, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Slavko Grahovac of the Yugoslav Democratic Party was a close friend of Jovan Opacic, Raskovic's leading collaborator in Croatia. Some grassroots activists who did not know Raskovic made contact with him as they began to organize local Serbs. Boro Zerajic of the Party for Human Rights and Democracy and Bozidar Vucurevic of the Trebinje initiation committee thus established a channel of regular communication with Raskovic and gained his endorsement (Research Interview, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

Moreover, the social and cultural capital of the Sarajevo-based network of intellectuals was superior to that of the grassroots committees and parties. The most influential of these was a circle of professors from the Faculty of Philosophy. Their doctorates and professorships at a

leading educational institution in the republic conferred objectivized cultural capital. Their endorsement from Cosic and Raskovic conferred additional respect as leading political authorities. They attracted media interest, which translated into dissemination capacities and further recognition. Within this circle, Milorad Ekmecic stood above the rest. As the only SANU-member academic in the group, widely regarded as one of the best historians in Yugoslavia, his opinion weighed more than that of any other activist in BiH (Research Interviews, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 & December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Indeed, this was an opinion of a person who hailed from Prebilovci, a mono-ethnic Serb village that was the site of one of the largest World War II-era *Ustase* atrocities. Milorad was twelve years old when *Ustase* killed his father, uncle and 76 other members of his extended family (Judah, 1997, p. 127). This trauma shaped Ekmecic's affective dispositions, which unavoidably participated in the constitution of his political preferences, and hence, his discourse. This emotional legacy could only be more pronounced at a time when the Croat nationalist HDZ seized power in Croatia. The enunciative modalities of a leading, SANU-member expert ensured that Ekmecic's discourse would be widely disseminated among Serb activists in BiH.

It was these power relations and dispersed informal networks that would inform the subsequent development of an official party of Serbs in BiH. By May 1990, the Sarajevo-based network of activists had grown to approximately 100 people (Delalic & Sacic, 2007). With the lifting of the ban on ethno-national parties in June, the intellectual circles began to formalize their activities. Cosic, Raskovic, Ekmecic, Buha and Koljevic led the discussions on electing a leader of the future party. The preferred choice of professors from the Sarajevo Faculty of Philosophy, Nenad Kecmanovic, had withdrawn his name from consideration. Cosic's favorite was Ekmecic, but he was unwilling to take over the task. Cosic then proposed other professors, Buha and Koljevic, both of whom also rejected the offer (Delalic & Sacic, 2007). The selection came down to Vladimir Srebrov, who was Raskovic's preference, and Radovan Karadzic, who had been proposed by his long-time friend Koljevic. Ekmecic found Karadzic acceptable, for he bore the same last name as a legendary Serb language reformer Vuk Karadzic. The Sarajevo professors also liked Karadzic's credentials as a psychiatrist, a skill they believed would translate into an ability to understand and connect with mass sentiments (Research interviews, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 & December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013). It was Cosic's preference for Karadzic, however, that propelled the latter from a last-ditch choice of a leader to the front of the Sarajevo-based

activities on forming a Serb party. By June, a 25-member initiation committee was formed to develop the future party's program and statute, and make preparations for the founding assembly. Karadzic was its president, while Srebrov served as vice-president.

It was only in the first part of July that the various initiation committees across BiH would begin acting in a coordinated manner of a single agent. The first large public event was organized by activists from Bosanska Krajina in coordination with the leaders of the Croatian SDS. On July 4<sup>th</sup>, they held a rally in the Bosnian town of Drvar, only 65 kilometers from the Croatian SDS's home base of Knin. Since the BiH Law banned the activities of parties based in other republics, the authorities intervened and cut the rally short. Yet, the intervention occurred only after the guest of honor, Jovan Raskovic, managed to give a rousing five-minute speech to an audience of 4,000 (Sabljic, 1990). More importantly, the event served to link the Sarajevo-based initiation committee with the activists from Krajina. After the rally, Raskovic introduced Krajina activists with the visitors from Sarajevo, including their new leader, Radovan Karadzic. The group then discussed the formation of a single party for BiH, which was to be named Serb Democratic Party, the same as that of Raskovic's party in Croatia (Delalic & Sacic, 2007). They also agreed to hold the party's founding assembly on July 12<sup>th</sup> in Sarajevo.

Parallel to the activities in Drvar, the leaders of the Srbac-based Patriotic Front were busy planning a coordination meeting of more than a dozen small initiation committees and parties. On July 7<sup>th</sup>, they organized a gathering of 13 such organizations in Srbac at which all but one agreed to merge into a single Serb party (Research Interview, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013). The only group that decided to remain separate was the initiation committee of a BiH branch of the right-wing Serbian Renewal Movement (*Srpski Pokret Obnove*- SPO), which had been founded in Serbia by Milosevic's opponent Vuk Draskovic. The leaders of the Patriotic Front learned from Jovan Raskovic of the Drvar agreement to hold the founding assembly of SDS BiH in Sarajevo (Research Interview, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013). They also learned of plans to elect Radovan Karadzic as president of the new party. While some Krajina activists were displeased with the choice of the then little-known Karadzic, Raskovic pacified them in a July 8<sup>th</sup> phone call in which he cited Cosic's endorsement of Karadzic.

The various grassroots groups and the Karadzic-led committee gathered in Sarajevo's Holiday Inn on July 11<sup>th</sup> to make final preparations for the founding assembly scheduled for the

following day (Research Interview, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013). The meeting resulted in an agreement on the statute of SDS BiH and the choice of Radovan Karadzic as the party's first leader. The Holiday Inn event represented the first collective activity of groups that had been dispersed throughout BiH. Yet, there was one notable absence. The Trebinje-based committee led by Bozidar Vucurevic had not been informed of the July 12<sup>th</sup> assembly. The committee would join the party only after it held a separate founding assembly of SDS for Trebinje, a large July 14<sup>th</sup> event attended by several thousand people (Research Interview, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

The founding assembly, which was held on July 12<sup>th</sup> in the *Dom Mladih* hall of Sarajevo's *Skenderija* cultural and sports center, defined the future organization development of SDS in dual ways. First, the assembly used the pre-existing informal networks as raw organizational material for establishing a single, formalized hierarchy of SDS BiH. Radovan Karadzic became the official president of the nascent party, formalizing the status conferred to him by Cosic, Ekmecic and others. The professors from the Faculty of Philosophy chose to stay out of the formal hierarchy, but remained influential behind the scenes by constituting SDS's Council for Interparty Cooperation. The Council would hold weekly meetings with technical experts and the party's top leadership in order to formulate policy recommendations. Radovan Karadzic attended the sessions as a way of learning from the more politically knowledgeable intellectuals, having only a minor role in the discussions (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). The formalized organizational structure of SDS also acknowledged the informal grassroots activism that preceded it by assigning at least one seat on the party's Main Board to each local group that came to Sarajevo for the founding assembly (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). The grassroots initiative thus propelled the likes of Dusan Kozic, Vid Janjic and Boro Zerajic from the politically unknown ordinary citizens to members of a leading organ of the nascent Serb national movement.

Second, the event of the founding assembly energized the ambitions of the dispersed sympathizers who hoped to get involved in Serb ethnic politics in BiH but had lacked avenues for linking up with a broader network of like-minded Serbs. The word of mouth and placard announcements spread the information on the founding assembly to Serb audiences across BiH. Indeed, some of the future high officials of SDS would become involved with the party after hearing of the event. One of them was a future SDS leader for the Romanija region, Milovan

Bjelica, who travelled from his hometown of Sokolac to Sarajevo to attend it. At the assembly's conclusion, Bjelica met Karadzic and other leading personalities, who gave him the party's statute and their endorsement to launch an initiation committee for the municipality of Sokolac (Research Interview, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Similarly, a medical doctor Slobodanka Hrvancanin came to the assembly from Zenica and approached Radovan Karadzic. She was awarded for her initiative with a seat in the party's Main Board.

The initial Main Board, elected at the July 12<sup>th</sup> assembly, carried the task of SDS's subsequent organizational development. Here the party relied on familiar modes of territorial organization, for it created organs at the levels of the existing municipalities and local communities. The members of the Main Board were assigned a group of municipalities in which they were expected to lead the development of SDS municipal boards (Research Interview, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Following the assembly, they went to the field to engage acquaintances or make contact with other locally reputable individuals that they deemed suitable for serving on the boards. Once formed, the municipal organs were tasked with organizing local community meetings that would elect local boards. As these efforts progressed in the summer and early fall of 1990, the municipal and local organs began formalizing themselves by holding dozens of municipal founding assemblies across BiH. Their membership swelled both through personable activist campaigning and with the word of new, community-embedded party organizations spreading to sympathizers. Again, the party reaped large benefits from the pre-existing networks of families and friends. Out of 7,000 SDS members in Sokolac, for example, more than two thirds were registered after individuals voluntarily approached the party offices to sign up not only themselves but also their families, including underage children (Research Interview, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013). The organizational development of SDS thus moved from the initial dispersed activism to centralization, and then back from the center to the local level. This trend would reverse again as the movement's organization fully developed, with lower organs electing representatives to the higher ones in the spring 1991 intra-party elections.

While the local-level efforts were leading to a rapid membership expansion in the summer of 1990, the rising movement had a deficiency of educated cadres relative to its non-nationalist rivals, SKBiH-SDP and SRSJ. Aspiring to create a more balanced image of SDS as a coalition of Serb intellectuals, blue-collar workers and peasants alike, the leading officials

engaged in a targeted recruitment of reputable professionals. The educated cadres were also valuable as candidates to the highest republican offices, such as the BiH presidency and the parliament. It was this recruitment that propelled Biljana Plavsic, the head of a Biology department at Sarajevo's Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, to membership in the BiH presidency. In September of 1990, Nikola Koljevic contacted Plavsic and invited her to a session of the SDS Political Council (Plavsic, 2005). Although Plavsic knew neither Koljevic nor Karadzic prior to the session, Koljevic's influential opinion would lead to her quick rise into one of the party's leading personalities. Koljevic saw Plavsic as a valuable asset, since the party's leading ranks lacked educated women. Moreover, Plavsic was dedicated to Serb ethnic politics and did not have a burden of previous membership in the League of Communists (Research Interview, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013). At the regional level, the leading activists also made recruitment contacts with educated former members of SKBiH. Some of these would go on to become SDS deputies in the Chamber of Citizens of the BiH Parliament (Research Interview, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013). The party's leadership in Bosanska Krajina thus expanded with the likes of lawyers Rajko Kasagic and Radomir Pasic.

The discussion thus far has addressed the political rise of Koljevic, Karadzic and Plavsic, three of the four individuals that would later constitute the core leadership of the SDS coalition and the statelet of *Republika Srpska*. The fourth member, Momcilo Krajisnik, owed his political role to a friendship with Karadzic. Krajisnik and Karadzic first met in 1983 as employees of the same company, Sarajevo's "Energoinvest". In 1985, they stood trial over the alleged missappropriation of public funds for the construction of private houses in Pale, for which they were acquitted four years later. This joint legal trouble brought the two into a close friendship (Stanisic, 1990b). Karadzic also introduced Krajisnik to another one of his friends, Nikola Koljevic. The three subsequently began meeting at least once a year for family Saint's Day celebrations (Koljevic, 2008). At the beginning of the activities on forming a Serb party in BiH, Krajisnik worked on politically organizing Serbs in the settlement of Zabrdje, a suburb of Sarajevo in which he lived. He later became President of the SDS Initiation Committee for his home municipality of Novi Grad, Sarajevo, and was eventually elected to the Parliament of BiH as the Party's deputy (*Prosecutor v. Momcilo Krajisnik*, 2006). In the aftermath of the November 1990 elections, the agreement on division of power between the three winning parties assigned SDS the right to appoint a Speaker of the Parliament. The SDS deputies were unable to

reach an agreement on who should be appointed, prompting Karadzic to step in and introduce his friend Krajisnik as a compromise choice. With his subsequent appointment as the Speaker, Krajisnik found himself in one of the top institutional slots in the republic.

The organizational origins of SDS are thus a story of both the sentiments that inspired local activism, and the capacities of leading activists to channel them toward the birth of a single collective agent. There is little doubt that the various local groups of friends and acquaintances dispersed across BiH would have far greater difficulties overcoming organizational fragmentation had it not been for the social and cultural capital that Cosic, Raskovic, Ekmecic and other prominent leaders and politicians deployed as an instrument of organizational cohesion. On the other hand, the elite-led growth of SDS would have been slower without the energetic individuals who created organizational foundations at the local level and, immediately after the founding assembly, carried the task of extending them to other municipalities and local communities. The motives of these early activists are not entirely certain. There were a number of early contributors who gave small donations to the movement but later became rich (Research Interviews, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013 & November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Some have suggested that a leader of the Milici initiation committee Rajko Dukic, for example, may have been motivated by a desire to protect his business capital, since the communist regime had prosecuted him for the alleged business crimes (Research interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Yet, a genuine political frustration appears to be a primary motive. Engaging in ethnopolitical activism in BiH was risky at a time when ethno-national parties were still banned, and when their future success was far from certain. That ethno-nationalism was indeed a motive is also suggested by the decisions of several leading intellectual activists to turn down official positions that would allow them to acquire large individual power.

**Organizations of the broader discourse coalition.** When analyzing the dissemination modalities one needs to distinguish between the dissemination of master narratives, which offer macro-scale interpretations from collective action frames, which interpret the more immediate developments and issues. Since the master frame of Serb nationalist discourse was informing a wide range of movements of which SDS BiH was only one organization, its dissemination avenues far exceeded those of SDS *per se*. To understand the exposure to SDS's discourse, one

has to consider some of the larger organizations of the broader discourse coalition that were disseminating the common master frame to the audiences in BiH.

The most significant organization for both the assemblage and dissemination of Serb nationalist master frame was SANU. Accounting for SANU's extraordinary influence was the organization's unmatched cultural capital. Starting with the 1986 memorandum, the role of SANU members in Serbian politics progressively increased. With the rise of Slobodan Milosevic, the views of SANU intellectuals expressed in the draft memorandum would find an echo in the discourse of the Serbian government. Between 1988 and 1992, not a single SANU political announcement or statement challenged the regime's policies (Milosavljevic, 2000, p. 296). Milosevic's discourse was thus enhanced by support from intellectual circles, while the SANU discourse gained the dissemination avenues of the regime-controlled media. The media reported heavily on the academy's assemblies, conferences, presentations and exhibitions, and provided space for political commentaries to its prominent nationalist members. During the late 1980s, SANU participated in political discourse as a unitary entity whose public announcements represented the entire institution. Within the institution, however, Dobrica Cosic was spending his immense cultural capital to politicize the academy's scientific activities and gather its members into a single Serb nationalist discourse coalition. Other SANU members either shared or came to passively accept this set of meanings, and, until 1991, there was almost no opposition within the academy to the activities of its politically engaged members (Milosavljevic, 2000, p. 275).

With the emergence of political pluralism in Serbia in 1990, SANU retreated from endorsing Milosevic and reduced its participation on the political scene. Parallel to this, however, its individual members intensified their political activities. While the individual views exposed considerable differences within the academy pertaining to Milosevic's authoritarianism, there was little dissent over the policies of Serb ethno-separatism in Croatia and BiH. One instance of dissent that did occur was a November 1991 appeal for peace issued by 18 SANU academics. The anti-war tone of the appeal departed from the traditional SANU nationalist victimization frames and masculinized interpretations of national interest. Within days, SANU's secretary Dejan Medakovic downplayed the statement as an expression of individual opinions rather than those of the academy. Indeed, most of SANU's politically engaged members continued to extend

support to war aims of the Croatian Serb leaders and the political maneuvers of SDS BiH. Their individual or group statements were frequently made and widely disseminated. Their public speeches at home and abroad were published in state-controlled newspapers, their essays often took up whole pages of daily newspapers, and they gave countless interviews to TV stations and printed media. The daily *Politika* occasionally published Cosic's opinions on its front page, a space usually devoted to major news events. The weekly NIN at times collected opinions of multiple Serb intellectuals on a political topic, which typically offered ethnicized political interpretations.

Another distinguished organization of Serb intellectuals that advocated the same master frame was the Writers' Union of Serbia. Among its ranks were Serbs from BiH as well as from Serbia, including SDS activists Rajko Nogo and Vladimir Nastic. In addition to issuing press releases and organizing conferences and presentations, the Union also published a periodical *Knjizevne Novine*. Some of its members, such as Aleksandar Popovic and Darko Tanaskovic, provided a more specific support to SDS's efforts in BiH by othering Muslims as a "foreign, inferior and threatening factor" (Cigar, 2001, p.23). There were also other organizations in Serbia that were not as involved in political discourse, but whose activities nonetheless promoted an essentialized understanding of ethnicity. Since Serbia was a republic with a titular ethnic nation, many of Serb ethnic institutions had been preserved throughout the communist era. *Matica Srpska*, the oldest Serb cultural and scientific institution, organized events and released publications that celebrated Serb ethnic history, traditions, and notables. The same was true of the Serbian Literary Cooperative, which established institutional ties to the Serb cultural organization *Prosvjeta* as soon as the latter was founded in Sarajevo in June of 1990.

As the Serb nationalist discourse coalition extended into Croatia, it created new avenues for the dissemination of the master frame. This task was first performed by the Croatian SDS, which later spun out the Pan Serbian Assembly, the various institutions of Serb Autonomous Regions and ultimately the separatist Republic of Serb Krajina. The public announcements of these institutions shared the same macro-scale performative structure with that of the broader coalition. For the purpose of disseminating it, the institutions of Serb Krajina had at their disposal local radio stations, periodicals as well as the Serbian state media. In addition to this

para-official institutional framework, Croatian Serbs formed cultural organizations, such as *Prosvjeta* and *Zora*, which promoted ethno-national distinctness and unity.

The network of activists that initiated a Serb ethno-national movement in BiH, and the party's dissemination capabilities in its first two years of existence would likely look radically different without the support of the regime of Slobodan Milosevic. Milosevic's embrace of SANU's nationalist discourse was the defining moment in the constitution of Serb nationalist coalition. As ethno-politicization progressed, the regime's ties with celebrated intellectuals would grow denser, and extend into the expanding network of activists in Croatia and BiH. While Cosic had met Milosevic only in February of 1990, the two had established regular contact by spring. In September of 1990, Jovan Raskovic introduced Radovan Karadzic to Milosevic (Donia, 2014, p.72).

The two would by mid-1991 establish regular telephone contact to coordinate the activities of SDS. Indeed, the official political agenda of Serbia's regime, its satellite governments in Montenegro, Vojvodina and Kosovo, and those advocated by SANU academics and SDS BiH were founded on the same organic vision of a Serb nation. By 1990, government officials spoke almost in unison in support of the agenda of Serb state union. As SDS BiH launched SNV in October 1990, Milosevic's regime gave it a tacit endorsement. A senior member of Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia, Petar Skundric, was a guest speaker. In late 1991, with the exit of the representatives of Slovenia, Croatia, BiH and Macedonia from Yugoslav federal institutions, the latter also became another modality for dissemination of Serb nationalist discourse. The rump institutions, staffed with the representatives of Serbia and Montenegro, continued to issue statements and proclamations, claiming to speak on behalf of the internationally recognized Yugoslav state. They also became sites of coordination between different organizations of the Serb nationalist discourse coalition, with SDS representatives from BiH and Croatia and the representatives of the increasingly ethnicized JNA at times joining into the "expanded" sessions of the Yugoslav presidency. Even the opposition politicians who challenged Milosevic on the grounds of his authoritarianism found little fault with his nationalist metanarrative and endorsed the imperative of Serb state union. This included the secretary of the Democratic Party, Zoran Djindjic, who would later emerge as the leading advocate of democratization in Serbia (Kosanovic, 1991b).

**The Serbian Orthodox Church.** During the communist era, religious organizations were among the few that could function autonomously from the party-state. Yet, the communists discouraged religion and kept the clergy at the margins of social life. The regime also wielded influence within the religious communities, endorsing the compliant clergy and monitoring those suspected of dissidence. With the collapse of the party-state, religious institutions became a dissemination resource for national movements. In BiH, Muslim, Orthodox Christian, and Catholic religious backgrounds have constituted crucial axes of ethno-differentiation, and are nearly coterminous with Muslim, Serb and Croat ethnic backgrounds. Much of the Serb ethnic field of meaning overlaps with that of the religious discourse of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC- *Srpska Pravoslavna Crkva*). Many of the Church's saints are also seen as national heroes, religious rituals are often understood as ethnic practices, and the history of the Church is accepted as a fundamental part of ethnic history. Thus, the relationship between SDS's agenda of Serb "national awakening" and that of SPC was structurally that of mutual reinforcement. The Church was interested in the success of the SDS-led Serb nationalism as it also brought the revival of religious sentiments and, consequently, of SPC's political influence. Conversely, the intensity of religious differentiations was directly proportional to the visibility of ethnic boundaries so important for the victory of ethno-national parties.

Indeed, SDS worked to reinvigorate the SPC on the territory of BiH, while the clergy readily endorsed the party. Karadzic portrayed SPC as a guardian of Serb national culture that should interest both atheist and religious Serbs. While the Church did not officially instruct the faithful to vote for SDS, the insinuation was evident. The SPC's representatives frequently sat in the first rows of SDS meetings dressed in religious garb. Conversely, SDS officials attended religious ceremonies, spoke at commemorations, and held meetings in church premises. The deeply religious Slavko Leovac and Nikola Koljevic were especially active at promoting the link between the party and the church. According to Karadzic, the priests were telling the leaders of SDS that "God sent them to save the Serb kind" (Delalic & Sacic, 2007). When the priests commented on political developments, they reinforced the master narrative of SDS. They saw all Serbs as members of a single national organism, and identified the unity of this organism as a political imperative.

However, structural tendencies do not suffice in explaining the radical commitment of SPC to nationalist ideals. The leadership of the church was more rigorous in pursuit of Serb state union than the leading nationalist politicians. During the wars in Croatia and BiH, the SPC opposed peace proposals to which Milosevic and Karadzic had given their consent. This position was not an outcome of any deterministic property of SPC's mission. The discourse of the church has historically included pragmatist and pacifist themes as well as the religious epics and idealism. That the latter would prevail and inform the church's political position in the early 1990s was a function of power relations between the clergy. The bishops, which together constituted the church's highest organ, the Holy Episcopal Assembly, did not have a monolithic position on ethno-religious nationalism. Bishops Jovan Pavlovic and Sava Vukovic were the leading advocates of diplomacy, cooperation and pacifist policies. In 1991, Bishop Jovan arranged a meeting between the leader of SPC, Patriarch Pavle, and the Croatian Cardinal Franjo Kuharic (Tomanic, 2001, p.179). On the other hand, bishops Atanasije Jevtic, Irinej Bulovic, Amfilohije Radovic and Artemije Radosavljevic saw the political moment of the early 1990s as an epic opportunity for creating an ethno-national state on "Serb" territories of Yugoslavia.

Indeed, the rising influence of bishops Atanasije, Irinej, Amfilohije and Artemije affected SPC's political attitudes during the early 1990s. The four bishops followed the theological strand of their mentor Justin Popovic, a famed Serb theologian known as a radical opponent of ecumenism. Popovic was himself influenced by a controversial Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic, whose writings included anti-semitic narratives and negative framings of democracy, pacifism and religious tolerance (Milosevic, 2006). The four students of Popovic, colloquially known as *Justinovci*, had gained new influence in the SPC community during the decade preceding the wars in Yugoslavia. Irinej and Amfilohije had been elected bishops during the 1980s, while Atanasije and Artemije were chosen only in May of 1991. The first three were also well-regarded professors at Belgrade's Faculty of Theology and members of the Writers' Association of Serbia. It was the writings of Atanasije Jevtic in the early 1980s that marked the SPC's initial discursive turn from conformism with the communist party-state toward Serb ethno-religious nationalism. As early as 1983, the SPC's publication *Pravoslavlje* (Orthodoxy) began publishing a series of Atanasije's columns that revived the frame of Serb national victimization. The columns initially depicted the alleged contemporary suffering of Serbs in Kosovo, and later moved on to historical reflections on atrocities against Serbs during World War II. By the latter part of the 1980s, the

SPC's discursive evolution also included rehabilitation of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic. The writings of Nikolaj began to appear in *Glas Crkve* (Voice of the Church), the publication of the Sabacko-Valjevska diocese. The diocese was headed by Bishop Jovan Velimirovic, Nikolaj's nephew (Byford, 2005, p.41).

By the turn of the decade, the political views of the four followers of Justin Popovic were still facing significant opposition from other members of the clergy. In December of 1990, when the SPC Assembly was electing a Patriarch, none of the *Justinovci* emerged as a serious candidate. The leading critics of ethno-religious exclusivism, bishops Sava and Jovan, enjoyed significant support among the bishops. Sava had received most votes in the first round of voting, and was among the three final candidates for the Patriarchate (Tomanic, 2001, p.67). It was the ceremonial draw from the three final names, rather than the vote, that brought Bishop Pavle to the throne. As Patriarch, Pavle issued frequent calls for non-violence and peaceful resolution of the Yugoslav crisis, but also firmly supported the politics of Serb state union. While the Patriarch was "first among equals", the outspoken *Justinovci* remained influential in forming the official position of SPC. Some commentators have suggested that Pavle's leadership was not strong enough to oppose the militant bishops ("Mirko Dordevic, o sprezi pravoslavne crkve sa strukturama političke moci", n.d.). Moreover, the discourse of the Church could not remain isolated from the broader political context of the early 1990s, which reinforced essentialist understandings of ethno-religious differences. The times of ethno-homogenization and armed mobilization favored simple dichotomizations of good versus evil, and hence, the religious discourse that could offer a higher purpose for national struggle and sacrifice. While the SPC had an uneasy relationship with the regime of reformed communist Milosevic, Serb nationalism had sidelined their differences. By fall of 1991, as the war raged in Croatia, the Church nearly stopped talking about communism (Tomanic, 2001, p.32). Also, Milosevic had an interest in promoting the SPC's "hawks", since their discourse could help with the mobilization efforts. The state-controlled media thus dedicated space to the commentaries, speeches and interviews with *Justinovci*.

The discursive alliance with such an SPC provided a modality of "divine" legitimization for SDS's agenda in BiH. As early as March 1991, at a gathering of Serbs from BiH who lived in Serbia, Bishop Amfilohije received a standing ovation for saying that "God has given Serbs

another opportunity to achieve their dream of living in a single state” (Kosanovic, 1991a). In October, Patriarch Pavle stated that Serbs were going through genocide for the second time in this century, and that the state had to protect them by all means, including the military ones (“Drugi put u ovom veku srpski narod je suocen sa genocidom”, 1991). The SPC assembly rejected potential independence of Croatia and BiH on the grounds that internalization of republican borders would “sever the flesh” of Serb national organism (Tomanic, 2001, p.125). The same metaphorical construct that Karadzic used to explain the imperative of state unity to Serbs of BiH was thus being echoed by a supreme religious authority.

**Formal structure of SDS BiH.** An understanding of how SDS disseminated its discourse also requires a look at a division of activist labor and internal power relations conferred by the movement’s official hierarchy. The first hierarchy was adopted at the July 1990 Founding Assembly, but was significantly redefined and expanded at the second party assembly held one year later. The initial statute defined six central organs, consisting of the assembly, president, main board, executive board, supervisory board, and court of honor (Karadzic, 1990). It authorized the founding assembly to elect the president, main board and supervisory board, while the main board elected the executive board and the court of honor. The assembly was the highest organ and was required to meet at least once a year, with the main board serving as the highest authority between yearly meetings. In practice, however, the Main Board met only sporadically. The early day-to-day activities of SDS were handled by a 5-member Executive Board that the Main Board established in August of 1990. The Executive Board served as a regular channel of communication between the top leadership and grassroots activists. Subsequently expanded with four more members, this board met frequently to coordinate the formation of municipal and local organs, organize rallies and prepare a list of SDS candidates for municipal and republican institutions (Ostojic, 1991). In addition to these central organs, the statute provided for eight regional and four subregional organs<sup>10</sup>. This was an intermediary level established for the purpose of coordinating activities between central organs and those at the municipal and local level.

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<sup>10</sup> Regional boards were those for Bosnian Krajina, Central Bosnia, East Bosnia, East Herzegovina, Northern Bosnia, Western Bosnia, Southeastern Bosnia and Western Herzegovina. Subregional boards were those for areas determined to be of special interest, including Ozren, Romanija, Semberija and Glasinac (Javnost).

When it came to the functioning of municipal and local organs, the initial statute said nothing. As discussed earlier, the creation of these organs was led by informal engagements of the Main Board rather than any official procedure. By the first week of November, the municipal and regional organs held over a hundred founding assemblies (Duric, 1990c). They also organized dozens of public forums, promotions and conventions. Once constituted, the local and municipal boards and assemblies became situated within a system of power relations that regularized the capacities and mutual relations of all organs. The municipal were tasked with implementing the party's policies, but had the autonomy to define local relations and needs, and propose candidates for municipal and republican assemblies. Prior to the 1990 elections, members of municipal assemblies proposed SDS candidates to the Chamber of Municipalities of BiH Parliament. After the elections, municipal boards made autonomous appointments of personnel to the municipal posts allocated to SDS. They also constituted a distinct modality for disseminating the party's collective action frames to wider audiences by holding press conferences and releasing public statements. This referred to both the developments of municipal importance and the commentaries regarding the broader political context.

The local boards here served as a connective tissue between SDS as a collective political agent and the larger populations of people who fell or could conceivably fall into the Serb ethno-national category. The boards were tasked with disseminating the party's discourse directly to local residents, a modality whose paralinguistic qualities fostered an immediate and personal exchange of affective sensibilities. Each member was typically tasked with approaching 10 to 15 houses of ethnic Serb families with the party's propaganda material (Kljakic, 1990). In the Sarajevo neighborhood of Dobrinja, for example, members of the local board were divided into 9 areas covering about 1,300 apartments, with each member tasked with recruiting 15 new members (Pejovic, 1991). Besides this recruitment, local activists worked to maximize compliance to the policies of top leadership by disseminating the collective action frames through a continuous personable exchange with membership and the ethnically Serb population at large. Each local board member was thus responsible for keeping contact with 10 to 15 households, for a total of approximately 200 households per each board (R Interview 3). The boards also gathered information on the activities of the target population, monitoring to see if they would give support for another party (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

The expansion of membership affected the organizational structure of SDS in several ways. At grassroots levels, the membership size dictated the numbers of local boards. In local communities where there was insufficient support for creating local boards the party was represented by trustees. At the top, the party formed new expert councils and redefined relations between leading officials. The Council for Interparty Cooperation was divided into thematical councils on the topics of healthcare and social policy, culture and education, economy and human rights. It also included the Political Council, consisting of the same academics that initiated the party in the spring of 1990. As the party expanded, so did its Main Board. It acquired representatives from boards of those municipalities that also served as regional headquarters (Ostojic, 1990).

In April 1991, SDS held elections for its local and municipal organs. The elections demonstrated the systematic nature of relations within the party. The existing local boards organized local assemblies, or the gatherings of all party members in local communities, which then secretly voted for new 15 to 20-member local boards. Each board subsequently elected a president, who automatically became a member of the municipal board, as well as the community's representatives in a municipal assembly. The assembly then voted for 20 to 25 members of a municipal board who would join those who were there by virtue of presiding over the local board (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Only two thirds of the municipal board, however, could be elected at this level, with the party's president having the right to propose candidates for one third of the board. The President made a list of such candidates, from which the rest of the board members chose their colleagues (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Each municipal organ then elected representatives to the top organ in the hierarchy, the SDS assembly. The procedure thus provided for participation of each party member in electing its officials, while also allowing the President to influence the staffing of municipal boards.

These elections were a preparation for the second SDS Assembly, which was held on July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1991. The Assembly re-elected Radovan Karadzic as the party's leader and chose a 45-member Main Board. It also adopted a new statute that incorporated the organizational realities that had developed during the first year of activism. The revised statute expanded with sections that dealt with municipal and local organs, formalizing the procedures for their constitution that were used to carry out the April 1991 elections. When it came to the central organs, the statute

formally added the party's advisory councils as the seventh organ and replaced the Court of Honor with a Statutory Council. It also specified the composition of the assembly, which was to consist of 300 deputies chosen by lower level assemblies. Each deputy represented roughly 2,000 members. Moreover, the statute acknowledged the growing stature of the party's president, Radovan Karadzic. It conferred upon the position of a president a right to make political decisions on behalf of SDS and propose up to a third of the Main Board. The new statute thus paved the way for a military-style centralization that would ensue in the latter part of 1991. Karadzic had himself bragged that there was "no statute that gives greater power to a single man, or a single board, than our (SDS) statute" (Karadzic, 1992).

The capacities of the president were also enhanced by the formation of a covert security structure within the party that was designed to collect intelligence and report it to the top of the party hierarchy. At the top was a "National Security Council", made up of president of SDS, seven SDS members of the BiH government, five members of the MUP, and nine parliamentary deputies from different regions of BiH. The president appointed members of the Council, managed its work, and coordinated the entire system. The nine members of the parliament organized data collection in their respective regions, forming two-person detachments in each of the SDS municipal boards. The members of the BiH government were tasked with organizing detachments that could monitor the work of each of the ministries. The system thus kept Radovan Karadzic well informed on the workings of both SDS grassroots organs and the BiH institutions ("The Intelligence and Security System of the Serbian Democratic Party", n.d.).

While the formalized rules and procedures served to structure relations between different organs, the party's collective agency was also shaped by the distribution of informal cultural capital between its leading officials. The most consequential was the growing reputation of Radovan Karadzic. During the 1990 election campaign, Karadzic served as little more than a public voice of the party's political council, which was an informal decision-making center behind the scenes (Andjelic, 2003). Yet, Karadzic was rapidly acquiring cultural capital and political experience through public performances that connected well with the affective sensibilities of Serb masses, particularly those from rural areas. By 1991, he emerged as a clear leader of the party. While there was a degree of democracy at the top of the hierarchy, Karadzic's superior capital translated into a disproportionate influence opinions of central

organs. The Main Board, which had independent-minded members and statutory powers to check the behavior of the President, did not meet frequently. Moreover, Karadzic sometimes directly contacted Slobodan Milosevic and the JNA and gave orders to municipal organs unbeknownst to the members of the Main Board (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Besides Karadzic, the heavily publicized work of the BiH Presidency and the Parliament was fashioning their SDS members, Nikola Koljevic, Biljana Plavsic and Momcilo Krajisnik as the leading faces of the party. This would later translate into their election to the top leadership of Republika Srpska.

These formal and informal relations, then, jointly constituted a form of delegation that concentrated the totality of the social capital of SDS members in the hands of a small group of leaders. This concentration authorized the leaders to speak and act on behalf of the entire movement, allowing the dispersed individuals to act as a single agent. It effectively gave a small group of individuals a disproportionate influence in defining ethno-national interests. This is not to say that the leaders could define policies in an *ad hoc* fashion, especially considering that the ethno-political developments had built affective momentum that autonomously delimited a range of policy possibilities. Yet, the internal delegation of capital conferred upon the top leadership a disproportionate ability to moderate these sensibilities, or channel them toward some policies rather than others. This would become evident in early 1992, as SDS leaders yielded to the pressures of opportunity structures to moderate the imperative of Serb state unity with a plan to decentralize BiH.

Considering that SDS sought to appeal to the widely diverse sentiments of individuals of Serb ethnic background, the achievement and maintenance of the party as a single collective agent was not a simple task. Yet, the emotionally charged ethno-political rivalry maintained high levels of ethnic solidarity, and thus fostered cohesion. Indeed, the coalition experienced only isolated cases of internal dissent. The first notable split occurred at the outset, causing a transformation in the envisioned structure of the party as having three wings- Populist, Social Democratic, and Youth Wing. In August, the Main Board suspended Vladimir Srebrov, the president of the *Mlada Bosna* youth branch of SDS, whom the rest of the leadership had accused of militancy. It also entrusted the Party's cultural programme to *Prosvjeta* and abandoned the division between the Social Democratic and Populist branches. Srebrov's departure did not create larger splits. Since Srebrov had leadership ambitions, his departure only served to solidify

the role of Karadzic and his supporting intellectuals. As the party's membership homogenized in 1991, there were several disagreements over tactical matters. In October, after the BiH parliament adopted the Declaration on Sovereignty, some members of the Main Board wanted SDS deputies to remain in the official bodies while others advocated a walkout (Caspersen, 2010). The outcome was a compromise that kept the deputies in the parliament but also initiated the creation of a separate Serb assembly. Also in late 1991, as well as early 1992, the leaders of SDS in the Bosanska Krajina region began calling for greater independence from the headquarters in Sarajevo, and advocating a union of the region with the Knin Krajina in Croatia. Yet the division did not penetrate the leading ranks of the party, which were eventually able to pacify the faction by evoking the imperative of ethno-national unity. There were thus no major divisions within SDS over its agenda of either preserving a rump Yugoslavia or carving out separate Serb "ethnic areas" of BiH.

**The broader coalition of SDS BiH.** When analyzing the internal organization of SDS discourse coalition, one must look beyond the official political party. Parts of the coalition were also civil society organizations that its activists initiated and managed. While these organizations did not explicitly seek to attract new commitments to SDS, they disseminated the same ethnicizing discourse. These were mono-ethnic Serb cultural, humanitarian, sports and other associations that focused on ethnicization of these diverse segments of public life. By forming these organizations, SDS activists created new enunciative modalities for the performance of the same discourse. An advocacy of Serb "national awakening" by the official political party was always to some degree infiltrated with the implication of politicking. In contrast, ethnic narratives, symbols and practices were more likely to appear as "natural" or "real" artifacts of the world when performed by cultural, humanitarian, and other overtly non-political establishments. Cultural organizations also served as sites of "re-education" in long lost ethnic traditions.

The first and the foremost of such Serb organizations in BiH was the *Prosvjeta* cultural society. The society, which had been outlawed by communist authorities in 1949, was reestablished in Sarajevo on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1990. Its founders were the same Serb intellectuals who were at the time also working on organizing a Serb political party. The society's elected president was Vojislav Maksimovic, while the two vice-presidents were Vladimir Nastic and Aleksa Buha. In the following months, *Prosvjeta* would develop an elaborate network of

branches across BiH, which included holding founding assemblies in dozens of municipalities. While the locus of its activities was the promotion of Serb ethnic history and revival of cultural practices, the society at times also engaged in a more overt political advocacy. Prior to the November 1990 elections, the society's main board thus issued a message to Serbs to vote for a party that would nurture Serb "culture, physical integrity, and spiritual unity" ("Vratiti Njegosevu kapelu", 1990). While it refrained from explicitly naming the SDS, the insinuation was evident. As the political conflict in BiH escalated in 1991 and early 1992, *Prosvjeta* also provided explicit support to SDS's policies. In February of 1992, it released a statement framing the BiH independence referendum as directed against Serb spirituality and culture ("Referendum- antisrpski cin", 1992).

In addition to *Prosvjeta*, SDS was implicated in the formation of several other ethnic associations. In December of 1990, the party led the establishment of a Serb humanitarian organization *Dobrotvor*. Its leader was Aleksandar Divcic, one of the founding members of SDS who participated in the earliest discussions held in Karadzic's apartment. Divcic later became a member of the party's Main Board. *Dobrotvor* also supported the renewal of a humanitarian and cultural organization of Serb women, *Kolo Srpskih Sestara*. In late April of 1991, high ranking members of SDS participated in the renewal of a Serb cultural and sports organization *Srpski Soko* (Kovacevic, 1991). The party's leadership also helped Bosnian Serb activists who lived in Serbia launch an Association of Serbs from BiH. While these organizations were officially not part of SDS, their regional and local branches held a multitude of conferences, presentations, concerts, folklore nights, sporting events, and other discursive performances that applied an ethnic frame to every imaginable aspect of cultural life in BiH. As such, these performances were no less important for Serb "national awakening" as the activities of the officially political SDS party.

**Institutional Modality.** SDS's success in the November 1990 elections translated into a considerable presence in the republican institutions of BiH. The party's candidates, Nikola Koljevic and Biljana Plavsic, won both Serb seats in the 7-member presidency. When it came to the parliament, SDS won 26.15 percent of seats in the Chamber of Citizens, and 34.56 percent in the Chamber of Municipalities (Arnautovic, 1996, p.108). After the three victorious parties divided the leading posts, SDS gained the right to appoint president of the assembly, president of

the Chamber of Municipalities, and BiH's representative to the Yugoslav federal presidency. It appointed chairmanship in eight out of thirty assembly committees and commissions (Treanor, p.64). The party also gained posts in the government, including that of a vice president for internal affairs, and the ministries of forestry, judiciary, agriculture, finance and information ("Stranke podijelile mandate", 1990).<sup>11</sup> At the municipal level, it won an absolute majority of seats in 30 and a relative majority in another 7 municipal assemblies, out of a total of 109. (Arnautovic, 1996, p.118).

With the electoral victory, SDS acquired capabilities to disseminate its discourse in a modality of BiH institutions. The statements of Plavsic, Koljevic, and other elected SDS candidates now also became those of BiH officials. In this form, they infiltrated media reports, official gazettes and other avenues that publicized government work. The institutional presence also gave rise to SDS Deputies' Club, a new organ of the SDS coalition that gathered the party's deputies in the BiH parliament. Headed by the SDS founding intellectual Vojislav Maksimovic, the Club had its office in the Parliament building and met prior to and during breaks in parliamentary sessions to coordinate collective activities of SDS deputies. Furthermore, the party gained capacities to legislatively sediment its successful ethnicization campaign. While SDS did not have a majority needed to institutionally control the future status of BiH, ethnicization was the shared goal of all three winners. As chapter 2 has mentioned, SDA, SDS and HDZ worked together on enshrining ethno-differentiation in all domains of public life. The three victors shared all executive posts among each other at both the republican and the municipal levels. The parties divided ministries and parliamentary commissions exclusively between themselves. They also agreed on a power-sharing scheme at the municipal level, which gave each party a right to appoint municipal executives, managers of public companies and even school principals in the quantities that corresponded to a percentage of votes it won at the municipal level. Despite winning between twenty and twenty-five percent of the vote, a total that exceeded the HDZ vote and was comparable to those of SDS, the non-national parties were entirely excluded from the

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<sup>11</sup> Out of eight SDS-appointed ministers, only the Minister of Information, Velibor Ostojic, was an official member of SDS, Others had been ethnically Serb members of the previous, communist-controlled BiH government. While SDS officially explained that these individuals were kept due to their technical expertise and experience, some high ranking members of SDS have suggested that they were the loyalists of Milosevic's regime inserted to monitor the work of both BiH's government and SDS (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). In any case, this group of ministers would remain in Serb ethnic politics until the outbreak of the war, and go on to constitute the government of the Serb statelet in BiH in 1992.

division of executive power. The institutional modality thus allowed ethnicization, including that of SDS, to penetrate all realms of public life.

However, SDS's discourse attained the greatest performative power in municipalities where the party won an absolute majority of votes. The control of local governments allowed it to discursively inscribe Serb ethnicity onto public surfaces, as in the naming streets after ethnic heroes, erecting monuments to past ethnic leaders, constructing new churches or using public spaces for ethnic manifestations. The party officials also gained control of municipal Secretariats for People's Defense, which then made autonomous decision on whether to cooperate with the JNA. Most importantly, however, local governments in control of SDS served as institutional building blocks for engineering ethno-territorial separation. The municipalities thus unilaterally joined to create communities of municipalities, which later became the SAOs, and ultimately merged into the separatist Serb republic. When SDS organized a Serb plebiscite in November of 1991, the municipalities it led provided voter registration lists, premises and other support, while in other municipalities polling stations were established in private houses and SDS offices. As the latter part of the chapter discusses, the control of municipal institutions also allowed SDS to acquire local weaponry, media technologies and other material resources that were crucial for forcibly eliminating its discursive opposition. This included several municipalities where the party had won a relative majority of votes, but later attained an absolute majority as some Serb deputies from non-national parties defected to its side.

Once social movements are institutionalized they typically moderate their goals and shift to organizational maintenance. Ethno-politicization in Yugoslavia, however, was escalating in 1991 to the point of making the institutional framework obsolete. SDS was not able to prevent BiH's independence by relying on the incapacitated Yugoslav constitution or the collapsing federal institutions. At the level of BiH, it was persistently outvoted by the more numerous advocates of BiH's sovereignty. To achieve its imperative objective of keeping the Serbs of BiH in the same state in Serbia, the party had to look beyond the existing institutional repertoire.

**Parainstitutional modality.** SDS was also disseminating its discourse in the modality of self-declared institutions of Serb peoples in BiH. The party both established and ran these para-institutions, proclaiming them as superior to those of BiH. When emitted from these sites, SDS's decisions came in the form of a dictate- they implied the non-negotiable 'will of the Serb nation'.

Backed up with capable implementation mechanisms, the para-institutions served as a quasi-legal framework for creating favorable realities on the ground.

The first Serb para-institution in BiH was the Serb National Council (SNV), established in Banja Luka in October of 1990. For the purpose of creating the Council, SDS gathered the representatives of its main board, its political council and the Serb cultural society of *Prosvjeta*. It also invited members of other parties and prominent non-party affiliated Serbs. While SNV issued several proclamations prior to the electoral victory of SDS, in its aftermath the Council went inactive. As SDS officials moved to create ethno-separatist institutions in BiH in 1991, they decided to tweak the existing institutional repertoire rather than activate the SNV. The first step was joining the municipalities where it had won the elections into regional units, or communities of municipalities, which served as an intermediate organ between SDS's top leadership and municipal organizations. This regionalization had both a grassroots and elite component. In the traditionally regionalist Bosanska Krajina, local SDS activists pressured for the creation of the ZOBK, while the decisions to form other regions came from the Main Board (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Initially, the municipalities merged into three communities; those for Bosanska Krajina, Romanija and Eastern and Old Herzegovina (Treanor, 2002). SDS thus made use of two existing institutional provisions: the available municipal institutions and the constitutional right of municipalities to join into larger associations based on common interest. In September of 1991, the community of municipalities of Bosanska Krajina was declared Autonomous Region of Krajina (ARK- *Autonomna Regija Krajina*), while the other two were transformed into SAOs. The leadership of SDS also led the creation of several additional SAOs.

These regional units effectively produced first fragmentation of BiH's institutions. The decisions of ARK and SAOs were considered binding on their member municipalities. When the BiH Constitutional Court declared them null and void, it caused no palpable effect. The final authority in the newly established regions rested not with any state institutions but with SDS. The party's leadership had a direct presence in the regional organs, as all regional assemblies included deputies who were also members of SDS's Main Board. Indeed, the SAOs served as little more than a *realpolitik* tool of SDS's top leadership that had initiated them. The SAOs wielded no autonomous authority, and served no purpose other than disseminating the discourse

of the leadership in the modality of a Serb ethno-national institution. The only region that exercised autonomous capacities was ARK (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

The process of integrating the regions into a single para-state organization at the level of BiH began with the formation of the Serb assembly in October of 1991. By this time, the radicalization of ethnic politics had also led several non-SDS Serb deputies in the BiH parliament to join the Serb ethno-separatist project. The formation of Serb para-institutions at the republican level was increasingly concentrating power within the SDS coalition in the positions occupied by the party's top leadership. The organs at the level of regions, municipalities and local communities were receiving orders from and reported to the senior leaders. In December of 1991, the SDS main board issued detailed secret instructions to the party's municipal leaders, directing those in the SDS-led municipalities to place themselves in the service of Serb ethno-territorialism, while instructing others to establish separate Serb municipalities that would then join the emergent RSBiH (Hanson, 2002, p.11). With the January 9, 1992 declaration of RSBiH, regional and municipal SDS para-institutions were integrated into the unified para-institutional framework. In January, an Official Gazette of RSBiH was launched. The Gazette published the decisions and acts of the statelet's assembly, giving them the force of law for the lower level organs. The party/para-state hierarchy became even more verticalized with the establishment of municipal crisis staffs, which brought together the municipal leaders of SDS, Territorial Defense and Police. These *ad hoc* organs played a crucial role in the transition to armed mobilization, as they placed local material and human resources in service of the territorial takeover by RSBiH/SDS. The crisis staffs were organized in municipalities per instructions from party leadership, and were constituted by a narrow group of officials who temporarily assumed the capacities of municipal institutions. They met frequently, often daily, and were tasked with implementing orders from the top. Its members included representatives of the party's assembly, who served as a direct connection to the top of the hierarchy. Thus, as the crisis neared its violent climax, Serb national interests were being defined by an increasingly narrow circle of people.

That this wide range of organizations both within and outside of the SDS coalition inhabited the common ethno-nationalist discourse, and that their discursive acts contributed to the same political goal, is evidenced by several attempts to bring them together under a common umbrella. The most ambitious was the March 1991 initiative by Radovan Karadzic to establish a

Serb National Council, an organ that would consist of the representatives of major parties in Serbia, SDS BiH, Serb leaders in Croatia, distinguished Serb intellectuals and the representatives of Serbian Orthodox Church. The initiative quickly collapsed amid conflicting leadership aspirations, but not before the invited representatives developed a Draft Declaration on Serb national unity. The Declaration summed up the common denominator of Serb nationalist discourse coalition- it saw the Serb ethnic nation as a single organism that could be preserved only through national and state unity (“Zalaganje za Jugoslaviju kao demokratsku saveznu drzavu slobodnih gradjana i ravnopravnih naroda”, 1991). Another meeting of the various components of the broader coalition was the conference of Serb intellectuals, held in Sarajevo in late March of 1992. The conference gathered 500 Serb intellectuals, as well as the representatives of *Matica Srpska*, “Writers’ Union of Serbia”, the Serb Orthodox Church and other smaller Serb cultural organizations. The conference decided to establish itself as a permanent organ that would meet once a year or as needed to define interests of Serb peoples and the mechanisms for their implementation (Rakocevic-Novakovic, 1992c). Within days, however, the Bosnian War would break out in full force and concentrate power for defining and implementing Serb interests in the hands of wartime leaders. It was not a coincidence that these leaders also led SDS BiH.

### **The Technologies of Dissemination**

This part of the chapter discusses material mediums that disseminated the discourse of SDS to mass audiences in BiH. These modalities were distinct from those discussed in the first part of the chapter insofar as they refer to technologies that raised the levels of exposure to SDS’s discourse beyond those which could be achieved by human networking alone. The following discussion discusses three such mediums: financing, mass media technologies, and weaponry.

**Money.** The success of a discourse coalition in promoting a desired set of meanings is a function of its financial capabilities. As a technology of economic exchange, money is transformable into a wide array of technological mediums that can magnify discursive dissemination. These may be as large as printing and broadcast technologies that can be used for developing a movement’s own newspaper and TV station. They can also be as small as tiny surfaces for discursive inscription, such as pens, badges, balloons, notepads, shirts, flags and key-chains. Movements use money for both acquisition and rent. They rent media space, as is the

case with TV and radio commercials and ads in the printed media. They also rent congregation sites, such as halls and offices. When organizing rallies and other large gatherings, coalitions buy or rent sound systems to amplify the performances. Money is also needed for covering a wide range of activists' expenses, from travel to food and lodging. In the case of SDS, transportation expenses accrued from the beginning, as the party transported supporters from rural areas to bolster its rallies in the cities (Andjelic, 2003). SDS also needed money for financing its para-state institutions, acquiring weapons and supplying the paramilitaries.

Money can also serve as a technological medium for directly acquiring human resources, which is the ultimate goal of discourse coalitions. Human resources typically refer to supporters who have internalized the advocated meanings in their own beliefs, desires and passions. With such cognitive dispositions, supportive masses stabilize a discourse into a social structure by performing and reproducing desired practices and, in some cases, engaging in further political activism. However, the coalitions can also acquire human resources without necessarily producing these desired subjects. Some people join a movement or offer services to it in exchange for material or financial compensation. Money also provides incentive for activists to intensify their labor in pursuit of the coalition's goal. Conversely, some may be cognitively inclined to support the movement's political agenda, but may end up joining an opposing movement that offers better financial promises. Moreover, money and the productive power of a discourse are intertwined in mutual constitution, as people consciously and unconsciously tend to internalize the meanings that they perceive as most capable of improving their material livelihoods.

In the case of SDS BiH, money was initially needed to cover expenses, with financial incentives being offered from the party's budget only at the later stages of activism. During the first year of the party's existence, the activities of its leaders and activists had been voluntary. Even after the beginning of SDS-driven regionalization, the President of the ZOBK Assembly, Vojo Kupresanin, had claimed that he did not have a salary, a secretary or an office (Preradovic, 1991b). Yet, in late July of 1991, SDS's Executive Council passed several decisions intended to professionalize the party. The decisions provided for a salary of the president and the creation of six professional departments. Salaries were also approved for secretaries of each department, as well as their accounting personnel, finance specialists, typists and couriers. The decision also

provided for the hiring of security personnel (“Izabran Izvršni odbor Srpske demokratske stranke Bosne i Hercegovine”, 1991)<sup>12</sup>.

In the initial stages, SDS’s activities were financed primarily by means of private donations. Activists often used personal funds and premises to travel and organize gatherings (Research Interviews, November 16<sup>th</sup> 2013 and November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013). During the 1990 elections campaign, SDS received donations from a variety of private sources. Two of the largest financiers at this time were Bosnian Serb businessmen, Danilo Veselinovic and Jovan Tintor. Tintor had previously been an innkeeper, and an owner of a profitable painting business (“Jovan Tintor se predao”, 2012). Veselinovic provided business space for early SDS meetings (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Both Tintor and Veselinovic were awarded for their contribution with seats on SDS’s Main and Executive Boards. Another businessman, Sinisa Koprivica, owner of a profitable *Koprivica-Trade*, has claimed that he donated three million Deutch Marks to the party (Delalic & Sacic, 2007). SDS also received donations from Serb diaspora associations in Germany, Switzerland, United States and Canada.

Furthermore, SDS made earnings through *Javnost*, a company founded in the summer of 1990 by Radovan Karadzic’s wife Ljiljana and three of the party’s founding members Danilo Veselinovic, Miroslav Toholj and Dusan Kozic. *Javnost* was producing the party’s newspaper that went by the same name. The party also collected membership fees in the amount defined in the statute as one percent of a member’s income. Although the amounts were small and collected only sporadically, they are notable considering that the party claimed membership of 600,000 by November of 1990. Initially, the statute provided for half of the fee to go into an account of the party’s central organs, with the other half to financing local activities. This was later revised to leave a greater share to local and municipal organs. In addition to the official political party, the coalition’s cultural organization *Prosvjeta* charged its own fee from members. SDS also raised revenue by selling flags, shirts and other items on which it had imprinted the party’s symbols.

After the electoral victory, the party began receiving substantial income from the BiH budget. An SDS Executive Board financial report for 1991 showed that over 60 percent of the

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<sup>12</sup> The decision established six commissions, one each for: social activities, information, agriculture forestry and waterpower, economic and development issues, staffing and organizational issues, and interethnic and interparty cooperation.

party's income came from the republican fund for financing parliamentary parties. The report listed private contributions and business activities as other major sources of income, with the latter referring to sales of newspapers and other marketing material by the *Javnost* Company. Membership fees continued to be collected only sporadically, amounting to less than 4 percent of the income. The expenses included various forms of advertising, rent of vehicles and premises, daily allowances, personal earnings, fuel consumption, aid to refugees and so on. The Board reported a budget surplus, which was carried over into 1992 (Blazic, Grubacic & Sekulic, 1991). When it came to financing regionalization, SDS BiH also used budgets of municipalities that constituted "Serb regions".

Furthermore, SDS's financial sources were expanded through highly profitable illicit trade. The party's local and regional control of vast stretches of BiH's territory, coupled with the erosion of the republican and federal institutional framework, created large opportunities for various forms of informal trade. Taking advantage of these opportunities were several firms with connection to SDS's leadership core. The largest one of these was a *Boksit* Company based in the eastern Bosnian community of Milici, which belonged to the municipality of Vlasenica. The company's General Manager, Rajko Dukic, had been elected President of SDS's Executive Council in July of 1991 ("Izabran Izvršni odbor Srpske demokratske stranke Bosne i Hercegovine", 1991). Brother of Momcilo Krajisnik, Mirko, was its representative in Sarajevo. In 1991, *Boksit* had joined forces with SDS BiH and Belgrade's *Jugopetrol* to engage in a profitable trade of fuel and oil. *Jugopetrol* had been taking oil from Federal Reserve warehouses on the territory of BiH and forwarding it to *Boksit*. SDS was responsible for securing *Boksit* the position of a main oil supplier in BiH in exchange for a commission of just under 5 percent (Camo, 1992b). Moreover, the scheme extended to SDS-affiliated managers at the local level. In Zvornik, for example, *Boksit* supplied the largest local employer, the *Birac* plant, whose manager Jefto Subotic ensured that the SDS-established crisis staff would be supplied with fuel (Toal & Dahlman, 2011, p. 119).

In late 1991, Rajko Dukic and Mirko Krajisnik extended their business scheme by establishing a company *Novi Privrednik*. *Boksit* supplied *Novi Privrednik* with fuel and fuel trucks, which in turn traded fuel within Bosnia. The company was also involved a large-scale fuel trade between Serbia and Croatia during the war in Croatia ("Vlast je unosan biznis", 2005).

According to Dukic, *Novi Privrednik* earned a 3 percent margin, which went into SDS's funds (Delalic & Sacic, 2007). The company also had special import ties with Serbia. During Serbia's economic blockade against BiH, *Novi Privrednik* was able to import truckloads of flour, milk and other merchandise from Serbia into BiH without disruption. The merchandise was then delivered to municipal branches of SDS, or to proven Serb businessmen. The company charged wholesale prices to Serbs, and retail prices to Muslims (Camo, 1992a).

A publicized example of mutual reinforcement between SDS's institutional control and its allied business enterprises was the takeover of *Energopetrol* gas station in Milici in early 1992. The Milici Local Community, which was part of the Vlasenica municipality, decided to bar Sarajevo's *Energopetrol* from operating the station under the pretense that it hadn't been providing an adequate supply of fuel. To address the alleged problem, the community placed the station at the disposal of *Boksit*. When *Energoinvest* protested, the SDS-member president of Vlasenica's Municipal Assembly merely concurred with the takeover (Bikic, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1992). Another example was the exploitation of natural resources in the areas of BiH under the local control of SDS. The party organized export of timber to Serbia and used the money to finance its operations (Camo, 1992b).

There is anecdotal evidence of a variety of other shady activities by SDS's leaders or individuals with close ties to them. While much of the earnings from these activities went to private pockets, a part did reach SDS's accounts. In 1991, *Javnost* expanded its operations to include shady trade, with some suggesting that it had engaged in a trade of high-tariff goods (Andjelic, 2005). Since SDS was only a minority owner of the company and did not have oversight of its business, these transactions left little paper trail. It has also been claimed that SDS had been receiving financial aid from the Government of Serbia via the account of *Javnost*. Another company suspected of engaging in illicit trade was *Nord Kemi*, owned by a high-ranking member of SDS and future vice-president of the Republika Srpska government Branko Ostojic (Camo, 1992a). SDS also acquired funds by linking with a shady company from Banja Luka, *Inmark-Omega*. The company's owner, Zoran Savicic, gave large donations to the party in exchange for securing influence in Banja Luka's Police Department.

The institutional fragmentation of BiH also enabled SDS to take control of parts of the Social Accounting System (*SDK-Služba Drustvenog Knjigovodstva*), which had been used for

financial transactions throughout Yugoslavia. The leadership of SDS instructed officials in Serb-majority areas to take control of SDK at the municipal level by appointing party loyalists. In this manner, SAO regions maintained connection to the SDK system in Serbia, allowing for their use by the Serbian government to fund the SDS-led Serb institutions in BiH. In 1992, much of the budget of the nascent Serb republic in BiH came from primary emissions of the Belgrade-based People's Bank of Yugoslavia (*Narodna Banka Jugoslavije*), transferred via the SDK system (Torkildsen, 2008). The party's deployment of municipal power toward ethno-separatism also translated into takeover of local post offices, banks and publically-owned commercial entities.

Thus, in the first year of SDS's activism, SDS's primary financial sources evolved from voluntary donations to elaborate business schemes and direct support from Milosevic's regime. The members of SDS had an incentive to break down the institutional framework of BiH not only to achieve the imagined Serb ethno-territorial union, but also to acquire economic power. By splitting from central institutions of BiH, SDS and its SAOs, local governments, individual leaders and party-affiliated Serb businessmen could gain both control of valuable resources and a privileged market position in BiH. The promise of such personal enrichment was itself an incentive for ensuring success of the entire coalition. The condition of possibility for these economic opportunities was a successful advocacy of the national cause to Serb masses.

**The media.** To understand the role of media in the constitution of SDS's agency, one must, again, focus the analytical lens on the processes that transpired outside of BiH. The mass media technologies responsible for most of the dissemination of SDS's discourse were located in Serbia. Prior to the rise of Milosevic in 1987, these technologies had been inscribed with the orthodox discourse of the Yugoslav League of Communists. The processes that erased this inscription and replaced it with Serb nationalist discourse were a crucial factor in the rise of Serb nationalism. This primarily refers to the processes that placed Serbia's large media organizations under the influence of the regime of Slobodan Milosevic.

**The Milosevic Takeover.** While the Kosovo issue produced a first palpable elevation of Serb ethno-national solidarity in the latter half of 1980s, public perceptions in Serbia of an existential threat against Kosovo Serbs had been on the rise since the beginning of the decade. In February of 1981, Albanian students at Pristina University organized mass protests demanding the upgrade of Kosovo's status as an autonomous province within Serbia to that of a Yugoslav

federal republic. The protests, which ended in the regime's violent crackdown, produced subtle but consequential shifts in Serbia's discursive landscape. While the policy of *Brotherhood and Unity* was still firmly in place, the rising perceptions of Kosovo as a bastion of anti-Yugoslav separatism and Greater Albanian irredentism had created opportunities for the assemblage of resonant narratives of Serb ethno-national victimization. Indeed, in the aftermath of the 1981 protests, the reporting in the Serbian mainstream media on the situation in Kosovo began to increasingly deploy both the frame of Serb victimization and ethnic stereotyping of Albanians. Individual cases of crimes against Serbs by Albanian perpetrators were being distorted as "Albanian terror", a high birth rate among Albanians as planned efforts at domination, and a variety of motives for emigration of Serbs from the province as mass exodus under Albanian pressure (Kurspahic, 2003, p.30). Serbian media were thus increasingly specifying the rhetorical commonplaces of anti-Yugoslav "separatism" and "irredentism" with a mono-national Serb frame and essentialist understandings of the Albanian ethnic "other".

The resonance of the 1986 publication of the draft SANU memorandum was in part a function of these previous ethnicized interpretations of the situation in Kosovo. The publication itself was amplified by both the dissemination potential of its publishing medium and the subsequent media reports. The publisher, *Vecernje Novosti* (Evening News) daily, had the largest circulation in Serbia at the time. While the regime condemned the content of the document, the magazines that had no direct Party affiliation picked up on its theme of Serbian victimization within Yugoslavia (Kurspahic, 2008, p.33). As such mono-ethnic frames increasingly permeating Serbia's public discourse, the policies of augmenting the republic's status within Yugoslavia gained populist appeal. Some high ranking officials of Serbia's League of Communists, such as President of Belgrade's Party organization Dragisa Pavlovic, warned against overreaction regarding Kosovo that could incite nationalism. Others, such as the then-President of the Central Committee of Serbia's League of Communists Slobodan Milosevic, were prepared to use the populist appeal of intervention in Kosovo for their own political ascent.

While much of the Serbian public sympathized with Kosovo Serbs and felt that something needed to be done to help them, there was a considerable gap between these sentiments and the mass nationalist hysteria in Serbia that would ensue by the end of the decade. Indeed, Milosevic's rise to the status of a champion of Serb national cause was a function of his

capabilities to expand and escalate the appeal of interventionism in Kosovo into a radical transformation of Serbia's and Yugoslav discursive field. To achieve this feat, Milosevic had to gain firm power within Serbia's party-state and, consequently, within the state media. That he succeeded in both was a function of personal ties with some of the leading media executives in Serbia who were able to place mass media technologies in the service of building his image as a national leader. Rising through Serbia's Party ranks, from the propaganda office of Belgrade city government to the position of a president of the City Committee and later to the presidency of the republic's Central Committee, Milosevic befriended several influential Belgrade journalists. This included a close family friendship with Dusan Mitevic, one of the top executive of Belgrade Radio and Television, as well as friendships with Ratomir Vico, the director of Belgrade Radio and Television, Zivorad Minovic, the editor-in-chief of *Politika*, and Slobodan Jovanovic, editor of a weekly *Politika Ekspres*. In 1987, when Milosevic moved to gain firm control of Serbia's League of Communists, these executives used their influence to ensure that his speeches would get the best coverage. They also drafted articles intended to defame Milosevic's political rivals, namely Pavlovic and the then-President of Serbia Ivan Stambolic. The relationship was reciprocal, and as Milosevic gained political power so did his friends strengthen their influence in the media. Minovic was thus able to gain control of the Politika Publishing House, which also published dailies *Politika Ekspres* and *Vecernje Novosti*, as well as the politically influential periodicals *NIN*, *Ilustrovana Politika*, *Duga* and *Intervju*.

Kemal Kurspahic (2008, p.42) summarized the influence of these personal relations in Milosevic's rise with a conclusion that "by controlling just four men who were willing to do whatever it took to propel him to power, Milosevic was able to control 90 percent of all information available to Serbs". Serbia's mass media technologies, previously in the service of *brotherhood and unity*, were now inscribed with the new, rapidly ethnicizing discourse of Serbia's party-state. In these conditions, the productive power of Serb ethnonationalist discourse was not only a function of the affectively resonant assemblages of semiotic commonplaces and the progressively ethnicizing political space, but also of high levels of exposure that heavily circulated Serb ethnic sensibilities. While the control was not complete, as some independent media outlets attracted substantial audiences, the alternatives had to operate under constant regime pressure. The business prospects of the most notable of these, the celebrated newspaper *Borba*, were hindered by a variety of means, such as insecure supply of newsprint, disruption of

access to distribution sites, and pressure on advertisers not to place ads in the paper (Gordy, 1999, p. 83). Despite this, *Borba* had considerable readership, whose circulation in 1991 was as high as 140,000 copies. Yet, *Borba*, and other notable opposition outlets, the weekly *Vreme* and a private TV station B-92, together covered only a small minority of Serbia's media space.

***The Serbian Media in Service of SDS.*** In the next several years, the Milosevic-led Serbia's regime placed its media outlets in service of legitimizing a variety of controversial policies, from the anti-bureaucratic revolution and rollback of Kosovo's autonomy to Serb ethno-territorial separatism in Croatia and BiH. The media prepared the affective terrain by devoting entire segments to Milosevic's speeches, to political commentaries by nationalist academics, to feuilletons about atrocities against Serbs in World War II, to serializing books by Serb nationalist writers, and numerous other ways of amplifying the sentiments of Serb victimization. After the onset of wars in Croatia and BiH, the Milosevic-controlled media broadcasted the affectively salient war propaganda, exaggerating Serb battlefield successes, downplaying the issues with morale and mobilization, and reporting only on the suffering of Serb civilians, at times even fabricating atrocities against Serbs.

When it comes to BiH, Serbia's mainstream media heavily covered the activities of SDS from the party's inception until the outbreak of the war, and beyond. During the election campaign, *Politika* frequently reported on the party's activities, at times daily, while providing only scant space to other major parties in BiH. It published interviews with Karadzic, Koljevic and Plavsic, with two of the interviews with Karadzic taking up an entire page each. SDS's discourse received similar treatment in other mainstream media outlets in Serbia. NIN also interviewed the leaders of SDS on multiple occasions and printed articles authored by Karadzic and Koljevic. These reports typically included pictures of the leaders, thus associating a visual recognition to their discourse. Ten days prior to the 1990 elections, on November 9<sup>th</sup>, the magazine featured Karadzic on its cover page. As ethno-politicization in BiH escalated in late 1991, Serbian media's favoritism of SDS became even more one-sided. TV Belgrade and TV Novi Sad broadcasted live sessions of the SDS-led "Serb Assembly" when TV Sarajevo decided not to do so (Rakocevic-Novakovic, 1991). When the media did report on the activities of the parties that opposed SDS, including those of the non-national SKBiH-SDP, they were used primarily for lexically filling in the slot of a dangerous ethnic "other".

Thus, when inquiring about the situation in BiH in the mainstream media, a citizen of Serbia was most likely to find a press release of SDS BiH, an interview with Karadzic, a commentary by a Serb ethno-intellectual, a report on ‘*Jihadist*’ or ‘*Ustase*’ attacks, JNA’s statement on operations against ‘separatists’, a broadcast of RSBiH assembly, a call for national unity by Serbian Orthodox Church, a feature on atrocities against Serbs in World War II, an article about a campaign by a cultural or humanitarian organization to help the suffering Serbs, and other discursive acts tied together by the common Serb nationalist master frame. As this omnipresent discourse heavily and unremittingly mobilized affective sensibilities toward the production of new emotion-discourse pairings that naturalized nationalist narratives as the true condition of the world, the alternative “truths”, those that had been lacking in dissemination avenues, were becoming more inconvenient.

The exposure to Serbian media in BiH was considerable, with *Politika*, *Nin*, and *Vecernje Novosti* enjoying high circulation across the republic. *Politika* had also been making additional investments into its distribution network in BiH, opening eight new kiosks in Banja Luka during the fall of 1990 (“Otvoreni kiosci ‘Politike’ u Banjaluci”, 1990). Some parts of Eastern Bosnia were also receiving a signal of TV Belgrade. Yet, the media space in BiH was far more diversified than Serbia’s. The reporting of the republic’s mainstream media, which had gained independence in the waning years of the communist party-state, was among the most balanced ones in Yugoslavia. Sarajevo’s Radio and Television and the widely circulated *Oslobodjenje* daily had served as the dissemination vehicles for a variety of conflicting discourses, providing space for all three ethno-nationalist master narratives as well as the civic discourse of the non-national opposition. This pursuit of professional journalism was perhaps the reason why none of the three winning ethno-national parties were satisfied with the mass media in BiH. Some, such as the SDS-appointed Minister of Information Velibor Ostojic, advocated creation of separate ethnic media spaces. In March of 1991, the tripartite nationalist assembly of BiH passed a law taking away the right to appoint managers of Sarajevo’s Radio and TV and *Oslobodjenje* from their employees, and giving it to the government. However, the management and the employees appealed, and Yugoslav constitutional court suspended the decision. The Sarajevo media thus likely avoided fragmenting along ethnic lines. It retained independent reporting that provided space to all sides in the political conflict in BiH until the outbreak of the war. It was only after a

series of artillery attacks on Sarajevo in the latter part of April of 1992 that these media organizations firmly sided with the government of the newly independent BiH.

*SDS Creates and Takes Over the Media.* SDS also actively intervened in the BiH media space. These activities can be divided in three types; the creation of its own media organizations and technologies, the institutionally provided influence over local media resources, and the forcible takeover of the state media technologies. In late October of 1990, the party launched its official weekly *Javnost* (The Public), with the initial circulation of 52,000 copies (“Izvinjenje prijateljima ‘Javnosti’”, 1990). The paper’s first publisher was Belgrade’s *Politika* Publishing House, while *Javnost* later established its own publishing house. Also in October, a group of regional SDS activists established a bi-weekly *Otadžbina* (Fatherland), which covered the region with the circulation of 6,000 copies (“Prvi broj ‘Otadžbine’”, 1990). After the 1990 elections, SDS gained influence over media resources of municipalities where it had won control of municipal institutions. The acquisition of institutional resources enabled the party to appoint managers and influence editorial policies in some of BiH’s 52 local radio stations (Djapo, 1991). At the beginning of the Bosnian war, SDS also established the mass media outlets of RSBiH. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, it formed a Serb News Agency SRNA (“Osnovana novinska agencija bosanskih Srba”, 1991). On April 18<sup>th</sup>, a Serb TV based in Pale near Sarajevo, under the name of *Kanal “S”*, launched a newscast that was initially broadcasted by TV Belgrade. On May 6<sup>th</sup>, *Kanal “S”* began its own broadcast. In April, the RSBiH controlled TV Banjaluka also began its operations.

As SDS BiH launched the policy of ethno-territorialization of BiH in spring of 1991, it also initiated the campaign of homogenizing the media space in the areas under control of the newly established regional institutions. In May, the ZOBK assembly passed a decision instructing the population living on its territory to stop paying a subscription to TV Sarajevo, and to redirect the money into an account for establishing TV Banja Luka. Under ZOBK’s pressure, the reporting of Banja Luka’s *Glas* was aligned with the views of SDS. As the war in Croatia escalated in the summer of 1991, *Glas* published JNA’s calls for mobilization, glorified the Army’s operations, and referred to Croat forces as *Ustase*. On July 26<sup>th</sup>, ZOBK ordered the transmission tower of TV Sarajevo at Mount Kozara to be redirected for transmission of the satellite program of TV Belgrade. On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, armed ZOBK loyalists implemented the decision by capturing the tower (Preradovic, 1991c). While TV Sarajevo protested, *Politika*

published an article by Velibor Ostojic explaining why the move was necessary. One media resource thus helped legitimize the acquisition of another. The program of TV Sarajevo temporarily returned several days later, but in place of its second program the tower continued to broadcast prime time news and selected political programs of TV Belgrade. Some viewers in Bosanska Krajina were also able to receive the signal of TV Belgrade from the Croatian TV tower on nearby Mount Pljesevica that was seized by the forces of Serb separatist state in Croatia (“Repriza sa Kozare”, 1991).

With the progression of ethno-separatism in BiH, manifested in the transformation of ZOBK into the Autonomous Region of Krajina and the declarations of SAOs, SDS’s control of regional media space was further tightened. In late September, the tower on Mount Kozara began broadcasting the program of TV Belgrade in its entirety, while the immensely popular newscast *Yutel*, known for its anti-war reporting, went off air (“Krajina bez Jutela”, 1991). Other self-declared Serb regions and SDS-led municipalities tightened control of local media. In December, AR Krajina took over the equipment of the TV Sarajevo information center in Banja Luka (“Harambase i trecine”, 1991). In early 1992, SAO governments took over several more transmission towers of TV Sarajevo. By the end of March, RSBiH was in control of four out of eight main towers of TV Sarajevo (Stajic, 1992). As the war broke out in April, their armed loyalists gained control of the tower on Mount Majevisa, and Mount Trebevic overlooking Sarajevo (“Majevisa emituje program TV Srbije”, 1992). Bosnia became internationally recognized as an independent state, but most of its citizenry could hear only the calls for its destruction.

**Weaponry.** By launching the policy of ethno-territorialization of BiH in spring of 1991, SDS came in direct confrontation with the republican institutions of BiH. That the party managed to implement the policy was a function of two mutually constituting factors- support of the population in Serb-majority areas and access to superior technologies of force. The party gained access to these technologies through a discursive alliance with three pre-existing organizations. The most significant of these, JNA, evolved from a genuine Yugoslav army to a Serb nationalist force, driven by the dynamics that were, for the most part, beyond the agency of SDS. The other two, police and territorial defense units, were absorbed into Serb nationalist discourse at the levels of municipalities and regions where SDS controlled local institutions,

enjoyed the backing of most of the population, and, consequently, could rely on compliance from local police and TO staff. These three organizations together possessed large quantities of small arms, ammunition, armored vehicles, artillery, aircraft, military factories and other technologies of force. Initially produced or acquired to enforce republican and federal laws and defend Yugoslavia from foreign invasion, by mid-1991 they were re-inscribed with Serb nationalist discourse. In spring of 1991, Muslim activists responded to these developments by initiating the formation of a clandestine armed force, Patriotic League of BiH, which would at the beginning of the Bosnian War provide an important organizational foundation for the nascent Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

*The Discursive Evolution of the Yugoslav Peoples' Army.* The expansion of Serb nationalist discourse coalition to include JNA secured the preponderance of power underpinning ethno-separatist policies of SDS BiH. JNA had been widely considered the fourth largest army in Europe. However, the discursive alignment of the Army with Serb nationalists had been anything but evident prior to 1991. During the final collapse of the Yugoslav party-state in early 1990, JNA had established itself as one of the most conservative communist organizations in Yugoslavia. The army's officer ranks continued to oppose the multi-party system even after the demise of the Yugoslav League of Communists at its 14<sup>th</sup> Congress. When it became apparent that the republics would hold multi-party elections, it gave support to the communist incumbents. At a time of the rising nationalist rivalry, JNA continued to speak of the *Brotherhood and Unity*. The performative structure of this discourse was largely the same as the earlier communist discourse, albeit the slot of the party-state was now lexically filled with non-national, and preferably communist parties advocating the preservation of a federal Yugoslavia. All of the rising ethno-national parties were placed into the slot of an enemy seeking to set at odds Yugoslav nations and nationalities. Indeed, during the election campaign in BiH, JNA favored the opponents of SDS. Its publication *Narodna Armija* (Peoples' Army) identified with the program of SKBiH-SDP and reported on its activities ("Svojatanje teritorije Bosne i Hercegovine", 1990). *Narodna Armija* was also favorably predisposed to the formation of SRSJ in BiH as another rival to the resurgent nationalism (Jovanovic, 1990).

Throughout 1990, the JNA remained equally critical of Serb nationalism as that of Tudjman and HDZ. This included both Serb nationalists advocating the rehabilitation of the

*Cetniks*, such as Draskovic and Seselj, and the Milosevic-sponsored SDS of Croatia. As late as May of 1991, *Narodna Armija* claimed that the Army's mission in Croatia was to prevent inter-ethnic conflict, and accused the Croatian SDS of attempting to exploit this mission for Serb nationalist purposes (Lovric, 1991). Yet, JNA's discourse had three structural components that would be decisive for its eventual merger with that of Serb nationalism. First, much of it consisted of the same communist semiotic commonplaces as those that the Milosevic regime joined to mono-national Serb themes. Their mutual mobilization of shared affective preferences for "socialism" and the alleged "struggle for Yugoslavia" served to obscure Milosevic's nationalism. Second, JNA's conservatism translated into an unwavering support for the preservation of the federal arrangement. *Narodna Armija* went as far to warn that confederation would lead to war (Bojovic, 1990). With this position, the Army chose sides on the principal issue of the interrepublican conflict, further reinforcing Milosevic's position. Third, JNA's officer slots were disproportionately filled with individuals of Serb ethnic background. There were only three Muslims among 130 JNA generals, for example (Kozar, 1991). When the escalating ethno-politicization eliminated the possibility of preserving a six-member federation, Serb commanding officers found less affective conflict between their sentiments of ethnic belonging and the agenda of creating a reduced Yugoslavia for "the people that want it" than would the officers of other ethnic backgrounds.

In the fall of 1990, JNA's leadership launched a political party under the name of "League of Communists- Movement for Yugoslavia" (SKPJ -Savez Komunističkih Pokret za Jugoslaviju). At a time when ethno-nationalism emerged as a dominant political force in all six republics, the Army thus founded a party that would continue to advocate both communism and *Jugoslovenstvo*. Yet, the escalation of the interrepublican conflict was pressuring JNA to address the increasingly likely scenario that the federation could not be preserved. In February of 1991, *Narodna Armija* published a commentary asserting that the inviolability of the republican borders was valid only within the Yugoslav federation ("Promene Republičkih Granica", 1991). While this was an early sign of the future discursive alignment with the politics of Slobodan Milosevic, a decisive turn in JNA's discourse occurred only in the aftermath of the 10-day conflict in Slovenia. Commenting on withdrawal from Slovenia, the Army's commanding general Veljko Kadijevic reinterpreted its mission from the defense of Yugoslav territorial

integrity to the preservation of Yugoslavia for the *peoples* that wanted to stay in it (“Zadatak armije je da omogući miran rasplet jugoslovenske krize u interesu svih nasih naroda”, 1991). This effectively meant the creation of new borders based on an ethno-territorial principle, which was precisely the agenda of Serb nationalist coalition. As JNA launched the war in Croatia to maximize territory for the envisioned future rump Yugoslavia, it began coordinating mobilization in BiH with SDS, the party that it had previously seen as a nationalist threat to *Jugoslovenstvo*. The grip of Serb nationalism over JNA was further strengthened with the October 1991 exit of Slovenian and Croatian members from the Yugoslav presidency. The move left the presidency, which was the Army’s supreme command, dominated by the loyalists of Serbia’s regime. The link between JNA and the second Yugoslavia, which had created it, was entirely severed in the fall of 1991 with the abandonment of its traditional communist semiotic commonplaces. JNA began removing the five-pointed red star from its insignia, and Tito’s pictures from the army’s buildings and offices (Hodzic, 1991b).

Yet, JNA never parted with the rhetorical commonplace of *Jugoslovenstvo*. While SDS framed the creation of the new reduced Yugoslavia in terms of Serb national union, JNA’s discourse maintained the themes that could mobilize pro-Yugoslav sentiments among Bosnians of all ethnic backgrounds. Rather than understand the Slovenian and Croatian moves toward independence in terms of rivalry with Serb nationalism, the Army framed it simply as secessionism and betrayal of Yugoslavia. While many officers of Croat, Muslim and other non-Serb ethnic backgrounds left the Army unable to identify with its new mission, the emotional appeal of *Jugoslovenstvo* motivated others to stay. Some, such as Sead Delic, had fought in Croatia and been decorated for bravery (Hoare, 2004, p.56). As late as early 1992, some reservists of Muslim and Croat ethnic backgrounds were still mobilizing into JNA. It was only after the onset of war in Bosnia that made the link between *Jugoslovenstvo* and the army’s mission manifestly untenable that these officers and soldiers left the Army. One of them was the future General of the Army of BiH (ARBiH), Enver Hadzihasanovic, who remained in the JNA until the spring of 1992. Another one was Colonel Rasim Delic, who would become commander of ARBiH in 1993.

***SDS’s Takeover of Territorial Defense.*** The Yugoslav armed forces also consisted of Territorial Defense (TO- *Teritorijalna Odbrana*), or territorially based units outside of the JNA hierarchy. The TO concept had been designed to maximize mobilization of the entire Yugoslav

population in the case of an attack from abroad. Territorial Defense was placed under control of civilian authorities, with staff at the republican, regional, municipal and local level. The municipal councils for peoples' defense were assigned responsibility to store weapons for local forces (Hoare, 2004, p. 19). These weapons were sufficient to supply one brigade at the level of each municipality, and were stored at several different localities (Research Interview, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013). In May of 1990, JNA attempted to gain control of all TO weapons by ordering their confiscation and placement in the Army's storage. However, after the fall of the communists, the new rulers never fully implemented the order. The resistance to implementation was particularly pronounced in the more ethnically homogenous municipalities where a single party controlled all leading TO posts (Research Interview, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013). While the Serb TO Commander, Drago Vukosavljevic, cooperated with JNA, the Muslim TO Chief of Staff, Fikret Jahic, obstructed the orders. Despite the obstructions, BiH reached the highest level of compliance out of all the republics (Research Interview, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013). These high levels of compliance would later seriously undermine the ability of the government of an independent BiH to resist the SDS-led ethno-separatism. As ethno-politicization escalated into the institutional crisis in 1991, Vukosavljevic remained loyal to federal organs while Jahic chose to comply with the republical institutions. The behavior of the TO leadership was thus often plagued with incoherence.

The ethnicized rift within the TO hierarchy was only larger at the regional and municipal levels. By the time SDS initiated the process of ethno-territorialization, it was well-positioned to take control of the TO branches and, consequently, arms warehouses in the municipalities where it had won the elections. While the republican TO staff remained the same as prior to elections, electoral victory at municipal level translated into a right of winning parties to staff municipal councils for peoples' defense. Indeed, the three ethno-national parties prioritized party loyalty rather than professional credentials when it came to the appointments pertaining to municipal TO capacities (Research Interview, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013). These then served as channels for implementing party policies at particular localities, which translated into a fragmentation of the hierarchy within which the TO units and weaponry had been situated. Indeed, the influence of party politics on the breakdown of monopoly on the use of force that preceded the war in BiH saw its first manifestation at the municipal level. At the start of the Bosnian War, 74 municipal TO staffs not controlled by SDS, or over two thirds of the total, declared loyalty to the new republican staff of TO BiH (Research Interview, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013). However, since many of

these had implemented the order to turn over their stockpiles of weaponry to the JNA, which had in the meantime evolved into a Serb nationalist armed force, this did not translate into a corresponding ability of the Bosnian government to impose control over municipal territories.

When it came to SDS's ethno-territorialization project, the party pooled forces and centralized decision-making over TO units in municipalities it claimed as Serb by subordinating them to its newly-found regions. The ZOBK contract of April 1991 stipulated that the community of municipalities would assume duties pertaining to peoples' defense, which included training, managing and commanding TO units ("Odbrambeni i drugi razlozi", 1991). As SDS expanded regionalization in the second half of 1991, the newly created SAOs asserted control over TO units of their member municipalities. Large parts of TO BiH were thus absorbed into the hierarchy of SDS. In the absence of unified policy at the republican level, SDA and HDZ controlled municipalities also made independent decisions regarding the status of the TO on their territories. These TO units would constitute the basis for the development of Army of the Republic of BiH (ARBiH) and the Croatian Defense Council (HVO- *Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane*), the two wartime opponents of the SDS-initiated Army of Republika Srpska.

***Police Ethnicized.*** Another source of arms for SDS was the police force. The police in BiH existed within a single republican hierarchy of the BiH Interior Ministry (MUP- *Ministarstvo Unutrasnjih Poslova*). The ministry was territorially organized into regional security services centers and public security stations that served the municipalities. Some municipalities also had multiple police stations below the public security stations. The Minister of Internal Affairs was an SDA-appointee Alija Delimustafic, while two of his assistants were Serbs, Vitomir Zepinic and Momcilo Mandic. The ethno-national parties in power also sought to establish presence at all levels of the MUP. At the BiH government session in June of 1991, Delimustafic himself accused the party leaders of compromising the MUP's mission by hiring incompetent people with whom they either had family connection or who had donated money to the parties (Stanisic, 1991). With loyalists of the three ethno-national parties permeating the MUP structure, the functioning of the police force had little insulation from elite politics (Research Interview, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

This would radically change in the latter half of 1991, however. The first palpable disruptions to the functioning of the BiH police as a single force came in the wake of the

escalating violence in Croatia. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, the SDS-dominated Council for Peoples' Defense of the Banja Luka Municipal Assembly declared a state of emergency in response to an alleged threat from the Croatian MUP. The declaration mobilized the police reserves without consultation with the central organs of MUP BiH (Kaliman, 1991a). At a session of the BiH parliament held the following day, BiH Prime Minister Jure Pelivan characterized the mobilization as illegal, and called for the release of mobilized units ("Dramaticna situacija u Republici", 1991). Yet, central organs had no means of enforcing such decisions without SDS's consent in municipalities like Banja Luka, where the Serb ethno-national party enjoyed political control and support of the JNA. With the formation of communities of municipalities and SAOs, SDS's regional organs also gained influence over police departments of their member municipalities. Moreover, police operations could not be kept isolated from the political context. Even when the central MUP organs could send intervention units to prevent illegal activities in SDS-governed areas, it often avoided doing so out of concern of escalating ethnopolitical tensions (Research Interview 13).

As the security situation deteriorated in the following months, so did the disjunction between the central MUP command in Sarajevo and police branches in self-declared "Serb" regions and municipalities. The ethnically based mistrust at the municipal level was exposed in the fall of 1991, when MUP BiH ordered the mobilization of police reservists. In Sarajevo's Muslim-majority municipality of Stari Grad, SDS complained that the MUP deliberately avoided mobilizing Serbs ("Gdje su puske?", 1991). In a traditionally nationalist Serb majority town of Nevesinje, which was part of SAO Herzegovina, Muslim police reservists refused to mobilize into the dominantly Serb force ("Muslimani se vraćaju", 1991). As ethno-separation escalated in early 1992, many Serb policemen came under pressure to leave the police branches where they did not constitute an ethnic majority. In Stari Grad, all 27 Serb policemen had left by early March as a result of recruitment or instructions from Serb para-institutions (Kebo, 1992). The divisions were also accelerated by the rising ambience of fear and mistrust that was increasingly being mapped onto ethnic categories. Some Muslim villagers would thus not welcome patrols made up of Serb policemen.

At the top of the MUP hierarchy, the divisions first surfaced in September of 1991. Seven high ranking Serb members of the MUP, including Zepinic and Mandic, released a statement in

response to the earlier press release of the Ministry that sharply criticized Radovan Karadzic (“Vrteska za ‘poslusne Srbe’”, 1991). The authors complained that the MUP could not criticize SDS without consultation with its leading Serb cadres. Furthermore, while Serbs had been overrepresented in the MUP, the statement alleged that many Serb cadres had not been chosen by SDS. By self-admission, the signees consulted the leadership of SDS prior to releasing the statement (“Sumnjivi i tjelohranitelji”, 1991). When the divisions within MUP exploded in late March 1992, the conspirators were the same. While Zepinic refused to take part, other signees launched a separate Serb police, again in coordination with the leadership of SDS. The decision to form the MUP of RSBiH was made at the March 27<sup>th</sup> session of the statelet’s assembly. The former secretary of MUP BiH, Mico Stanisic, was appointed chief of the new Serb MUP, while each SAO was given its own Regional Security Services Centers. Implementing the assembly’s decision, Mandic issued a call to all Serb policemen to join the MUP of RSBiH starting on April 1<sup>st</sup> (“Poziv u ‘srpski’ MUP”, 1992).

*The Military Complex of Police, Territorial Defense and JNA.* By July of 1991, JNA and the police and TO units in the SDS-managed areas were working together toward the same Serb nationalist agenda. Moreover, these were not only three distinct organizations that shared a common mission, but also elements of a single military organism coordinated by Serbia’s political leadership. Indeed, an understanding of how this weaponry came to be deployed in service of SDS’s goals requires a look at this interdependence and power relations between top leaders. As phone intercepts available at the ICTY reveal, Milosevic and Karadzic regularly discussed and coordinated mutual reinforcement and division of labor between all armed units in service of Serb nationalism. The communication reflected Milosevic’s superior authority within the Serb nationalist discourse coalition. While Milosevic used casual informal language to address Karadzic, the latter addressed Milosevic formally, referring to him as “President”. Moreover, Milosevic’s communication with Karadzic occasionally assumed form of instructions that Karadzic readily implemented on the ground. During 1991, Karadzic’s principal responsibility was to utilize the existing organizational infrastructure of SDS for the purpose of mobilizing Serb reservists and volunteers into the JNA. The SDS leader coordinated the specific needs and methods of the mobilization with both Milosevic and the commander of JNA’s Banja Luka corps General Nikola Uzelac (Karadzic & Uzelac, 1991). On the other hand, Milosevic and the Army were providing weapons to TO units in SDS-controlled areas per Karadzic’s requests.

By early 1992, this relationship at the top of the Serb nationalist discourse was formalized and publicized. The rump Yugoslav presidency held an expanded session from January 31<sup>st</sup> until February 2<sup>nd</sup> that also included the JNA representatives, leaders of SDS BiH and officials of a Serb statelet in Croatia. The participants discussed both political and military tactics pertaining to the creation of the rump Yugoslavia (“Bitka za ‘stolice na vlasti’”, 1992).

The principal role of Police and TO units in their relationship of mutual reinforcement with JNA was to ensure success of the Army’s mobilization. In SDS-managed municipalities, local radio stations frequently broadcasted JNA’s calls for mobilization, while municipal police helped deliver them to reservists. When military officials requested the list of reservists that had been in custody of municipal institutions, the latter readily turned them over. In Banja Luka, SDS instructed its local boards to make lists of individuals in their communities capable of military service, and turn them over to military officials (“Prijetnja otpustanjem”, 1991). The relevance of local law enforcement organs for implementing these decisions becomes apparent when contrasted to the municipalities that had declared mobilization illegal. In some of these, municipal police was deployed to guard the reservists’ documentation from being taken over by the Army. Indeed, the rate of mobilization was higher in the areas where the municipal organs cooperated. Furthermore, SDS’s control of large swaths of BiH’s territory ensured a friendly and secure environment for the stationing and transport of JNA’s troops and equipment. SDS also assisted JNA by mobilizing volunteers that would join the Army’s operations in Croatia. When ZOBK ordered its member municipalities to prepare for mobilization of TO and Police reservists, it also instructed them to form volunteer detachments that would “defend Serbs from slaughter” (Kaliman, 1991b). In Sipovo, the municipal leadership distributed arms from TO storages to the volunteers (Zuna, 1991).

While SDS was JNA’s service for mobilizing personnel, JNA’s support was a condition of possibility for the success of SDS’s ethno-separatism in BiH. While its opponents also had access to local police and some TO weapons, SDS’s overwhelming superiority in technologies of force was a function of access to JNA’s equipment on the territory of BiH. Moreover, this equipment had progressively accumulated in the year that preceded the Bosnian War. In 1991, JNA relocated much of its equipment from Slovenia and Croatia to BiH (Kozar, 1992). In September, two JNA corps moved from the territory of Serbia and Montenegro into BiH with the

immediate purpose of reinforcing the Army's operations in Croatia. Additional troops and equipment arrived in early 1992 with the signing of the cease-fire agreement that called for JNA's withdrawal from Croatia. The units that pulled back from the front were relocated to Bosnia. Parts of the JNA troops that withdrew from Macedonia in March of 1992 also arrived in BiH. Furthermore, JNA bolstered its logistics bases on the republic's territory, intensifying the transfer of supplies from Serbia to the warehouses in BiH (Cengic, 2005, p.1015). By April of 1992, 14 out of 17 JNA corps were either fully or partially stationed in BiH (Cengic, 2005, p.855-7).

JNA's participation in SDS's mission included both direct military engagement and the delivery of weapons and supplies. As the political conflict in the republic escalated in the latter part of 1991, SDS Main Board instructed municipal boards to arm the Serb population (Cengic, 2005, p.866). Presidents of SDS local boards were instructed to recruit and organize volunteers, who would then be taken to JNA barracks, issued weapons and trained. Upon finishing the training, the volunteers took the weapons with them. JNA also returned weapons that it had earlier confiscated from the TO, but only to the TO units controlled by the SAOs (Hoare, 2004, p.37). Furthermore, JNA adjusted its organizational structure to maximize mobilization of the Serb population in BiH, forming units in Serb-majority areas beyond the regular mobilizational sites, such as battalions in Eastern Bosnia (Cengic, 2005, p.899). It also distributed weapons, ammunition, dried food, clothing and oil from its warehouses directly to SDS officials or their affiliated firms, who were then expected to prepare the Serb population for armed struggle (Camo, 1992a). The SDS mediators often used these supplies to form their own paramilitary units. When the conflict escalated in April of 1992, JNA directly engaged in the fighting. JNA's attacks were decisive for the capture of Doboj, Kupres, Bijeljina and Zvornik, and their absorption into RSBiH. Fighting together with the Army were paramilitary formations from Serbia that had been armed by Serbia's MUP, as well as local Serb paramilitaries created by SDS.

Parallel to these processes, the leading members of the Serb nationalist discourse coalition, namely the JNA command and the rump Yugoslav presidency, had been making preparations for the transition of JNA units on the territory of BiH into an army of the SDS-led Serb statelet. This involved transferring Bosnian Serb conscripts serving in other republics to

assignments within BiH. Seeking to portray the conflict as an internal civil war, the political and military leadership of the new Yugoslavia ordered withdrawal of its armed forces from BiH. However, the order was merely a rhetorical tool with little effect on the military balance on the ground. At the end of April, the organs of RSBiH decided that JNA's equipment could not leave the Serb statelet, an order which the latter readily implemented ("JNA u BiH postaje srpska teritorijalna odbrana", 1992). On May 12<sup>th</sup>, RSBiH formally established its armed forces, taking over the JNA equipment and the majority of its personnel, and uniting them with Serb TO units and paramilitaries under a single military command (Jovic, 1995). The withdrawal ordered by the Belgrade government effectively involved only 14,000 troops who were citizens of FRY. The formation of separate armed forces of RSBiH provided the political and military leadership of the statelet, and hence the leadership of SDS, with greater autonomy vis-à-vis the leadership in Belgrade. Its army now answered to the RSBiH command rather than the General Staff in Belgrade. Indeed, the January 1993 split between the leadership of Republika Srpska and the leadership of FRY over the Vance-Owen Peace Plan testifies to this growing independence. Yet, the military fortunes of the SDS-created statelet continued to be closely tied to the support from FRY. Serbia continued to provide assistance in military equipment, intelligence, training, logistics and staffing. It also supported VRS operations with its special police and military units. The broader Serb nationalist coalition thus worked together toward eliminating discursive alternatives to SDS. The only available truth left available on large parts of BiH were the SDS master narrative and collective action frames, which were now being infused with the party's affectively intense war propaganda distortions or outright fabrications.

### **Concluding Remarks**

More than six decades ago, a Canadian neuropsychologist Donald Hebb (1949) coined the phrase "the neurons that fire together wire together" to assert that each experience humans encounter becomes embedded in neural networks. While Hebb's argument was complex, involving a neuroscientific elaboration of the wiring process, its basic premise came with important implications for the analysis of political agency. It suggested a novel understanding of political discourse as a set of external stimuli that interact with and modify the biological structures of a human brain. Each time an encounter is repeated, it strengthens particular neural connections, crystalizing transitory responses into more lasting sentiments. This chapter has

discussed the avenues that allowed the SDS coalition to widely and repetitively disseminate its discursive/affective stimuli across the social field of BiH. The first part has focused on human networks that served as avenues of discursive exchange and dissemination. It also looked at power relations within the networks, as these defined who had a right to speak, from what sites, and with what capabilities. This identified individuals, or small groups of them, who had a decisive influence on the activities of the movement as a whole, and hence on the subsequent political developments. The material mediums discussed in the second part of the chapter achieved the levels of dissemination beyond those that could be reached by human networking alone. Indeed, these dissemination resources served to create, reproduce and intensify the desired affective pairings. The continuous reproduction and strengthening of these associations was no less important than their creation. When it came to mobilizing Serbs for collective action, the persistently high levels of exposure to ethno-nationalist discourse left little delay between affective stimulation and mobilization that could provide space to new, more deliberative reflections and reassessments. SDS's dissemination modalities were thus a crucial aspect of the party's ability to acquire and maintain human resources, whose levels in turn defined the stability of the meanings it advocated.

*“We cannot mobilize people with mineral water...” Radovan Karadzic, October, 1991*

## **Chapter 4**

### **Feeling the Nation: SDS BiH and Discursive Framings**

The analytical task of this chapter is to understand the productive power of SDS’s discourse by exploring the complex relationship between its performative structure and human cognitive processes. The approach builds on an understanding of discursive performances as external stimuli that participate in the mapping of brain patterns by mobilizing some affective dispositions and suspending others. As affective mobilization translates phenomenological encounters into experience, it moves thinking and judgment in certain directions rather than others. Since the majority of human learning occurs below the level of conscious recognition, the analytical locus is placed on the exploration of implicit meanings. When a discursive stimulus meets human senses, it first triggers a rapid, unconscious mode of perception that Daniel Kahneman (2011) has termed System 1. Indeed, Kahneman’s system 1 can be understood as a mode consisting of what William Conolly (2002) has termed “virtual memory”, or unconscious memory traces of the previous experience of the stimuli. These refer to memorized feelings that have been paired with stimuli during previous encounters, and are rapidly mobilized with each new encounter. The stimuli, whether they come in the form of images, spoken words, sounds, scents, or some combination of these, are first perceived through the feelings they rapidly mobilize from this storehouse of virtual memory. These feelings then prime, or highlight, some interpretations over others as the processing enters more conscious and rational deliberations of System 2.

An understanding of how virtual memory participates in the production of meanings is all the more important when we consider that agents in discourse seek to marshal support by deploying discursive elements already familiar to the audiences. By definition, semiotic commonplaces refer to elements with extensive historicity of intersubjective deployment. As they most often correspond to a low quantity of signification, semiotic commonplaces may mobilize widely different emotions to different people, or even diverse emotions to a single individual. The contextual deployment of this material as a constituent element of a particular discursive assemblage, however, links it to other commonplaces. This both specifies feelings mobilized by an enunciation of the element and contributes to the emotional impression of the

broader discursive performance in which the element is situated. A Yugoslav flag with a red five-pointed star may mobilize both pleasant, patriotic feelings toward one's homeland and negative feelings toward its communist regime. When situated as background to a narrative of imminent ethno-fragmentation, the commonplace is specified to mobilize love for the homeland. Thus specified, the flag reflects back on the narration by amplifying its affective qualities.

The discussion that follows seeks to synthesize the analysis of SDS's discursive assemblages that exist in the plain sight with an exploration of their explicit and implicit signification. An explicit signification refers to the everyday, conscious understandings of a term or a statement, such as that of one's country as a place of residence and citizenship. In contrast, an implicit signification escapes the conscious register, and is often constituted through discrete metaphorical language. An example would be a reference to a country as a motherland. The metaphor implicitly serves to produce an attachment to the abstract notion of a country by simultaneously signifying a more primally embodied tangible relationship, in this case that with one's mother. The sensibilities associated with one's personal relationship thus infiltrate the perceptions of one's country. Indeed, the meanings of discursive acts are never fully constituted in the intersubjective field, becoming complete only as the acts interact with the subjective registers of virtual memory. While acknowledging that any analytical venture into such registers is limited by their subjective character, the analysis in this chapter seeks to add another layer to an understanding of discursive acts by thinking about the historicity of the terms they evoke, and the imprints of feelings they unavoidably mobilize. It thus searches for implicit meanings by looking at the previous usage of the deployed commonplaces, their links to the broader discursive landscape within which they were situated at the time of the act, and the type and the intensity of affective sensibilities such deployment would typically mobilize.

When discussing affective mobilization, this chapter makes frequent use of commonplace emotional categories, such as anger, fear and hatred. Yet, these should not be seen as comprehensive descriptions of particular affective states. In real world, emotions intersect and mix in ways that cannot be separated into neat classifications. A single stimulus may mobilize diverse sentiments. Fear may intensify anger, and anger can amplify resentment. Further complicating the matters is the interdependence between sensibilities of widely varying intensities. Lower level sensibilities, such as habits, dispositions and moods, integrate into

higher, more recognizable emotions, such as fear and joy. While vague and diffuse, these quieter modes are no less important for defining perceptions and directing the deliberative thinking of System 2. They typically last longer, and affect the ability of a particular stimulus to produce shorter, but more intense emotional reactions. A prolonged ethno-political rivalry, for example, creates a general disturbance of public mood. This disturbance is a background affective disposition that agents can discursively amplify to turn a generalized anxiety into intense fear, or discontent into a recognizable anger. These short-lived intense emotions in turn reinforce the longer-lasting moods. The discursive stimuli, then, mobilize not so much coherent feelings as particular affective energies. In this sense, the emotional categories discussed here should be seen as linguistic representations that stand for clusters of intertwined affective reactions rather than the sharply differentiated emotions. The analysis uses these representations to depict some of the more intense and dominant affective clusters without claiming to provide a comprehensive account of the overall affective states that a particular discursive action may induce.

This understanding of affect locates the agency of SDS in its discursive rearrangement of cross-cutting affective dispositions. The party's efforts were producing distinct clusters of intense affective pairings specific to individuals of Serb ethnic background, which integrated into a strong sense of ethnic solidarity. SDS built on a generalized sense of discontent, anxiousness, uncertainty, and heightened awareness of one's ethnic category that had characterized the transition to pluralism in BiH in 1990. It worked to escalate these vague, lower level sentiments into more intense emotions, whose dominance over other sentiments would subconsciously focus the cognitive processes on a single element of a complex political situation. Whether they evoked the lifestyles of forefathers, elicited the memories of historical suffering, or alleged conspiracy by an ethno-national "other", SDS's performances mobilized those sensibilities that were shared by individuals of Serb ethnic background while subduing others that connected them to other constituencies. The more these emotions intensified, the more ethno-national categories corresponded to the lines of affective discrepancy.

Such discursive intervention upon the affective landscape occurred simultaneously at both the level of personal emotion-generating interactions and as the micro-scale dissemination of images and sounds by mass media outlets. Indeed, the totality of the intervention consisted of a multitude of dispersed performances, ranging from individual, local statements to large

manifestations of republic-wide importance. For this reason, the following discussion synthesizes an understanding of SDS's discursive mobilization, circulation and rearrangement of affective sensibilities that occurred at multiple levels. The first part analyzes that minimum of common signification that identifies the various acts as components of a single SDS discourse. This commonality is what social movement theorists refer to as the "master frame". These are large scale interpretations, typically flexible enough to allow for contradictions between the various collective-action frames. The latter are the more targeted storylines derived from a master frame that serve the more immediate political tasks, such as winning the elections or gaining support for a particular policy. The second part of the chapter deals with the collective action frames, studying them in a diachronic fashion. It considers how the discourse has adopted as the political context evolved, moving across four distinct configurations of political opportunity structures identified in Chapter 2. Yet, the analysis is also synchronically informative, for it identifies the themes that have remained constant throughout the two-year period.

Since SDS's discourse consisted of innumerable statements, speeches, gestures, concerts, presentations and other performances, the analysis is unavoidably selective. The selection is guided by an aspiration to identify the largest performative structures of the discourse. Rather than discussing multiple performances of the similar kind, the analysis identifies different themes that mobilize diverse sensibilities. It discusses the statements and events that could serve as paradigmatic examples of a distinct theme or the framing of a particular event. While the analysis does include some of the available video and audio records from the 1990-92 timeframe, the primary source is a systematic review of texts and printed images, namely those found in newspapers, magazines and transcripts.

### **Master Frame**

Two levels of SDS's master frame can be identified. The first one refers to the party's ontological position, or a frame that offers an interpretation of the world "as it is". This macro-scale narrative identifies some social entities as having an independent existence in the world, while treating others as illusory. The second level is a large-scale interpretation of the sociopolitical moment. It defines sides to a political conflict, identifies significant issues, assigns blame and offers solution. Although this frame does not necessarily flow from the ontological narrative, it is largely informed by it.

**The Ethno-national ontology of SDS.** SDS's discourse is founded on the portrayal of an ethnic nation as a natural community that exists independently of human action. A nation supposedly has a referent in innate traits that its members acquire by birth. This interpretation largely went unchallenged, as it merely recycled a widespread mode of understanding. One needs to look no further than the global political order. National imaginaries, whether specified in ethnic or civic terms, are its guiding principle. The system of nation-states assigns a national category to people everywhere, usually by virtue of being born into either an ethnic community or within a designated national territory. It is a political order that organizes the messy and fluid multitude of self-understandings into a relatively stable world of nations. As a hegemonic discourse, the global "community of nations" reproduces national imaginaries through a multitude of dispersed performative acts. Whether they come in the form of interaction and cooperation, as in "the Organization of United Nations", *international* competitions, as in sporting events, or scientific understandings, as in cartographic presentations, historical narratives and demographic data, these performances imply that a nation is a natural community. This continuous naturalization serves to neutralize constant threats to the image of a unified nation coming from a multitude of social ties that transgress the imagined national boundaries.

The same can be said of ethnic groups. While some nations are understood in civic terms and may allow for a degree of voluntary membership, ethnic understandings of a nation are widespread. Many European nation-states, such as Germany, Italy, Hungary and others, may have increasingly inclusive conceptions of a nation, but their names mobilize and privilege the identity defined in linguistic terms. Civic states classify their citizenry according to the various ethnic categories. In communist Yugoslavia, Serb, Croat and Muslim ethnic nations had been institutionalized as the constituent peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition to the narratives of a common Yugoslav history, schools also taught about the more distant ethnic pasts. Despite decades of widespread cultural exchange and intermarriages, first and last names in much of the population pointed to, whether accurate or not, distinct ethnic backgrounds.

Indeed, when SDS addressed speeches and statements to "Serb people" (*Srpski narod*) it deployed a rhetorical commonplace in an uncontested manner. The audience heard a natural category of belonging that all people had by virtue of either cultural commonalities or family heritage. While lived experiences provided evidence that even the very ethnic categorizations

were problematic, as in the issue with categorizing the children of intermarriages or shared cultural practices, they were insufficient to challenge the “common sense”.

*Serb Nation as a Body Politic.* That the existence of a nation is a dominant “common sense” says little about the social significance of ethno-national categories however. People may conform to categorizations with little reflection on what ethnicity meant for them. A sense of belonging toward one’s ethnic nation may be superseded by regional, republican, ideological and many other axes of identification. Prior to the outbreak of war in 1992, the intensity of feelings of *Jugoslovenstvo* led hundreds of thousands of Bosnians to categorize themselves as belonging to a Yugoslav *narod*.<sup>13</sup> To level this uneven field of self-understandings, SDS’s discourse aspired to link the rhetorical commonplace of *Srpski Narod* to a signified that universally triggered strong sensibilities. It is difficult to imagine anything better suited for producing such an effect than the corporal senses. Indeed, when SDS specified the portrayal of a natural and independently-existing Serb ethnic nation with a description of the mode of this existence, most frequently it metaphorically associated the ethno-national imaginary to tangible, corporal experiences. *Srpski Narod* was not merely a collection of human beings belonging to a common culture or ancestry, but also as a living organism itself. At a general level, this metaphorical assemblage is present in the party’s numerous references to a “Serb national being” (*Srpsko Nacionalno Bice*). It may appear that this assemblage merely recycled commonplace understandings insofar as people everywhere essentialize available categorizations by speaking of the “Irish complexion”, “African manners”, or “Indian character”. However, SDS’s metaphorical complex was more elaborate, going beyond the emphasis of commonalities and shared traits. The nation was itself an organism akin to a human being- it had a mind, body and character. Each of these warrants a distinct mention.

The mind of the national organism was its intellectual core, a place where SDS situated itself. SDS nearly never framed its agency as simply that of one political organization. Rather, it claimed that the decisions made by a narrow group of the party elites represented “the will of the Serb people”. In this framing, the linkages to the more tangible phenomena were dual. The notion of the “will” is associated to a thinking mind as the site of production of human interests

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<sup>13</sup> The term “Narod” in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language is a congested term that roughly means folk, people and nation at the same time. It can also be understood to mean “a race of people”.

and desires, or the will of individual human subjects. While the framing explicitly stated that millions of dispersed Serbs could have a single will, it also implicitly indicated that SDS embodied that will. On infrequent occasions when the party's leaders did identify themselves as officials of only one organization, they did it only to acknowledge that the national mind also included other members of the Serb nationalist coalition. When Karadzic stated in March of 1992 that "the politics of survival of the nation must be led from the head of an entire nation, its intellectual core, and not only one party", he was addressing a congress of like-minded Serb intellectuals (Rakocevic-Novakovic, 1992c). Those Serbs who opposed the coalition's policies were excluded from the constitution of the national will.

Second, SDS's master narrative grounded its imaginary of a Serb national body in the tangible experiences of live biological ones. The nation's body here referred to the territory regarded as Serb, which stood to represent the dispersed Serb population through a more tangible, de-individualized and integral entity. Karadzic's statement that "Serb people are a single whole and united and cannot be attacked in one area without triggering a response from another" signified interconnectedness akin to that of tissues, nerves and organs of a biological body ("Za jedinstvenu i federativnu Jugoslaviju", 1990). The response, as SDS envisioned it, was not merely to defend co-nationals, but also, or most of all, "Serb" territory. The linkage between land and national identity is, again, a pervasive mode of understanding. The system of nation-states divides the planet's landmass into national territories. Yugoslavia was itself divided into republican territories that bore the names of titular ethnicities. Yet, the meaning of imagined "Serb ethnic areas" here exceeded ethnic demographics or the fate of their inhabitants. For SDS, they constituted the national body just as bones, flesh, torso and limbs constitute a human one. Hence, Karadzic interpreted the idea of placing state borders on parts of this Serb geo-body as "severing the living flesh of the Serb nation" ("Za jedinstvenu i federativnu Jugoslaviju", 1990).

Third, SDS portrayed the imagined Serb national organism as having a character just like that of an individual human being. The metaphor served to obscure the differences between a multitude of personalities of individual Serbs by speaking of the traits that defined a character of the entire nation, such as "good-natured", "good hosts", "proud", "hard-working", resilient, and spiritual. Not surprisingly, all of these traits contributed to a positive understanding of the national character, thus constructing the collective self-image that individual Serbs could find

emotionally pleasing. The metaphor also saw the national organism as a spiritual one. SDS's performance occasionally specified the national character to signify a soul. Karadzic thus claimed that "the soul of the Serb peoples is sick from humiliations", while SDS of Bosnian Krajina portrayed Yugoslavia as "something dearest that was conceived in the warm Serb soul" (Caric, 1990).

Yet, the national being was greater than a live organism. Here the master narrative exhibited splits of what Hommi Bhabba (1990) has termed "double time". While the narrated being lived as a contemporaneity, whose practices, pleasures, pains, desires and needs are simultaneously those of the nation's people living in the present, the cultural commonalities and other disclosures of everyday life did not provide sufficient affective sources for naturalizing the narration. A different temporality had to be called in to ground the visual presence of national affiliations and provide sustenance to the national imaginary. This was the continuist temporality of pedagogical narratives that situated the nation's people as objects of a mythical historical backstory. Indeed, this double-time that sees the contemporary Serb people both as subjects who constitute a national being and objects of a much larger phenomenon created an awkward moment in the metaphorical content of SDS's ontological narrative. While the imagined Serb national being was persistently likened to a living biological organism, the pedagogical narrative of the origins could not escape resorting to the mythical traits that exceeded those of any worldly being. SDS thus portrayed the Serb nation as an ancient entity whose existence dated back to times immemorial. Its narrative assemblage foregrounded all evidence that suggested historical continuities of the nation, such as those of ancient battles, traditions and notables, while ignoring everything that pointed to the nation's socially constructed and contingent genesis. SDS was thus creating a perception that the nation had always been there, in the nature, in the same mode of existence as other living organisms, only without their birth and mortality. In addition to the physical, the nation had metaphysical properties that were also superior to those of a human. In a November 1991 speech, Karadzic even linked it to the ultimate supernatural being: "God is now a Serb" (Fazlic, 1991a). To reject the nation, it thus appeared, was to reject God.

So what does this master metaphorical complex explain when it comes to Serb ethno-homogenization? It is useful to begin with ethno-national classifications. The mere existence of such categories reflects hegemonic understandings that had, to some degree, already implicated

ethnicity with one's sense of self. SDS's metaphorical assemblage served to heighten their significance by deploying specific elements of the register of virtual memory. The linkage of the rhetorical commonplace of *Srpski Narod* to the image of a living biological organism mobilized the records of sensory-motor experiences. The assemblages such as a "Serb flesh" or a "spine of the Serb nation" thus simultaneously mobilized a sense of an ethnic self already stored in one's virtual memory and the corporal sensibilities associated to one's spine and flesh. Similarly, when SDS portrayed itself and other like-minded political and intellectual elites as the "head of the nation", or even when it claimed to be merely an articulator of "national will", it mobilized the commonplace perceptions of a human mind as a site of thinking and rational deliberations. The more the framing managed to produce associations between leaders and the mind, the more the masses would be relegated to the bodily functions of processing the brain's instructions, and feeding it sensory information. Similarly, when SDS spoke of the nation as "good-hearted", "honest" and "proud", it evoked the most pleasing and desirable perceptions of the self. After all, being a Serb meant both existing as a cell in the national organism and having *srpstvo* within one's own essence.

**Master narration of the political moment.** The ontological narrative of SDS largely informed its master interpretation of the political crisis in BiH and Yugoslavia. The following discussion identifies two mutually reinforcing but distinct dimensions of this interpretation. The first one looks within the Serb national organism to address the issue of national self-awareness among Serbs themselves. It thus treats the imagined nation as an object of the narration. In the second one, the integrity of the national organism is presumed, and the Serb nation is treated as a subject of a narrative of conflict between Yugoslav nations.

***Awakening the Nature.*** When SDS entered the discursive competition in mid-1990, one of its first tasks was to address a large discrepancy between its primordial understanding of ethnic identities and the actual state of Serb ethnic solidarity in BiH. To explain why many individuals who fell or who could conceivably fall into the Serb ethnic category did not feel strong ethnic sentiments, SDS claimed that their internal *srpstvo* was merely suppressed or dormant. As a party aspiring to return the ethnic nation to its heyday, it also needed to explain how the naturally powerful ethnic sentiments could become dormant. Here the discourse identified the Yugoslav communist regime as a profane agent that conspired against the ethno-

national nature. The national organism, it claimed, was a victim of deception. The communist stigmatization of national self-expression, marginalization of religious institutions and the production of a common Yugoslav national identity at the expense of the previous ethnic ones were framed as violence of the artificial against the natural. In the words of Radovan Karadzic, the consequences upon the national spirit were severe:

For the sake of a false and illusory peace in the house we sacrificed our greatest values, abandoned the traditions of national culture, neglected our ruined church, and left it alone in its uneven fight for survival. Everywhere, and especially here in BiH, we were mostly loyal to the system, which seems as if it was established for the purpose of our national destruction (Rakocevic-Novakovic & Zivkovic, 1990).

The 45-year long tranquility of the common Yugoslav experience was thus relegated to the status of an illusion. Even the peace could not have been “natural” peace unless it was made between peoples homogenized around an ethnic axis of identification. As the analysis of the collective action frames during the 1990 election campaign will show, this was a frame that would rapidly gain in emotional resonance with the simultaneous rise of Croat and Muslim ethno-nationalism and ethnically motivated incidents in Croatia.

SDS’s ontological narrative also involved a self-frame, which required addressing an embedded tension. On the one hand, if the Serb nation was a natural phenomenon, then there would be little need for its political constitution. The nation would naturally reveal itself with the collapse of the communist oppression. On the other, the party had to justify the need for its existence and extensive political advocacy. The solution here was “national awakening”. While the nation existed independently of politics, its newly liberated mind was needed to awaken the rest of the organism. While some needed little guidance, as the end of the communist repression would automatically liberate their national spirit, others had to be taught to understand the misapprehensions of the communist era and unlearn the bad habits. Radovan Karadzic thus summarized the mission of his party as “teaching Serb to be Serbs” (Tijanic, 1990). The frame simultaneously suggested both the presence of a Serb essence that was independent of any ethnic practices, and that ethnic practices were required for some to fully qualify as a Serb. It thus appeared that without SDS many Serbs would remain incomplete or “asleep” Serbs.

A further problem to be addressed was that ethnic Serbs constituted much of the ranks of the communist party. As such, they were the enemies of themselves, or of the same national

organism of which they were part. SDS dealt with this by portraying them as estranged (*odrodjeni*)<sup>14</sup> from their nature, and hence from one's ancestors and inner essence. *Odrodjeni* were not only the Serbs who remained loyal to SKBiH but also others whose *srpstvo* the ethno-national political elites, or the mind of the nation, failed to awaken. Their eccentric behavior represented an abnormality akin to a psychological disorder. Ljuba Tadic thus characterized them as "masochistic", while Karadzic described them as "having certain problems with being Serb" (Besarovic, 1991b; Kljakic & Kozic, 1990). Moreover, the symptoms of the disorder were not limited to political choices. SDS also identified them in those people of Serb ethnic background that nationally declared as Yugoslavs. While SDS supported the preservation of Yugoslavia, it encouraged *Jugoslovenstvo* only as a secondary derivative of distinct ethnic beings.

The SDS-led "national awakening", then, was a remedy for the estrangement. If the treatment was unsuccessful, an amputation from the national being would be warranted. In particular, this referred to SDS's prominent political opponents of Serb ethnic background. As SDS saw it, the estrangement of these Serbs was not so much due to misapprehensions as to the corrupt inner essence that had made them unrecognizable as Serbs. The newspaper *Javnost* placed their *srpstvo* in quotation marks, distinguishing between "*Serbs*" and Serbs (Miljanovic, 1991). Yet, these "*Serbs*" were not a new or unique phenomenon. The party sought to portray its contemporary Serb opponents as merely the new generation of the same line of historical traitors. Here SDS had at its disposal an extensive lexical register of signifiers. Most frequently, SDS labeled these Serbs as "Brankovici", associating them with folk portraits of a Serbian nobleman Vuk Brankovic, the mythical traitor in the narratives of the 1389 epic Battle of Kosovo. The party also referred to Serbs who supported Bosnian statehood as new "Janissaries", or Islamized Orthodox Christians who served as Sultan's elite infantry units during the Ottoman occupation. This complex of rhetorical linkages served to associate the communist, reformist, and other Serb opponents of SDS to the sentiments of aversion, enmity and resentment associated with signifiers that in folk traditions stood for traitors permanently estranged from their national being. They also helped homogenize the mainstream by defining the boundary between the appearances, thought, and practices of "real" and *odrodjeni* Serbs.

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<sup>14</sup> While the English translation of the word *odrodjeni* is "estranged", in Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian language the meaning is more specific, signifying a quality of being removed from that which one was "rodjen", or born with.

*A Clash of Ethno-national Beings.* The “living being” metaphor also informed SDS’s position on the Yugoslav interrepublican dispute. In SDS’s view, this was not merely a dispute between political options or movements, but a conflict of wills between the newly revitalized ethno-national beings. When it came to Serb national will, SDS’s definition was consistent with its metaphorical vision. It recognized all Yugoslav peoples (*narodi*) as the thinking, knowing and acting organisms with a right to self-determination, but this right was superseded by the will of the Serb national being to preserve its integrity. Integrity here meant that the body could not be divided across multiple states. While the contours of the body here were vague, as the precise demarcation of “Serb ethnic areas” that constituted the body was negotiable, SDS insisted that it encompass the bulk of the Serb population in BiH. The coalition referred to Serbia as *matica*, which roughly translates as the center, queen bee, mother bee, or a parent-body. When situated within the “living being” metaphor, *matica* appears as a torso of the national organism. If Serbia was understood as a torso, then “Serb ethnic areas” of BiH were akin to extremities. As such they could not survive without remaining attached to the main body.

In the political context of the early 1990s, the imperative of protecting the integrity of this geo-body translated into two political possibilities. The first one was preservation of the federal Yugoslavia, as this would ensure that Serb body remained in a single state. The key here were the framings of the individual Yugoslav republics, and, more specifically, of the interrepublican borders. While SDS saw the imagined ethnic nations as natural, ancient phenomena, it portrayed the republics as their secondary derivatives. Nikola Koljevic thus stated that “nations created the republics, but at the same time nations created Yugoslavia, which created republics. The republics are thus in the middle” (Duric, 1991d). Sovereignty rested with ethnic nations, which were the actual beings, rather than the republics, which were the secondary social constructs. It followed that the republican borders could have no other meaning than as the lines of demarcation between administrative zones. When seen as part of SDS’s metaphorical assemblage of the “living organism”, the borders signified a differentiation line between the torso and the limbs of Serb national body. When further situated in the existing political contexts, they were also a potential existential threat as a cutting point of the body.

Indeed, the policies of SDS’s political opponents were aimed at giving new meaning to these boundaries. Regardless of whether the governments of Slovenia, Croatia and BiH pursued

con-federalization of Yugoslavia or outright independence, SDS and the broader nationalist coalition of which it was part saw the same effect on the Serb national being. In both cases, the interrepublican boundaries would acquire the character of state borders, the effect of which would be the severance of Serb national flesh. If this was the effect, then the Serb state union was the only policy that could ensure the health and vibrancy of the nation. Indeed, the Serb nationalist coalition was prepared to protect the integrity of the national body at the price of amputating large parts of Yugoslavia. Since the Slovenes, Croats and Bosnia's Muslims were seen as sovereign national beings with a right to self determination, they were free to take their "ethnic areas" out of Yugoslavia. With this understanding, Serb national elites sought to redirect political negotiations to the issues of territorial demarcation.

The "national being" master metaphor was thus specified to mobilize support for SDS's definitions of national interest. The rhetorical linkage of the republican borders to the image of a blade cutting through human flesh served to conjure up the sentiments of anguish, fright and aversion associated to corporal experiences of injury to one's flesh. In contrast, the preservation of Serb state unity signified health of the national organism. Yet, SDS was aware that the frame would have a diminished effect for Serbs whose affective dispositions did not translate into a strong sense of ethnic self. To expand the range of affective appeal, its lexical register included not only the rhetorical commonplaces of *Srpstvo*, but also those of *Jugoslovenstvo*. The borders would not only sever the Serb national flesh, but also fragment the territory of Yugoslavia. While SDS could not stop other national beings from leaving, it could fight to preserve as much of Yugoslavia as possible for the people who wanted it. With this lexical filling, the threat to the geo-body frame could thus also tap into the register of "virtual memory" of those many individuals of Serb ethnic background who felt, first and foremost, affection toward Yugoslavia.

While the communists threatened the spirit of the nation, the danger to the body came from ethno-national "others". Yet, SDS framed this danger as arising not merely from incompatible claims to the same territory, but from the very character of Croat and Muslim ethnic nations. Since the very beginning, SDS framed the Croat nation as an existential threat. The rise of the nationalist Franjo Tudjman and HDZ indicated here the Croat inner essence. Building on the pre-existing portrayals of HDZ in the Serbian media as a resurrected *Ustase* movement, SDS deployed the attributes of "Croat" and "*Ustase*" interchangeably when referring

to both Croat nationalists and the HDZ-led Croatian government. Tudjman may have won a little over 40 percent of votes in the Croatian elections, but for SDS his victory signified historical continuity of the corrupt, predatory and malicious Croat national character. Indeed, as the discussion of collective action frames will illustrate, SDS found little difference between the political moment of 1990 and that of 1941-45. This understanding was hardly surprising considering that the party portrayed the forty five years of socialist Yugoslavia as an illusion, and ethnic nations as essentialist ancient beings.

The framing of the Muslim ethnic “other” was more fluid, and evolved parallel to SDA’s position on the future of Yugoslavia. As long as SDA advocated a federal Yugoslavia, SDS portrayed the Muslim national character as good-natured and benign. This framing was particularly pronounced during the 1990 elections campaign, a time when the party still feared a popular backlash against excessive nationalism. These positive representations were distinctly the assemblage of SDS BiH, considering that the nationalist elites in Serbia had been deploying the frame of an “Islamic threat” since early 1990. Yet, the two seemingly opposite frames of BiH’s Muslims were mutually reinforcing. SDS’s positive frame was conditional upon SDA’s good behavior. As long as SDA’s policies did not endanger the state union of BiH’s Serbs and Serbia, Muslims were good neighbors and partners. In the aftermath of SDA’s withdrawal of its support for the Yugoslav federation in 1991 in favor of greater independence for BiH, however, the Muslim national essence quickly changed from good-natured to malicious. This discursive shift served to escalate the previous representations in the Serbian media that had been creating background anxiety of the “Islamic threat” among the ethnic Serb population of BiH. SDS’s portrayal of the menacing Muslim nation deployed the same civilizational frame that other Serb nationalist elites had already made commonplace.

With these essentialist frames of the Croat and Muslim ethnic “others”, SDS mobilized a range of sentiments from the register of virtual memory that could contribute to Serb homogenization by creating a general mood of anxiety and resentment. The frames’ intense emotional resonance was primarily a function of their constituent rhetorical commonplaces whose history of intersubjective deployment had been both extensive and affectively salient. The Serbs of BiH were particularly responsive to the signifier of *Ustase*. For many of them, the virtual memory associated to the signifier was derived from the living memory of *Ustase*

atrocities. While these feelings were most vivid, other Serbs also acquired affective dispositions by learning about *Ustase* crimes against co-nationals from school assignments, media reports, artistic presentations and witness accounts. The commonplace thus mobilized outrage, contempt and disgust one felt toward the perpetrator, as well as sympathy, despondency and distress one experienced when thinking of the victims. SDS also mobilized strong sensibilities when linking BiH's Muslims to the Ottoman occupier. While the Ottoman era was outside of memory of any living Serb, the linkage served to pair contemporary Muslims with aversion and resentment one felt upon hearing folk narratives, epic songs and other representations of Serb hardship under the five centuries long Ottoman occupation.

The corollaries of these feelings were those associated with heroes who defended Serbs from the *Ustase* or rebelled against the Ottomans. The *Ustasa* threat frame could also mobilize enthusiasm and encouragement one felt while watching film and art representations of the virtuous Partizans always heroically defeating the evil fascist opponents. The reference to the Ottoman rule conjured up the feelings of pride, inspiration and zeal associated to Serb *Hajduks* who heroically resisted the occupation. By mobilizing such sensibilities, SDS threat frame opened up the slot of a modern national hero, which it could fill in with itself. As the mind of the nation, the party understood the threat, warned the rest of the organism, and gathered its strength in preparation for defense. It was the intelligence, courage and steadfastness of this mind that was on display both as a political negotiator, and as the leader of physical resistance. By rallying behind the leadership in this struggle, each Serb could display the virtuous essence and courage that characterized Serb epic heroes. An article on the front page of *Javnost* thus associated the “true”, ideal-type Serbs to those who fought in the Battle of Kosovo, suggesting that the times called for sacrifice of the individual in order to preserve the virtues of the collective:

With this battle and defeat Serbs announced to the world that the only existence they recognized is the highest one, and victimization and the choice of death are only evidence of a divine victory and siding with the Heavenly Kingdom (Radovanovic, 1991).

The master metaphor of a threatened national body, then, owed its resonance to mobilization of virtual memory through both associations to sensory-motor experiences of an injury to the flesh and parallels to the emotionally salient historical narratives of heroes and villains. These various sensibilities served to conjure up a mixture of motives for political and even armed mobilization,

such as pain-avoidance, sympathy with co-nationals, animosity toward the assailants, and a desire for heroism.

It would be inaccurate, however, to understand the productive power of SDS's discourse exclusively in terms of the resonance of the master metaphor. For many individuals of Serb ethnic background, a sense of belonging to a national being had to be created rather than mobilized. Here SDS sought to foster an ethnic "self" by anchoring its discourse to a more individualist sense of "self". It spoke directly to individual desires and fears, sidelining its national imaginary to foreground the pragmatism of the political moment. The most urgent need of the moment was protection from the existential *Ustase* threat. By framing the political moment of the 1990s as a return of 1941, SDS suggested that each individual of Serb ethnic background would become a potential target regardless of one's political views or a sense of ethnic belonging. After all, when the *Ustase* regime persecuted Serbs half a century earlier, it had no other criteria than simple ethnic categorizations. The *Ustase* threat frame thus mobilized sensibilities in dual ways: as a threat to the Serb national organism *and* to the lives of each individual who fell into a Serb ethnic category. That this threatening "other" went a longer way in Serb homogenization than any mobilization of the pre-existing sentiments of the ethnic "self" is suggested in Karadzic's statement that "Serbs could thank Tudjman because he helped them constitute themselves as political subjects" (Rakocevic-Novakovic, 1990c).

Moreover, SDS claimed that ethnic Serbs could secure their personal equality and better livelihoods only by voting for their own ethnic party. Shortly after the party was founded, Radovan Karadzic claimed that its basic program was social democracy, private initiative and social justice, and that the national program was only needed at the moment due to the need for cultural, religious and political rehabilitation of the Serb nation (Loza, 1990). The party's programme spoke of freedom, democracy, social justice, rule of law, modernity, equality, civil peace, market economy, and other rhetorical commonplaces not limited to any ethnic field of meaning (Karadzic, 1990). While it was not clear what these signifiers exactly meant and how they would be achieved in the BiH context of early 1990s, they served to mobilize the repertoire of positive sensibilities that was unreachable to the master metaphor.

Despite the distinction, the appeal to individual desires and to the imagined national organism should be seen as mutually reinforcing. A sense of belonging to a national organism

implied that the state of the nation would also be intimately related to that of an individual. Conversely, when associated to the fate of other members of the same national category, one's individualist concerns serve to intensify national solidarity. The dispersed individuals come to share the same affective dispositions, making their communion feel more palpable. The nationalist agents, such as SDS, work to intensify this cluster of shared affect, producing emotional resources that could legitimize their ontological narrative. These resources combine with a human cognitive tendency to metaphorically ground abstract thinking in terms of the more readily understood phenomena to foster an imaginary of an organic tissue that binds the individuals who share a particular predicament.

While the master frame did establish general perimeters of acceptable political action, there was no automaticity between it and the policy decisions that would ensue. The frame was flexible enough to allow for multiple specification possibilities. This flexibility unavoidably produced logical inconsistencies, but it also allowed for mobilization of an expansive repertoire of affective sensibilities that could obscure them. While the master frame provided a macro-level interpretative framework, a more advanced understanding of Serb ethno-nationalist collective action under the leadership of SDS requires a look at SDS's frames of specific issues and events, and the meanings they produced in interaction with the broader dynamics. This is the topic of the second part of the chapter.

### **Framing Collective Action**

To understand SDS's ability to produce new meanings, one must explore how intertextuality, speaker performativity, the staging of performances and immediate contextuality all participate in the production of perceptions and beliefs. This requires moving beyond the generalized macro-scale analysis to a more targeted exploration of SDS's individual performances, or a distinct set of familiar performances, that occurred at particular space and time. Indeed, Serb ethno-mobilization was occurring not as a single BiH-wide action over the two year period, but as a conglomeration of activities that varied spatially and temporally. SDS's performances typically came in the form of interpretations of particular issues, events and policy decisions rather than the articulations of the master frame.

The collective action frames in the pre-election period often reflected the microdynamics of particular localities, thus exhibiting spatial variations. At grassroots level, activists adopted to the worldviews specific to particular villages and neighborhoods. In areas that nurtured the partisan tradition they foregrounded SDS's support for a federal Yugoslavia, while in the more ethnically conscious, religious communities or those that valued the *Cetnik* legacy they emphasized nationalist themes (Research Interviews, November 27<sup>th</sup> 2013 & November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013). As Biljana Plavsic recalled, "every area had its specificities, certain problems, one needed to be familiar with them and discuss them" (Plavsic, 2005).<sup>15</sup> Yet, the party's center established the parameters within which all local agencies had to function. At its August 23<sup>rd</sup> session, the Main Board concluded that speeches at rallies had to be standardized, emphasizing what the party was "for" rather than "against". Fearing that the media may publish even marginal statements that could compromise the goal of national unity, the Board took a stance against anti-communist and revanchist speech. The Main Board thus exercised power to structure a discourse in ways that targeted those sentiments that could foster unity, while removing the affective side-effects. Unity, it appeared, would be undermined if activists freely expressed their diverse sentiments. While local knowledge certainly contributed to the expansion of the deployable register of virtual memory, its significance diminished as homogenization progressed. In such an ethnically polarizing environment, the locus of discursive action could shift from national awakening and voter mobilization to the pursuit of Serb state union at the level of elite politics.

The locus of the following discussion is on temporal variations of the collective action frames that were disseminated at the level of BiH, and which incorporated various local themes. It analyzes the frames across four distinct macro-configurations of political opportunities identified in Chapter 2; the 1990 election campaign, the post-election negotiations, the declarations of independence by Croatia and Slovenia, and the Badinter Commission aftermath.

**Pre-election mobilization.** When SDS emerged as a political agent in the summer of 1990, the self-understandings of ethnic Serbs in BiH were still heterogeneous and convoluted. A sense of belonging to Yugoslavia, BiH, class, region and city was for many still on par with

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<sup>15</sup> The appeal to local sentiments also contributed to Muslim and Croat homogenization. HDZ BiH thus won the elections in Kotor Varos, where Croats constituted a relative ethnic minority, with the votes of Muslims attracted to the party's promise to build them a new mosque (Research interview 1?). SDA won in Velika Kladusa largely as a result of recruiting a local hero, Fikret Abdic.

ethnic sentiments. Some prioritized economic agenda that could provide best employment prospects for one's occupation. Others favored political change from the previous regime for it came with a promise of private initiative opportunities and greater ethnic and religious self-expression. The task of homogenizing all peoples who could conceivably fall into the Serb ethnic category required mobilizing diverse sensibilities.

SDS's discourse at this time was multifaceted, reflecting the uneven landscape of self-understandings. That the movement saw mobilization of the *ethnos* as having only a limited homogenizing effect at this time is evidenced in SDS's first large advertisement published in *Oslobodjenje* on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1990. Apart from the opening statement that identified SDS as the party of Serb people, the ad was made up of a list of floating signifiers not reducible to any single ethnic field of meanings. Its list of what SDS was "for" thus consisted of "Yugoslavia, civil peace, market economy, democracy and renewal of villages" ("Srpska Demokratska Stranka", 1990). The party's campaign posters featured large stylized letters SDS, specifying that the abbreviation stood for "*Sloboda, Demokratija, Sloga*", or "Freedom, Democracy, Unity" (Kreativni tim SDS, 2010). A wide repertoire of semiotic commonplaces was also evident at the staging of SDS's campaign rallies, which typically involved displaying the juxtaposed flags of SFRJ, the Socialist Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Serb ethno-national shield of four letters "S". The rallies began not only by playing the Serb traditional anthem of "God of Justice" (*Boze Pravde*), but also the Yugoslav anthem of "Hey Slavs" (*Hej Slaveni*). In the estimation of a member of the initial SDS Main Board, SDS would get less than 50 percent of Serb votes had it campaigned solely on Serb nationalist messages without appealing to *Jugoslovenstvo* (Research Interview 2).

Indeed, SDS's *srpstvo* rarely stood on its own, and even the party's top leadership expressed skepticism in its ability to turn the ethnic category into a homogenized group. In July, Radovan Karadzic stated that elections would not turn into an ethnic census in BiH since a certain number of Serbs would not be attracted by SDS's program. "This is why SDS tried to create a flexible program, so that every Serb could find something in it as his own" (Loza, 1990). Karadzic also occasionally framed ethno-national homogenization as a forced move that would not be desirable in normal times. When asked if a natural mode of human existence was reducible to a national dimension, Karadzic answered that "this is natural now because the

system of violence destroyed all interest groups except the national one...this system left us only with poverty (wealth for some) and a nation”( Kljatic & Kozic, 1990). *Srpstvo*, it appeared, was a variable with ebbs and flows, with its rise at the moment being the effect of communist deceptions.

Yet, most of SDS’s performances during the campaign saw the Serb nation as not only a natural entity but also a unified political agent. This was most consistently manifested in the conflation of the party with the nation. When SDS officials spoke, their first person pronoun was often “we”, in a manner that signified “we, Serbs” rather than merely “we, SDS”. Both “we” and “Serbs” served here as the performative disguised as banal descriptive. They served to conjure a Serb “we/us”, and naturalize it through repetition as a political reality. The relationship also worked in the reverse direction, as “we, Serbs” intimately implicated the identity of the enunciator with the enunciated entity. There was no line between “SDS” and “Serbs” in the party’s performances, making the two terms appear as synonyms.

Since the party had just emerged to the political scene, an important theme of the “we” frame was to promote its leading personalities into the leaders of the nation. The outward appearances and family background here were an integral part of the performances. The implicitly signaled commonalities, and hence shared sensibilities, between the speakers and the audience served to foster solidarity. This aspect was particularly pronounced when it came to the promotion of the president of SDS Radovan Karadzic, who was a new face on the public scene of BiH. Karadzic’s epic appearance and background went a long way in linking the party to sensibilities of nationalist Serbs. He hailed from a small Montenegrin village of Petnjica on Mount Durmitor, the region celebrated in Serb heroic folksongs. His family belonged to the Drobnjak clan, known for vicious resistance against the Ottoman occupier. Radovan wrote poetry and played the traditional instrument of *Gusle*. The power of this symbolism would prompt Ivo Zanic to describe Karadzic as “a figure who had literally come out of a song and dropped down to earth to take his place at the head of his people.”(2007, p. 367).

SDS coalition worked on heightening these perceptions. The *Rodoslov* (Genealogy) section of *Javnost*, which narrated a history of one Serb last name each week, featured a genealogy of Radovan Karadzic’s patriarchal lineage in its first edition. It claimed that he was a blood relative to one of the most celebrated figures in Serb folk culture, the Serbian Language

reformer Vuk Karadzic. The promotion of SDS's leader was also done through endorsements he received from better known Serb personalities who had already established themselves as leaders, such as Jovan Raskovic. Nikola Koljevic spoke of Radovan as "an outstanding lyrical poet and *gusle* player who did not have a literary mafia and circles behind him" (Lucic, 1990b). At SDS rallies across BiH, Karadzic was presented as a keynote speaker. The Serbian media also contributed, featuring his picture in many of its reports on SDS's campaign activities.

While Karadzic's profile resonated with rural and more nationalist Serbs, the task of national unity also required mobilization of urban sensibilities. Here SDS had another ideal leader. Nikola Koljevic hailed from Banja Luka. He was a distinguished professor at the University of Sarajevo, and one of the foremost Shakespeare scholars in Yugoslavia. His better-known brother Svetozar was also a professor, and a member of SANU. In contrast to Karadzic's affectively charged performances, Koljevic's demeanor was more measured and rational. His appearance consisted of refined, mild mannerism and calm intellectual speech. Yet, the content of his speech was no less dedicated to Serb body politic. As Koljevic became SDS's candidate for the BiH presidency in fall of 1991, the daily public exposure would fashion him into one of the leading faces of SDS.

The more these discursive associations produced intimate connection between SDS and its targeted audience, the more the coalition earned cultural capital. Yet, if SDS was to appeal to those many individuals of Serb ethnic background who had only a weak or vague sense of ethnic selves, it had to do more than merely mobilize the pre-existing neural pairings. The ethnic "we" needed to be anchored to a wider repertoire of affective sensibilities. During the 1990 election campaign, three mutually reinforcing themes could be identified as amplifying this Serb-SDS "we", and filling it with new signification. These were the cultural awakening, the *Ustasa* threat, and the de-legitimization of the non-ethnic axes of identification.

***Cultural Awakening.*** Considering that the locus of SDS's agency in 1990 was on reviving the distinctness of the Serb ethno-cultural field in BiH, it is not surprising that the first official structure of the SDS coalition came in the modality of a cultural society. The society, *Prosvjeta*, was led by the same people who would emerge as prominent members of the political party. *Prosvjeta*'s mission, as defined by its president and future leader of SDS's Deputies' Club Vojislav Maksimovic, was to look "to the past and our cultural heritage, so it could be at once its

interpreter and protector, as well as to the present and the achievement of a series of programmatic goals that should immediately help change and enrich the cultural state of our people” (Nastic, 1990). Indeed, as the discussion below will show, SDS’s performances were structured to develop a palpable sense of continuity between Serbs of the present and those who lived decades and centuries earlier.

Much of this relationship was conjured implicitly, through performance intertextuality and staging symbolism. One needs to look no further than the date symbolism. The founding assembly of *Prosvjeta* was held on June 28<sup>th</sup>, a date of dual significance in Serb history and folk culture. It was St. Viscius Day (*Vidovdan*), an important date in the Serb Orthodox Calendar. It was also an anniversary of the 1914 Sarajevo assassination of Austro-Hungarian Archduke Ferdinand by a Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip that ignited World War I. In the Serb folk narratives and mainstream Yugoslav historiography, the assassination had been portrayed as an act of courage against the imperial occupier, while Princip earned the reputation of a national hero. The choice of the date served to transpose sensibilities associated with the celebrations of *Vidovdan* and reverence for Princip to the concurrent campaign of cultural awakening. 76 years to the day of the assassination, Serb vanguards were committing another act of liberation. By celebrating *Vidovdan* with a renewal of *Prosvjeta*, they released the Serb culture from the decades of communist oppression and inaugurated the process of its renewal. The date symbolism continued as the SDS coalition established itself in the modality of an official political party. The party’s founding assembly was held on July 12<sup>th</sup>, which was also St. Peter’s Day (*Petrovdan*), another important holiday in the Serb Orthodox Calendar. By choosing this date, the movement linked to the sensibilities of those “true” Serbs who still celebrated the holiday. When it came to those other, estranged Serbs, the assembly served as an opportunity to promote the celebration of *Petrovdan*, offering them an early lesson on “how to be Serbs”.

The SDS discourse coalition would hold many such lessons in the coming months. Although much of *Prosvjeta*’s leadership was busy with campaign activities of the political party, the society managed to hold a number of cultural manifestations that performed the distinctness of Serb history, music, literature, poetry, art, and religion. Here the *Gusle* playing events deserve a separate mention, for their symbolism is irreducible to the artistic expressiveness of the performer. In Serb folk tradition, the *Gusle* has had a large role in patriotic

oral legacy. The playing of the instrument is accompanied by singing of epic poems, typically about the struggle for liberation from the Ottoman Muslim occupation. *Gusle* events thus mobilize associations to both cultural traditions and historical struggles. While *Prosvjeta* was organizing *Gusle* nights as a cultural organization, the events of the political party also occasionally featured *Gusle* performances. As Ivo Zanic observes, the purpose was to foster national identification, or “renew the common value system into which contemporary relations, events and personalities will then automatically fit” (2007, p.71). The appearances thus signaled and amplified shared sentiments in their own right.

There were also other cultural/religious artifacts that found a pronounced political function. The party sought to densely pair a set of semiotic commonplaces of the Serb religious tradition to a sense of ethnic belonging, which would intertwine the two in a relationship of reciprocal reinforcement. Priests, dressed in their religious garb, sat in the first row of both *Prosvjeta*'s and Party's assemblies, suggesting that the Serbian Orthodox Church constituted an integral part of a Serb ethnic identity. SDS's paper *Javnost* contributed by publishing the section “Orthodox Holidays and Saints” in each of its issues. The section offered theological narratives of Serb Orthodox holidays and the lifeworks of the church's saints, as well as lessons in the proper practices of celebrating them. Some lower level party structures also participated, reviving local Saint's Day celebrations, and thus ethnicizing the yearly calendar.

These cultural politics constituted an early step in the process of turning dispersed individuals of Serb ethnic background into a palpable political group. A sense of cultural distinctness served to intensify solidarity with others who belonged to the same cultural field, thus contributing to the appeal of ethnicized interpretations of one's political condition. Yet, the celebrations of history and revival of old traditions could mobilize sensibilities only unevenly. In particular, the experience of city culture had left a mark on registers of virtual memory of urban Serbs, creating affective distance from an ethnic lifestyle of the past. Karadzic seems to recognize as much when he stated that SDS would “work on bringing closer the rural and urban features of Serb culture, on their integration...political divisions are another story, they will be overcome much easier” (Vucelic, 1990). The leader of SDS thus acknowledged the power of the immediate social environment to produce deep splits in the broader ethno-cultural field. Moreover, the re-integration of culture was not something that would develop naturally as

communist violence against it came to an end. SDS had to politically constitute it, or “work on” it.

Indeed, SDS recognized cultural unity as central for national homogenization and, consequently, for its own electoral success. The imperative of unity was thematized in all of SDS’s performances. The longstanding traditional symbol of four Cyrillic letters “S”, which stands for “Only Unity Saves the Serbs”, was omnipresent at the events as a visual icon of the imperative. The performances also served to foster unity by reconciling the celebrations of the distant ethnic past with those of the more recent cultural traditions and achievements. Since the latter were often not exclusively Serb, SDS’s framing ethnicized them. In Banja Luka, SDS organized a “Serb Ball”, a dinner and dance night for Serb “ladies and gentlemen” (“Iz stranackog zivota”, 1990). Elsewhere, speakers recited verses of famed Serb poets and nationalists, such as Petar Kocic and Jovan Ducic, but also those of the more recent poets of Serb ethnic background who did not identify themselves in exclusively ethnic terms. One of them was Branko Copic, an ethnic Serb who had declared himself a Yugoslav poet.

The SDS-led cultural awakening was also structured to foster a sense of cultural unity between Serbs of BiH and those in the neighboring republics. While the performances focused on cultural artifacts of Serbs from BiH, these were celebrated as a regional contribution to the wider Serb culture. Serb notables both from BiH and elsewhere attended and often spoke at SDS’s assemblies and rallies. A well-known poet from Serbia Matija Beckovic gave a passionate speech at *Prosvjeta*’s founding assembly (Nastic, 1990). The leader of the Croatian SDS, Jovan Raskovic, frequently attended the party’s assemblies and rallies. Efforts were also made at semiotic synchronization between the various organizations of the Serb nationalist coalition. SDS BiH adopted as its symbol the same stylized Cyrillic letters “SDS” used by its sister party in Croatia (Donia, 2014, p.54). SDS also participated in the standardization of the three-finger salute as a national symbol of all Serbs. While the salute has since become a ubiquitous visual icon of Serb unity, in 1990 it was still a relative novelty. Jovan Raskovic and Vuk Draskovic had popularized the sign in early 1990 by raising the three fingers to greet crowds (Nikolic, 2007). SDS BiH featured the three raised fingers on its campaign posters (see Figure 4.1).

#### **Figure 4.1**

Above- SDS campaign logo of three raise fingers as an illustration in the *Javnost* article on the genealogy and meaning of the three finger salute. Next to the salute is the symbol of three Cyrillic letters "SDS", used by both SDS BiH and the Croatian SDS. Published on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1990 on page 8.

Below- Radovan Karadzic raising three fingers next to SDS Campaign poster. Published on the front page of *Javnost* on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1990.

1. децембар 1990. године

## Симболи

# И остаде крста од три прста...

Гледајући пропаст православних Срба, Његош је зајеввао, односно бога би било рећи закучао: „И не остаде крста од три прста“. И заиста „крсту од три прста“ било је неизмерно тошко, а није му лако ни данас. Но ипак и упркос свему, овај и овакав крст је остао. Овом приликом ред нам је проговорити о њему, о крсту од „три прста“.

Многи ме питају: откуда на предизборним плакатима Српске демократске странке рука са истакнута три прста? Три прста подижу се у свим јавним иступањима Срба од Кинна па до Београда. Зашто увијек и баш три прста? Опште је познато да се у сличним ситуацијама свагде у свијету подижу само два прста у име викторије – побједо, а само код Срба на викторију се не мисли и умјесто побједо истиче се ето некакав други симбол и знак.

На низ оваких и сличних питања одговор има, недвосмислен, сигуран и јасан.

Србинова три прста јесу вјерски, православно-символички знак. Кад се Србин осењује са крсним знаком, он ће увијек саставити три прста десне руке, па ће тек онда да се прекрсти. И та три прста означају вјеру Србиново у Свету Тројицу, Бога; коме Срби заиста вјерују или би требало да вјерују.

И кад год Срби забораве да је њихов Бог Света Тројица, кад год оставе Свету Тројицу и умјесто Ње себи скroje и измисле лажног Бога, њихова вјера почиње да се толи и нестаје. Није ни чудо, јер се лажни богови Србину натоваре на леђа са теретом лажни, немоћи, обмане, страха и понижења. Такви богови одбијају од себе и у њих се не може вјеровати, а ни имати повјерење. Вјеровати се може само добром Богу, управо онаквом како јеванђеље тумачи и открива Свету Тројицу.

### Света Тројица

Кад се погледа историја настанка рода људскога, поремећај у односу човјека према Богу, на-



језда зла на Земљу, мора се поставити отворено питање како истинском Богу, тако и „боговима“: зашто се не помогне несретном и унакаженом човјеку на Земљи? Шта ће на Земљи смрт, ратови, свађе и заваде међу људима: шта ће зло на Земљи. И једини одговор на овакво питање може да понуди и даје Света Тројица, а сви остали богови, лажни богови, морају да занјеме, да заћуге.

Први од Свете Тројице, Отац Небески, шаље Сина Свога јединородног да сиђе на Земљу, да се оваллоти од Богородице и постане човјек и као човјек пострада на крсту, да би људске патње узео на Себе, а човјеку вратио и мир и радост и достојанство и љубав; све оно што је човјек изгубио својим добровољним изласком на Раја. Такав Бог који се брине и страда за човјека, заслужује да се у Њега повјерује и човјек унапред зна да неће бити преварен. Овакво безрезервно повјерење Светој Тројици даје се, не на основу божанских наређења и порука, већ на основу Голготске Жртве и дара, којег Света Тројица пружа људима.

Што се тиче човјека и његовог разумијевања степена овакве Божанске Жртве, то може осјетити само родитељ и веома, веома,

продуховљена особа, какви су од старина били велики Српски калуђери и аскете. Човјек који гледа патње свога дјетета разумије драму Великог Петка. И то само прави и истински родитељ у којем није уништен родитељски, природни, осјећај. Бити породичан, бити родитељ, уздиже човјека за још један степен к љубави, сличној божанској љубави.

### Узвишеност породичног живота

Некад су Срби водили рачуна о породици, знајући у свом вјерском просветљењу, да човјек треба што више да наликује Богу. Сад видимо да су Срби, умногоме, заборавили да треба да буду богослични. Заборавили су и да треба да буду и породични. Васпитавани да буду бића колектива, радне организације и друштва, временом су заборављали на основно, да требају, прије свега, да буду личности породице. Зато данас и није чудо што имамо млађице и дјевојке и од тридесет и четрдесет година, а да не знају ни шта је брак, а ни родитељску љубав.

Новине, телевизија, радио, мори зориште, шибали су породицу где је требало и где је није требало да тући. Ту и тамо појави се некоја драма или прича да проговори о породици емотивно и осјећајно. Али зато имамо поплаву новоскомпонованих стихова, новосвакодневно бомбардују нас спљачинама римсованих изјављивања о пропастима брака, о неверствима и кафанском лијечењу развојених. Тако да су и сами људи, ослепљени, предали се овој слабости и слабо ко хоће да се бори за узвишеност породичног живота. Умјесто храбрости Мајке Југослава, пожртвованости Јевросиније, вјерности Анђе Косорића; збогом се ружне шале у односу синица, оца, мајке и кћерке. Да није било још ово гусала и гуслара поплави бисмо у мору себичности и материјалних интереса.

Без сталних истицања породичних врлина и радости породичног живота, бракови нам падају и пуцају остављајући узроне, јад и биједу иза себе. Да није оно стараца и старица по нашем готово заустелим селима, не бисмо имао ко прихватити оне мусавале мале људе, што су остављени да расту без родитељске љубави.

Овакво стање ствари захтијева сталан и непрекидан рад на духовној и културној основи свјетлости о потреби, значају и узвишености породичног живота. У овом задатку сложено и заједно, треба да се укључе и школа и црква, књижевност и сва средства медија. Изградити здраву и јаку породицу; снажни и стабилну, постављају се основни темељи ког и снажног народа. Из стабилне породице изнедрило се и Свети Василије, и Тесла, Његош, Милош Пупин, као и животињици Шић, Колијевица и гнијезде и бућих великана нашег народа заједно је здрава породица. Заупрегнимо све снаге, растргнимо повезимо, па да се поправа све оно што се поправаило же на срећу и радост свију људи који долазе за нама.

Милорад Голијац  
свештеник



Furthermore, the party worked to foster a sense of biological belonging to the Serb nation. To achieve this, it made use of the last names, the most durable and personalized cultural artifact that had survived the communist era. Each week, *Javnost's* "Genealogy" (*Rodoslovi*) section narrated a genealogy of one Serb last name by tracing patriarchal lineages of contemporary families as recorded in the archives of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The section did not merely identify one's distant ancestors, but also narrated their lifeworks, culture, heroism and self-sacrifice. These narrated nuances served to turn vague memories or understandings of ancestors into vivid mental images that presented them in a more palpable, emotion-generating form. By framing their lifestyles as those of ideal-type Serbs, the assemblage channeled the

sentiments of reverence for forefathers toward supporting cultural revival. To revive the culture was to dignify one's forefathers.

Considering that the distinctness of one's culture is always constituted in relation to that of the cultural "other", much of the success of SDS's cultural revival can be attributed to the performances that identified the non-Serb cultural field. While SDS reaped benefit, this task was largely performed by Muslim and Croat ethno-national parties. Key here was a mutually reinforcing dynamic. Indeed, the cultural ontologies of SDA, SDS and HDZ were the same. All three worked on ethnically bracketing as much of the cultural environment as possible. The goal of ethno-cultural awakening was made explicit in SDA's programmatic statement that Muslims had "their own religion, writers, poets, in one word past and the future, SDA will fight against disputing of this distinctness and awaken their consciousness" ("Programska Deklaracija", 1990). The Croatian HDZ also expressed an ethnicized stance that Yugoslavia was formed out of "historically distinct national identities that belonged to different cultural spheres" (Sarac, 1990c). In the fall of 1990, Muslim activists renewed a cultural Society *Preporod* (revival) while the Croatian ones rehabilitated the Croat Cultural Society *Napredak* (Progress). Although *Preporod* and *Napredak* were counterparts to *Prosvjeta*, as they celebrated different writers, poets, music, histories and rituals, in important ways they shared the same goal. A performance of one assisted the other two in the production of ethno-cultural differentiation.

***Amplifying the Ustasa Threat.*** The more one felt a cultural belonging to an ethnic community the more likely one's ethnic sentiments were to influence perceptions of the political moment. Conversely, the ethnicization of political issues oriented perceptions toward accentuating cultural differences. The single most important aspect of the political context that contributed to the success of both SDS-led cultural "awakening" and political homogenization was the election of Franjo Tudjman and his HDZ party to power in Croatia. By the time SDS launched its campaign in July of 1990, the rival threat discourses of the Serbian and Croatian state media had already left a mark on the political ambience in BiH. The framing of the new Croatian government in the Serbian media as an *Ustase* resurrection was particularly potent, as much of the World War II *Ustase* atrocities against Serbs had occurred on the territory of BiH. Since its very beginnings, SDS worked on radicalizing and specifying these pre-existing frames of the dangerous Croat "other". As several then-senior leader of SDS BiH estimated, the anxiety

created by HDZ's victory in the Croatian elections was decisive for SDS's ability to win the majority of a Serb vote in BiH (Research Interviews, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013 & December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

While SDS framed the communist cultural policy as a crime against Serb national spirit, the Croat ethnic "other" was a threat to the national body. The threat was constituted as such within SDS's framing of the principal axis of a Yugoslav political crisis at the time, the rift between the federal and con-federal visions of Yugoslavia. On July 19<sup>th</sup>, in response to an inquiry from *Oslobodjenje*, Karadzic stated:

The standpoint of Serb people in BiH and Yugoslavia is that federation is the irreplaceable order of our state union...Serbs are not prepared for definitive separation from the parent-body Serbia by means of interstate borders and to become a national minority and fall into the category of 'other citizens' in the newly created states...("Interstate borders would separate us from the parent body", 1990)

Besides constituting himself as the spokesman for the "Serb peoples", Karadzic deploys here the parent-body rhetorical commonplace to signify an imagined organic nation-state space in opposition to an administrative conception of states and territories. While not mentioned explicitly, the statement is directed at the confederal position of the new Croatian government. At this time, only Slovenia and Croatia advocated a confederation, and a substantial number of Serbs lived only in Croatia. Implicit in the statement was a suggestion that the Croatian nationalist government threatened to put up state borders that would be akin to separating the limbs of the Serb geo-body from the torso. The limbs would lose vitality without the torso, turning Serbs into second-class citizens. In a speech at the founding of the Serb National Council in Banja Luka, Karadzic used a more vivid metaphor that left little doubt of his imaginary: "It should be known that most of those future hard, solid state borders are intended to sever the living flesh of Serb peoples..." (Za jedinstvenu i federativnu Jugoslaviju, 1990).

Yet, SDS was more restrained in deploying the *Ustase* threat commonplace than the rest of the Serb nationalist coalition. In the context of BiH, the frame could contribute to Serb homogenization by mobilizing fear and outrage, but it could also produce feelings of revulsion toward the performer if perceived as excessively nationalistic. Thus, when the conflict between the Croatian SDS and the Government of Croatia escalated in the summer of 1990, it posed both an opportunity and a challenge for the Serb party in BiH. As SDS BiH was entering a campaign

partnership with the leading Muslim and Croat ethno-national parties, its sister party in Croatia was taking a series of steps at breaking up the existing spatial order that had submitted the areas of Serb ethnic majority to Tudjman's rule. On June 27<sup>th</sup>, the three municipalities in which the Croatian SDS won the local elections, Knin, Gracac and Donji Lapac, unilaterally declared themselves a Community of Municipalities of Northern Dalmatia and Lika. In July, the SDS of Croatia led the establishment of a Serb National Council with self-declared powers to overrule any action by the Croatian government it deemed as anti-Serb. In August, it held a successful, extra-constitutional referendum on Serb autonomy in Croatia. As these developments devolved into an armed standoff between the Croatian police and local armed Serb, the perceptions of the *Ustase* threat gained in tangibility.

Despite the rapid ethno-polarization in Croatia, the reaction of SDS BiH was cautious. Consistent with its ethno-national ontology and the organic nation metaphor, SDS provided discursive support to its co-nationals. Karadzic thus justified their ethnically exclusive referendum by stating that "Serb people have a right to declare what kind of state they want to live in so that the parties that represent them know what to advocate"(Idrizovic, 1990b). Yet, SDS still had an election to win, and its rivals SRSJ and SKBiH were likely to benefit from any statement that could be interpreted as stirring ethnic animosity. The leaders of SDS thus stayed away from militancy that was becoming characteristic of other leading Serb nationalists. That the Croat threat discourse of SDS BiH at this time was more restrained than that of the rest of the coalition became evident in October at the founding of the Serb National Council for BiH. Several Serb nationalist leaders from Croatia gave rousing speeches notable for their radical dramaturgy and militancy. Dusan Zelembaba called for Serbs who had two cows to "sell one and buy a gun" (Novo, 1990b). In contrast, Karadzic and Koljevic gave defiant but comparably moderate speeches that focused on the legal and political methods for preserving the Serb state union. SDS's framing of the threat thus assumed a more rational, wise and deliberative voice in opposition to the more emotional one coming from the Croatian Serb leaders.

This dual voice was also present in the affectively salient ceremonies of excavation and reburial of the remains of Serbs that *Ustase* had thrown into the pits during World War II. In the fall of 1990, SDS activists participated in organizing excavations from pits at several locations in Herzegovina that the communists had previously sealed with concrete. Teams of speleologists

from Serbia and BiH spearheaded the excavations, suggesting a scientific rather than political character of the events. When Vuk Draskovic visited an excavation site near Kupres, the organizers prevented his speech on the grounds that they were against politicking (“Nema prolaza cetnickoj idelogiji”, 1990). The religious rituals dominated reburial ceremonies, suggesting their spiritual character. Yet, the performances were, most of all, politically resonant. While the excavations themselves received some attention in media, the occasions of reburials were turned into widely reported mass performances, often attended by thousands of people that included leading religious and political figures. *Javnost*’s reports consisted of images that visualized the occasion to its readership (see figure 4.2). The excavated human skulls laid out next to the pits, some of them with holes inflicted by sharp objects, the large and small bones gathered next to them, some of those of a child tied together by a wire, a glance at the abysses of the pits, some of them several dozen meters deep, all served as vivid, graphic and intimate visual reminders of the tragic national past. Such visuals, often published on the front pages of newspapers, mobilized forceful feelings of compassion and grief for the victims, outrage and hate toward the perpetrators, and even reconstructed a fragment of the experience of the dread that the victims must have felt as they were escorted to the site of the crime. These were the shared emotions that brought the dispersed observers together into an audience of mourners. While manifestly about the past, they were occurring within the broader discourse of *Ustasa* resurrection in the form of a new Croatian government. An entity against which the mobilized feelings of outrage, hate, revenge and fear could and should be directed was not some distant movement present only in historical records but a palpable side to the temporary conflict.

Indeed, SDS had a central role in the staging of the reburial performances and constitution of their political meanings. The party’s activists and supporters organized the ceremonies, while its senior leadership attended them. *Javnost* covered the events in each edition with lengthy reports. It also published graphic feullitons about the murders, and interviews with survivors. It accompanied textual narratives with multiple pictures of excavated skulls and bones. Some were scaled to show large quantities of excavated remains, highlighting the magnitude of the crimes. Others zoomed in on the remains that had visible points of impact, thus representing the agony of the victims. The excavation visuals thus helped SDS amplify the *Ustasa* threat frame. Yet, this



was achieved implicitly through the relation to the broader contextuality, minimizing the opportunities for being accused of the nationalist excesses. That its emotional resonance went a long way in homogenizing Serbs is indicated in Velibor Ostojic's reflections given to *Javnost*:

We began with excavation of the remains of the Serbian people who were brutally killed during the WWII. It was a warning regarding all the misconceptions that the Serbian people accepted about the shared life with the enemies. All of a sudden, the Serbian people felt that they had been deceived, misled and that their modern history full of tragedy, genocide and exodus had been hidden from them ("Pet srpskih godina", 1995).

***Neutralizing the Non-ethnic Axes of Identification.*** While Serb homogenization was positively associated to that of the Muslim and Croat ethnic "other", it was inversely related to *Jugoslovenstvo* (as a national identity), class, republican, regional and other collective belongings that transgressed ethnic lines. Indeed, SDS saw SKBiH-SDP and SRSJ as its primary opponents, for they sought to mobilize these non-ethnic axes and, hence, distort the visibility of ethnic boundaries. To discredit these attempts, SDS deployed several framing tactics.

Keeping consistent with its self-portrayal as a movement of "true" Serbs, SDS framed support for non-ethnic parties not so much as an ill-advised political decision as an immoral act against *Srpsstvo*. Here the affectively imbued lexical reservoir of historical treason, which had been popularized and maintained through folk traditions, came in useful. In particular, SDS mobilized the myth of self-sacrifice at the battle of Kosovo that saw Tzar Lazar consciously sacrifice his earthly kingdom to gain a heavenly one. Nikola Koljevic thus portrayed Serb communists as Serbs who had "transferred the Kosovo's choice of a heavenly kingdom to the earthly plane, and for them it is the issue of honor whether to remain faithful to their pseudo-religious oath" (Mandic & Kljakic, 1990). Similarly, leaflets distributed at a SRSJ rally in Banja Luka warned against voting for the reformists: "Remember Kosovo and do not allow traitors to determine the lives of your unborn descendants...collect all your numbers and your strength, and let the curse of holly Tzar Lazar pass you by" ("Letak SDS", 1990)." Mobilized here is more than merely a folk narrative. The Kosovo myth is a key element of Serb ethno-genesis and a moral codex that distinguishes between virtue and corruptness, and, hence, between a proper and improper national self. Serbs who fought and died in Kosovo gained eternal glory, while Tzar

Lazar cursed the traitors, deserters and those who refused to join the battle to posterities of misfortunes. By linking Serb communists and reformists to the commonplace portrayals of Serbs who had betrayed the cause of Tzar Lazar, SDS paired its political opponents to the feelings of disgust, shame, disappointment and resentment that oral traditions, church ceremonies and other previous encounters with the Kosovo Myth had recorded in virtual memories of many Serbs. Conversely, the frame associated SDS with the virtuous Tzar Lazar, likening its call to Serb political unity in 1990 with the Tzar's call to arms six centuries earlier.

Yet, the task of ethno-homogenization required that the non-ethnic sentiments be acknowledged rather than outright dismissed. Many Serbs had fought for the second Yugoslavia in the communist Partisan movement, and many others had been socialized in the conditions of communist discursive hegemony. SDS's tactic here was to ethnicize the Partisans by appropriating their anti-fascist virtues while discrediting their communist agenda. It spoke of the anti-fascist Peoples' Liberation War (NOR- *Narodnooslobodilacki Rat*) that gave rise to the second Yugoslavia as an integral part of Serb history, while at the same time demanding reconciliation with the resurrected former enemy. At a pan-Serb Assembly in Gradina near Jasenovac Karadzic stated that "the question of Chetnik and Partisan movements is not a political but a historical one. From a political perspective, there are no Cetniks or Partisans, there is only a united Serb people who got unified to protect itself" (Grubic, 1990).

Despite portraying itself as the guardian of Yugoslavia, the party also found threatening the powerful *Jugoslovenstvo* sentiments that had led an increasing number of Bosnians to declare nationally as Yugoslavs. In an interview with Politika, Nikola Koljevic sought to delegitimize these feelings by stating that "there is no Yugoslav language, religion, customs, history and culture- some Serb fear that they would be declared as 'nationalists' if they fully embrace their identity...they don't want to see that Slovenes, Muslims and Macedonians don't have that problem" (Mandic & Kljakic, 1990). A Yugoslav identity could thus be only a derivative of an ethnic one, and all others, including Muslims, realized this except Serbs. Ironically, SDA was also moderating love for Yugoslavia by telling Muslims it was only them who were declaring themselves as Yugoslavs.

More specifically, SDS framed SKBiH-SDP as a new manifestation of the anti-Serb communist agency that had been not only suppressing the Serb national spirit, but also producing

economic inferiority that impoverished many individual Serbs. A vote for the reformed communist would bring a further deterioration in the livelihoods of Serbs. SDS exploited all negative byproducts of the communist-led urbanization and industrialization as evidence of an anti-Serb conspiracy. The frame was all the more resonant considering that urbanization adversely affected rural areas, most of which were inhabited by Serbs. Karadzic particularly emphasized that the existing territorial organization broke down the “natural” Serb areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina, reducing the Serb nation to “an inferior economic, demographic, and political position.” (Rakocevic-Novakovic, 1990b)

The Communist threat frame in the pre-election campaign also made use of a concurrent event of the constitutional amendments that the SKBiH-led parliament had adopted on July 31<sup>st</sup>. The principal legal concern for SDS was that the amendments, which provided for the establishment of a chamber of citizens and a chamber of municipalities, did not establish a Council of Peoples made up of the representatives of three constituent peoples who would each have a veto over the fate of the country. SDS saw the absence of this veto as a communist conspiracy that could allow Croats and Muslims to outvote Serbs and potentially separate them from the parent-body of Serbia. The party responded in October by launching the Serb National Council (SNV- *Srpsko Nacionalno Vijeće*), an institution like the one established earlier in Croatia that claimed the right to speak for Serbs as a unified whole. It was an extra-legal improvisation that came with a diktat: all BiH Assembly decisions in conflict with Serb interests would be declared invalid. Karadzic legitimized the move by delegitimizing the existing legal framework and the ruling SKBiH. He presented the issue as an existential one, claiming that the communists were contributing the breakup of Yugoslavia and trying to “take away the homeland from Serbs” (Duric, 1990b). Yet, despite the proclamation of SNV as a supreme authority, SDS also made use of the fear of outvoting to mobilize Serbs to vote for SDS candidates to those same institutions it was discrediting. Again, Karadzic dramaturgically presented the issue, stating that if SDS did not get 34 percent of votes Serbs could be legally destroyed (“Završnica je pocela”, 1990).

Furthermore, SDS sought to discourage Serbs from voting for SKBiH-SDP by escalating the anxieties generated by the ongoing crisis in Croatia. In Krajina, SDS activists distributed leaflets that bluntly misrepresented SKBiH as being against Yugoslav federation, and even made

an absurd claim that the reformed communists represented “Tudjman’s soldiers”(“Strpljivo traganje”, 1990). The party leaders framed the victory of HDZ in Croatia and its subsequent nationalization of the Croatian state as a warning to Serbs in BiH that a vote for the communists would leave Serbs fragmented at a time when other nations united. It mobilized the results of the Croatian elections held only a few months prior to the emergence of SDS, which suggest that the Serbs of Croatia gave their votes to the Croatian Communist Party while the majority of Croats voted for HDZ. SDS portrayed this as another case of Serb naivety. A week before the BiH elections Karadzic stated that “whoever votes for (leader of SKBiH) Durakovic will fare as Serbs in Croatia did who voted for (the Croatian communist leader) Racan” (Jahic, 1990). Serb supporters of SKBiH-SDP were thus both traitors and naïve.

The party also made use of the crisis in Croatia to dissuade Serbs from voting for SRSJ, the party of their favorite politician to date Ante Markovic. Again, SDS deployed the themes of deception and conspiracy against Serbs. Since Markovic did not run in the Croatian elections, SDS claimed, his late entry and campaigning in BiH could only mean that he wanted to do harm to the Serb national being by dividing a Serb vote. Another framing opportunity was Markovic’s ethnic Croat background and a historically resonant first name, which was the same as that of the leader of the notorious NDH leader Ante Pavelic, and one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century founders of Croatian nationalism, Ante Starcevic. A speaker at the founding assembly of SNV, Milica Rajic, took advantage by stating that the followers of “two Antes, Ante Starcevic and Ante Pavelic, aided by a third Ante, Markovic, are once again plotting against the lives of Serbs in Croatia” (Rajic, 1990). Serb nationalists thus mobilized historicity of a single common signifier to conjure up similar emotions toward individuals who lived decades apart and advocated a widely different agenda. What the signifier of “Ante Markovic” stood was thus infiltrated by the meanings of other signifiers to which it was discursively associated, and, as such, could never entirely correspond to the referent person. Furthermore, SDS sought to discredit Markovic’s market reforms and SRSJ’s campaign focus on economic policy by mobilizing the image of a virtuous Serb national being in opposition to the morally decadent individualist pursuit of earthly, material riches. Karadzic thus stated that “Markovic fooled himself when he promised Serbs bread and money, because they were used to hunger and needed first and foremost freedom that could only be achieved in their own state” (Karadzic, 1990). In the shadows of the statement was, again, the moral code of the Kosovo myth. Even if a Serb found SRSJ’s economic program

to be superior, it was in the character of Serb traitors, and not true Serbs, to choose sides based on one's material needs.

Much of SDS's discourse during the election campaign was structured to diffuse the fear that the three ethno-national parties would produce ethnic conflict. From the outset, SDS sought to differentiate itself from radical nationalism. Karadzic thus stated that SDS "will not accept aggressive parties, especially those who preach national egocentrism, hatred and ethnic paranoia" (Rakocevic-Novakovic, 1990a). Rather than calming the anxieties, however, the party redirected them toward its non-national rivals. It alleged that the peace of the communist era was fake and artificial, a frame against which it could portray itself as a harbinger of sincere peace. Plavsic thus spoke of the former peace as the one in which everyone smiled to one another's face but despised one another behind the smile. Koljevic alleged the conspiratory nature of the Communists, stating that they "made up nationalist conflicts so that they could then be peacemakers" (Lucic, 1990b). Karadzic linked the frame more directly to the upcoming elections, claiming that "if Serbs vote for SKBiH this would lead to outvoting and endanger civil peace" (Vucelic, 1990). SDS was thus a guardian of both the threatened Serb nation and of peace. What the frame omitted to address was a logical contradiction between the assertion that national parties would bring a better, more sincere peace and the rapid ethno-political deterioration that followed the collapse of the communist hegemony.

From the very beginnings, SDS sought to demonstrate the arrival of this new, more genuine peace by entering into a campaign partnership with the other two ethno-national parties, SDA and HDZ. When staging its events, SDS sought to visually display this partnership. The leading Muslim intellectual Muhamed Filipovic attended the Founding Assembly of *Prosvjeta*, occupying a first row seat next to the Orthodox Priests (Nastic, 1990). At the Founding Assembly of SDS, Filipovic and the SDA leader Alija Izetbegovic were guest speakers. Both gave friendly speeches, with Filipovic calling Serbs "brothers and sisters" and Izetbegovic declaring: "We have been waiting for you, Bosnia-Herzegovina needs you" (Rakocevic-Novakovic & Zivkovic, 1990). SDS later returned the visits, as its senior leaders attended SDA's events. In the weeks prior to the elections, the leaders of HDZ, SDA and SDS held a joint press conference to protest the existing electoral law. In Konjic, the three parties held a joint rally. They also aided one another at the polling stations. Since everyone could vote for the

representatives of all ethnic nations in the BiH presidency, SDS leaders encouraged supporters to vote for the candidates of the other two ethno-national parties rather than the ones nominated by the communist and reformists, claiming that these were the only legitimate representatives of the people (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 & December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013). In the ethnically homogenous town of Drvar, Serbs thus gave more votes to a HDZ-candidate for Croat member of the Presidency, Franjo Boras, than to a SKBiH-SDP candidate, Ivo Komsic. Similarly, voters in the predominantly Croat Listica (present-day Siroki Brijeg), chose Biljana Plavsic as a Serb member of the presidency (Delalic & Sacic, 2007).

Yet, evidence abounded that this ethno-nationalist peace was far from a genuine one. Most obviously, SDS entered into a partnership with HDZ BiH despite holding opposing views on the principal political issues of the time. HDZ BiH favored a con-federal arrangement for Yugoslavia, which for SDS signified fragmentation of the Serb national being. Moreover, the partnership co-existed with the *Ustasa* threat that framed HDZ of Croatia. SDS thus partnered with the side that favored a confederation and existentially threatened the Serbs, against SKBiH-SDP and SRSJ, both of which still advocated a preservation of a federal Yugoslavia. The partnership between SDS and SDA was also occurring against the background of contradictions. During the elections campaign, both stated their positions that would become controversial later on. Karadzic thus declared that Serbs would remain in Yugoslavia no matter how big it was. He referred to the potential independence of BiH as NDBiH, thus associating it with the fascist NDH (Misic, 1990). SDA stated a conflicting position, with Izetbegovic declaring that BiH would remain in Yugoslavia only under the condition that Croatia remain in it as well. However, in 1990 these differences still referred to a relatively distant scenario, since Yugoslavia continued to exist and both parties still advocated its preservation as a federation. While the tensions between SDS, SDA and HDZ also corresponded to an affective conflict, the three parties worked together to keep it in the background of resentment directed at the communist regime, which they aspired to escalate into anger.

Indeed, SDS Main Board sought to obscure the differences with SDA by instructing activists to portray Muslims in a positive light (Research Interviews, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 & November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Karadzic even softened the Islamic threat frame by locating the threat among the usual suspects- the communists:

Muslim extremist weren't operating through Islamic organizations, but through the League of Communists. The majority of Muslims prefer a European quality of life. We, Serbs, are much closer to our Muslims than to Europe (Vucelic, 1990).

When the differences did come to the forefront, SDS minimized any reference to them. Thus, when Izetbegovic stated in October that Muslims were prepared to defend the sovereignty of BiH with weapons, *Javnost* reported and commented on it only briefly on the last page (Zaric, 1990). In contrast, a similar statement in the spring of 1991 launched an avalanche of reactions from SDS and intensified the political crisis. Furthermore, as *Focatrans* standoff between the Muslims and Serbs of Foca escalated during the campaign, Karadzic commented that "conflicting situations are being created, there is a scenario for setting people against one another" (Tucakovic, 1990). The passive voice suggested a conspiracy of the communist authorities rather than the manifest ethnic standoff. In comparison, after the elections SDS's frames would magnify the size of the standoff and emphasize its ethnic character.

The 1990 election campaign, then, was a time of the expanded semiotic commonplaces. Displayed at SDS rallies were Yugoslav, BiH, and Serb flags, the events began with both Serb and Yugoslav anthems, they celebrated both the newer and older Serb traditions, both Yugoslav and nationalist Serb notables, the Croats were both a threat and a partner, and Muslims were a friendly nation, albeit the Islamic threat was lurking in the shadows. When contradictions needed to be addressed, the theme of communist deceptions came to the rescue. Considering a diversity of sensibilities felt by individuals of Serb background, this was the only way to turn the category into a political group. The campaign had also produced Karadzic as an undisputed leader of SDS. Karadzic had proven himself as a skillful orator who was able to adapt and connect to a variety of sensibilities of Serbs in BiH.

The results of the elections suggest that well over 80 percent of Serb voters chose SDS, indicating a high level of correspondence between the national category and a political group. The party won 26 percent of votes for the Chamber of Municipalities, while the percentage of the republic's population that declared in the 1991 census as ethnically Serb was 31. Yet, the task was far from complete. While Serbs who lived in rural areas overwhelmingly chose the national party, many urban Serbs voted for SRSJ and the parties of the Left. SDS official in Prijedor, Milan Pilipovic, estimated that the party received 90 percent of Serb votes in villages, but the percentage was down to 50 in the towns (Mutic, 1991). Moreover, the Yugoslav ethno-political

rivalries would escalate in 1991, and SDS needed to maintain support of Serbs for the polarizing policy positions it would assume.

**Post-election affective escalation.** The convincing victory of the three ethno-national parties in the November 1990 elections marked a first large shift in the performative structure of SDS's discourse. The heterogeneity that characterized the discourse prior to the elections would give way to increasing specification. Some frames were losing resonance and fading away from the intersubjective field, while the deployment of others intensified. As the defeat of SKBiH-SDP and SRSJ effectively marginalized the non-ethnic axes of political identification, the themes of the communist and reformist threat rapidly lost their political utility. Moreover, the electoral victory and the accelerating Yugoslav disintegration combined to eradicate common interest that had given rise to a partnership between the three ethno-national parties. Cultural performances continued, as SDS continued to organize *gusle* nights, celebrations of Orthodox holidays and other cultural manifestations. With their progressive accumulation and repetition, cultural ethno-differentiation was settling in as natural rather than socially enacted. As the conflict in Croatia escalated, SDS intensified its radical othering of the Croats. The post-election period also brought a full reversal of the previous framing of the Muslim ethnic "other". As the differences in the agenda of SDS and SDA came to the forefront, the Islamic threat frame suddenly emerged as one of the principal themes of SDS's discourse.

A more detailed discussion of this evolution is organized here around four main dimensions of SDS's agency. The first one refers to SDS's sedimentation of its ontological order through legislation and inscription upon the physical environment. Others discuss the party's framings of three most significant political developments in the period from the elections until the declarations of independence by Slovenia and Croatia: the negotiations on the future of Yugoslavia, SDA's declaration in favor of a confederation and the SDS-led regionalization.

**Enshrining Ethnicity.** With the victory in the November 1990 elections, SDS gained the capacity to shape the official discourse of BiH's republican institutions. Certainly, SDS could not impose its worldview at will, since the party staffed only part of the institutions. Yet, the three ethno-national parties together controlled every seat on the presidency and over four fifths in the parliament. With such power relations, any position to which all three agreed could be underpinned with legislation, and thus with systemic violence against the alternatives. While

there was little the three could agree when it came to the future status of BiH, they quickly agreed on enshrining their shared ontological order. Indeed, the new parliament had not even been sworn in when the three victors began removing the sediments of the previous ontological hegemony. The deputies were sworn in only after agreeing to remove the commonplaces of “Socialist” and “brotherhood and unity” from the inaugural oath (“Verifikovano 125 mandata”, 1990). Once in power, SDA, SDS and HDZ proceeded to form the government and staff state institutions by applying the criteria of equal ethnic representation, or the “ethnic key”, to the widest extent possible. It was time for ethnicity to reign supreme.

Yet, the key was not merely ethnic, as it referred to more than the share of offices to be allocated to members of each nationality. The members also had to be “good enough” Serbs, Muslims and Croats to be appointed by the three ethno-national parties. Indeed, the principle was more of an “ethno-party key” rather than an “ethnic key”. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the three reached an internal deal to divide all leading republican posts amongst themselves. SDA thus appointed six ministers to the new government, while SDS and HDZ appointed five and two respectively. The deal also provided for the deputies, undersecretaries and assistants within each ministry to be of different ethnic affiliations, as chosen by SDA, SDS and HDZ. Despite winning over twenty percent of the votes, SKBiH-SDP, SRSJ and other non-ethnic or multi-ethnic parties were not given a right to a single appointment. It thus appeared that when it came to non-national parties, outvoting was acceptable. The same was the case at the municipal level. The victors had agreed to share appointments to the municipal executive organs and public companies according to the share of votes each had won, but the principle did not apply to the communists and reformists. While the ethno-nationals quarreled in dozens of municipalities over who would get what post, they quickly agreed to entirely exclude SKBiH-SDP and SRSJ whenever their combined votes permitted them to do so.

Furthermore, the three victors aspired to extend ethnopartization of state institutions beyond the leading offices. SDA secretary Muhamed Cengic argued that an ethnic key should be applied to all positions, from “a receptionist to the governing bodies” (Milanovic, 1991). Karadzic declared that Muslims in the Serb majority Trebinje would be treated in the same manner as Serbs in the Muslim-majority Visoko (“Rafali na saveznu vladu”, 1991). The parties were thus promoting one’s ethnic background, as expressed through affiliation with one of the three ethno-national parties, into a principal determinant of one’s career and socioeconomic

position. Indeed, the ethno-party key served here as a newly gained political tool for de-individualizing the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, while groupism inherent in the principle represented an endorsement of the organic body metaphor. The more a shared ethno-national category also meant a shared socioeconomic fate, the easier it was to imagine a single tissue connecting the co-nationals. Individual skills, training and education may have still mattered, but only to the extent circumscribed by one's ethnicity and party affiliation. For those citizens who had declared as Yugoslavs, this was an incentive to look for ways to identify with one of the three dominant ethno-national categories.

However, it quickly became apparent that the widespread use of the ethnic/ethno-party key would create a storm of mutually incongruous ethnicized grievances rather than the promised ethnic equality. The parties began searching for anything that could be interpreted as an imbalance to the detriment of the ethnic nation they claimed to represent, both at the level of the republic and in municipalities. SDS thus claimed that the reporting of TV Sarajevo was not representing Serb interests, and advocated its separation into three ethnic channels. The BiH minister of information, Velibor Ostojic, asserted that "with separation everyone will listen to their own music and nobody will feel shortchanged" ("Tri naroda na tri kanala", 1991). Radovan Karadzic frequently complained that Serbs were underrepresented in the Interior Ministry. When a reporter showed the data that Serb cadres were actually overrepresented, Karadzic resorted to the "true Serbs" frame stating that "they could keep those Serbs for themselves" ("Stranka ne prihvata platformu", 1991) In Doboj, SDS complained that the municipality did not have a sufficient number of typewriters in Cyrillic alphabet ("Doboj bez cirilice", 1991). In Zvornik, SDS counted the kilometers of paved roads in Muslim and Serb villages, alleging that Muslim villages had five times as many. Indeed, the three parties were using the newly gained capacities to create sentiments of ethnically-grounded discontent in all aspects of public life. Considering that the communist era had left very little beyond the reach of the state, this opened the path to a thorough ethnicization of the media, educational institutions, state owned companies, and, most detrimentally, the police force. This was more of a process of ethnopartization than mere ethnicization insofar as neither a self-declaration nor family background qualified one as a full-fledged member of an ethno-national group. The ruling parties appropriated the right to make this judgment, which in turn served to produce subjects disciplined to their will.

Furthermore, the three victors used their newly gained capacities to build their ontological order into the physical environment. The new municipal governments wasted no time in renaming streets and schools that bore the names of communist heroes and holidays to those that signified ethnically exclusive traditions, history and notables. They also launched the process of removing inscriptions of the communist discourse from public spaces, such as monuments, slogans and pictures, and re-inscribing them with shrines to the new regime of truth. In April, *Prosvjeta* initiated and the local SDS-led government approved the change of street names and squares in Mrkonjic Grad, and initiated a process of erecting a monument to the previously vilified King Petar Karadzordzevic (“Kralj zauzima trg”, 1991). The monument was unveiled seven months later. In June, local authorities renamed a school in Srbac after one of the most important figures of Serb history, *Sveti Sava* (St. Sava), even though the school was attended by both Serb and non-Serb children. The process steadily accumulated throughout 1991. By the end of the year, the municipal authorities of Titov Drvar had renamed the town to Drvar, removing the prefix Titov (Tito’s). The municipal assembly also removed a large Tito’s signature that had been built across one of the nearby hills (Sabljic, 1991).

SDS was also inscribing its discourse with monuments to Serb victims of *Ustasa* atrocities. In May, such a monument was built near Bileca (Asanovic, 1991). In the fall, the construction of a memorial church began at the site of an *Ustase* atrocity near Lopare (Jovic, 1990). The SDS authorities were also re-inscribing the existing memorials in order to emphasize ethnic background of the victims. In Bugojno, they changed the inscription on a monument from “victims of the fascist terror” to that of the ethnically-specific “Serbs, Jews and the Roma people” (Micic, 1991). In the village of Drakulic, they replaced the generic reference to “victims of fascist terror” with that of “genocide against Serbs” (Preradovic, 1991a). The environment was thus rapidly changing, with each inscription representing a sedimented performance of ethno-national ontology that would live beyond the agents that produced them. While these inscriptions ostensibly spoke of the past, their productive power was projected onto the present and the future. Each served to naturalize ethno-differentiations in the present as having deep historical legitimacy. In the municipalities where one of the three ethno-national parties won an absolute majority and could freely pass legislation of local relevance, the environment was built so that it left no mistake as to its exclusively Muslim, Serb or Croat ethnic character.

*The Rise of an “Islamic Threat”*. That the portrayal of BiH Muslims was highly malleable to the shifting political opportunities and constraints became apparent with the rise of the Islamic threat frame in February of 1991. The trigger event was the SDA-proposed declaration of sovereignty that failed to pass in the BiH parliament amid the objections from SDS. Again, the Serbian media led the way, with NIN describing the declaration as an attempt to create a de facto Islamic state (“Musliman u Nisu, Srbin u Sarajevu”, 1991). This time SDS picked up on the theme, with SDS city board for Sarajevo asserting that a sovereign Bosnia could mean the “formation of an Islamic republic” (Caric, 1991a). A larger eruption of the frame occurred after SDA’s reaction to the declaration’s failure. SDA announced a shift toward a confederal position, thus effectively declaring itself in favor of what the SDS master frame saw as a fragmentation of the Serb geo-body. Compounding this was a statement by Izetbegovic that Muslims “would not sacrifice sovereignty of BiH for peace”, suggesting that sovereignty had greater value than peace (“Vukovi nisu pojeli crvenkapicu”, 1991). This contextual escalation served to heighten the resonance of the rhetorical commonplaces of the “Islamic threat”, and SDS wasted no time in deploying them. The Banja Luka SDS went the furthest, calling Izetbegovic an Islamic fundamentalist, “Serbophobe”, and a potential “Serb-eater” (“Sukob dvije opcije”, 1991). It was time for discursive dramaturgy that could escalate general anxiety into outright fear, and resentment into hatred.

Moreover, SDS began specifying the Islamic threat commonplace in dual ways. First, it paired the threat to the *Ustase* one. On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, *Javnost* published an article on its front page claiming that SDA’s true intentions behind its proposed Declaration of Sovereignty were to join BiH to NDH (Vucinic, 1991). In its later editions, the paper’s feuilletons and regular weekly articles on the *Ustase* atrocities increasingly discussed the participation of Muslims on the side of the perpetrators. An April 6<sup>th</sup> edition of a feuilleton on *Ustase* atrocities was thus titled “Imam leads the *Ustase*”, and was entirely devoted to the atrocities of Muslim *Ustase* against Serbs. On both ends of the association, then, were signifiers that mobilized anxiety and resentment, and which the political contextuality projected onto the concurrent Muslim nationalists. Second, SDS spoke of a slower progressing Muslim demographic rise as a threat of renewed Islamic subjugation. The linkage served to heighten suspicion that behind all policies of SDA was a Muslim desire for domination. Radovan Karadzic thus warned that an independent BiH would become an Islamic republic the moment when Muslims became an absolute majority (Duric,

1991a). Biljana Plavsic asserted that Muslims would behave well while they constituted less than a half of the population, after which they would create an Islamic republic (“Srbi imaju odgovor”, 1991). Both claimed to base their assertion on Alija Izetbegovic’s beliefs as expressed in his 1970 controversial publication “Islamic Declaration”. Belgrade’s *Politika* even used a misrepresentation to reinforce the claim. In a commentary published on May 26<sup>th</sup>, it claimed to quote a line from Izetbegovic’s work: “when the number of Muslims in the republic reaches 51 percent, a Muslim state will then be formed” (Caric, 1991b). The actual citation read that “an Islamic order could be achieved only in countries in which Muslims are a majority population. Without this majority the Islamic order is reduced to power and may turn to violence” (Izetbegovic, 1990). It thus spoke only of prerequisites and made no mention of the republic Bosnia-Herzegovina.

SDS tactical deployment of the “Islamic threat” frame is also evidenced in a sharp reversal of its framing of the security situation in BiH. Amid the February fallout over the declaration of sovereignty, the “Islamic threat” suddenly became omnipresent. The contrast was particularly evident in the framing of the *Focatrans* strike. While SDS downplayed the ethnic element of the strike during the campaign, by March of 1991 the party was overstating it. *Javnost* thus recalled the September 1990 intervention of special police forces in Foca, reinterpreting it as MUP’s way of “defending a sovereign BiH by beating Serb people” (Blagojevic, 1991). In April, when someone flattened tires of a *Javnost* vehicle in Sarajevo, the paper warned Izetbegovic that he would “get the bill” (Kisic, 1991). Later in the month, when Muslims fired shots in the air while passing through Serb areas on the way to a rally in Trebinje, the subtitle of *Javnost*’s report on the incident read “Alija’s terrorism” (Zaric, 1991).

The framing of a May 1991 physical assault against the SDS-appointed Information Minister of BiH Velibor Ostojic is worth a distinct mention, for it consisted of an explicit deployment of the organic nation metaphor. Although the assailants were unknown, Ostojic himself stated that the attack showed the “perspective of life of Serb peoples if they would be forcibly removed from the main body of Serb peoples in Yugoslavia”. While Ostojic saw the fate of Serbs as dependent on the health of their national organism, Radovan Karadzic framed the attack in terms of the organism’s previous experiences. He compared it to the Slaughter of the *Knezes*, a 19<sup>th</sup> century slaughter of Serbian nobility by the Ottoman Janissary junta that led to the First Serbian Uprising against the Ottoman occupation (Duric & Caric, 1991). The suggestion

was that the contemporary political moment amounted to another epic struggle. A new generation of national enemies was again conspiring against Serb leaders. This was both a danger to Serbs, and an opportunity to show the spirit of their heroic ancestors who had bravely risen up against the enemy.

***Framing regionalization.*** The victory in the 1990 elections provided SDS with capacities to tweak the existing legal framework toward initiating the process of ethno-territorialization that would culminate in the creation of Republika Srpska. Namely, two components of the political opportunity structures combined to allow SDS to make first moves toward ethnoterritorial demarcation as early as the spring of 1991, a full year prior to the outbreak of the Bosnian War. First, many of the 30 municipalities in which SDS won an absolute majority of votes were contiguous. The second was a framing opportunity. The constitution of BiH provided for the right of municipalities that were territorially and economically linked to form communities of municipalities on specific issues of shared interest. SDS took advantage of this configuration to create Serb-majority communities of municipalities by merging those municipalities where it had absolute institutional control, and legitimize them by citing the constitutional provisions.

While the BiH constitution envisioned the communities of municipalities only as sites of coordination between municipalities rather than a level of government to which they were subjugated, the party initially went at great lengths to argue that the policy conformed to the legal framework of BiH. When the Banja Luka branch of SDS publicized plans to create ZOBK on February 21<sup>st</sup>, it framed the community as an economic, cultural and administrative region within the framework of BiH (“Bosanska Krajina uskoro ekonomska, kulturna i administrativna regija”, 1991). Even after the formation of ZOBK, its founders continued to emphasize economic motives behind the association. The themes of greater economic autonomy particularly appealed to the population of Krajina, whose self-understandings had traditionally included strong regionalism and a sense of economic exploitation by the republican center in Sarajevo. The result was that the Community initially enjoyed support of even some of Krajina’s non-Serbs.

Yet, SDS never simply hid the ethnic dimension of regionalization. While the party accentuated economic exploitation, it also introduced mono-ethnic themes that would become dominant at the later stages. On February 14<sup>th</sup>, the SDS Deputies Club in the BiH Parliament declared a position that the alternative to a federal Yugoslavia is a division of BiH, arguing that

the republic's concurrent borders lacked a historical pedigree to be acceptable as state borders (Serbian Deputies Club, 1991). The relatively distant scenario appeared to loom larger with SDA's declaration in favor of a confederation, or in SDS's terms, the fragmentation of Serb national organism. Karadzic responded by framing regionalization as a revanchist measure against the geo-body of the alleged perpetrator: "Whatever they (HDZ and SDA) are doing to Yugoslavia, we will do to BiH" (Fazlic, 1991). The leader of SDS thus threatened to turn the party's discontent into an affective zero-sum game, which was sure to produce emotional polarization. Two weeks later, the president of Banja Luka municipality warned that the Community's function could change if confederalization of BiH continued to the detriment of Serbs (Kecman, 1991b). By the end of May, ZOBK was performing such an ethno-political function. Adopting a recommendation of the regional board of SDS, the Community declared against confederation and an independent BiH, and claimed the right to hold a referendum on the region's future status (Kecman, 1991c). In May, SDS's Regional and Main Board decided to extend the regionalization with the formation of two more Communities of Municipalities, one for East Herzegovina and the other for Romanija. The framing of the decisions also combined the themes of regional economic development and Serb ethno-national interests.

The party was thus legitimizing this initial stage of regionalization by mobilizing a diversity of sensibilities and keeping its actions as close to the existing legal framework as possible. By merging the existing administrative units into new, larger wholes, SDS was constructing new spatial imaginaries. The ethnicizing political context and the ethnically exclusive character of SDS would ensure that the imaginaries were oriented toward associating the new space to the predominant ethnicity of its inhabitants. This was sure to produce different affective reactions on the opposite sides of boundaries that divided ethno-national categories.

***Supporting the "Parent-body"***. While the Serb nationalist political parties were organized to conform to the republican borders, their shared master frame ensured that the activities of one would hold implications for all others. The senior partner was certainly Serbia's regime, both for its institutional capacities and for Serbia's place in the organic nation metaphor as the main body of the national organism. Moreover, the future of Yugoslavia was being negotiated by republican leaders, with Alija Izetbegovic representing BiH. Slobodan Milosevic thus represented both Serbia and Serb nationalists that operated in BiH and Croatia. That their

relationship was that of mutual reinforcement is evidenced in the debates on the future of Yugoslavia that took place in the first half of 1991. The position of SDS BiH was fully aligned with that of Serbia, in opposition to the compromise proposals advocated by Izetbegovic. SDS also sided with Milosevic against opposition within Serbia. In March, when an anti-Milosevic rally in Belgrade turned to deadly violence, Karadzic blamed the opposition, stating that “now was not the time for party conflict” (“Vreme je da se svi Srbi i sve srpske stranke ujedine na poslu spasavanja srpske buducnosti”, 1991). The leader of SDS thus translated the master imperative of unity into a wide political discretion for the party in power. Karadzic also made use of the institutional modality of Milosevic’s discourse by claiming that SDS supported the institutions of Serbia rather than the party of the Serbian president *per se* (Fazlic, 1991).

In March of 1991, the discursive imperative of national unity gave rise to a modern embodiment of a Serb national traitor. The man was Bogic Bogicevic, a Serb communist whom the previous regime had appointed BiH’s representative to the Yugoslav Presidency. The facilitating event was a March 12<sup>th</sup> vote in the Presidency on JNA’s proposal to deal with the deteriorating situation in the country by raising the Army’s combat readiness. Serbia supported the proposal, as it would allow JNA to remove the secessionist governments of Croatia and Slovenia. With four out of eight seats under its influence, Serbia needed another vote to ensure its adoption. Among the other four was Bogicevic, who was still serving his term. While the BiH representative in the Yugoslav presidency was expected to follow instructions of the BiH Parliament, the lack of a united stance at the republican level ironically gave Bogicevic autonomy to make decisions on behalf of BiH based on personal values and beliefs. Despite his Serb ethnicity and intense pressures, which included death threats, Bogicevic joined the representatives of Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia in voting against the proposal. With the vote, Bogicevic effectively stepped into SDS’s discursive slot of a Serb national traitor. He came to personify a deviant, immoral “Serb” in opposition to the virtuous “true” Serbs who would have never turned against their national organism. As a multitude of SDS’s performances now associated Bogicevic to “Brankovic”, “Jannisary” and other commonplaces that signified Serb treason, “Bogicevic” was becoming a rhetorical commonplace in itself. Its signification was evolving into that of a live, immediate and present traitor, which could be used in conjunction with the historical ones to amplify the treason frame in the future.

SDS also disputed the right of Izetbegovic to represent BiH at the Yugoslav level in ways that introduced new, ethnicized spatial imaginaries. The party framed the policy as representing not merely the will of one part of BiH's society, but also the position of parts of BiH's territory. When Izetbegovic asserted that BiH was "somewhere in-between" the federation and confederation, Karadzic reacted by denying Izetbegovic the right to speak for 64 percent of BiH's territory on which SDS "won a territorial victory" (Kecman, 1991a). Besides the empirically unsubstantiated percentages, the statement was significant for fostering ethno-territorial imaginaries superior to those of BiH as a long-established spatio-administrative unit. SDS did allow for BiH to act as a single agent within the framework of Yugoslavia. In the 1991 context, however, this merely served to promote the party's nationalist agenda. When SDS rejected all compromise proposals put forth by Izetbegovic and Macedonian president Kiro Gligorov, Karadzic explained that the ethno-territorial logic was not only better but also unavoidable: "An ethnic and not historical principle should be applied. New borders should be drawn according to the ethnic principle- this is an unavoidable historical process" ("Moguc je jedino etnicki princip", 1991). It remained unclear how this ethno-teleological reading of history coexisted with any possibility of avoiding the division of BiH into ethno-territories, which SDS still claimed was only an undesired distant possibility.

The post-election period, then, was remarkable for the escalation of SDS's frame of the Muslim ethnic "other", and launch of the themes of ethno-territorial division of BiH. Both represented SDS's discursive adjustment to the shifting political opportunity structures, showing that the master frame's flexibility allowed the party to produce diverse collective action frames. New legislative capabilities of ethno-national parties in conjunction with the escalating ethnopolitics served to both naturalize ethnic groups and further elevate their levels of groupness. Affective cleavages between the pleasing sensibilities of ethnic selves and the negative sentiments toward the imagined ethnic other were becoming more pronounced. That the new regime of truth had a productive impact on the landscape of self-understandings was evidenced in the results of the April 1991 census, in which the number of Yugoslavs dropped by a quarter from the decade earlier. Yet, a quarter of a million Bosnians were still declaring as Yugoslavs.

**Framing collective action after Croatia's separation.** The June 26<sup>th</sup> declarations of independence by Slovenia and sovereignty by Croatia firmly placed the locus of the Yugoslav

crisis on territorial disputes. For its part, SDS reacted to the declarations with a position that Slovenes and Croats should be allowed to separate, but without the Serb majority areas of Croatia. The reaction was consistent with its master frame that saw Yugoslavia as a marriage of interconnected ethno-national organisms rather than as a union of republics. In this metaphorical vision, the separation of Slovenia and Croatia was legitimate insofar as it represented a divorce between the organisms. In the case of Croatia, however, the two sides had outstanding issues, which could be resolved only with territorial demarcation. It would soon turn out that the demarcation required physical violence.

As Croatia's declaration shifted the political opportunity structures toward the realization of a rump Yugoslavia, the differences between SDA and SDS on the future status of BiH came to the political forefront. Croatia's self-declared exit from the federation brought SDA closer to the policy of pursuing an independent BiH, which consequently turned SDS further in the direction of demarcation of "Serb" areas to be kept in union with Serbia at all costs. Against this background, SDS's discourse continued to specify, abandoning the supra-ethnic economic themes and the rhetorical commonplace of *komsiluk* in favor of those that legitimized ethno-separation of BiH. These were structured around four principal activities; armed mobilization in Croatia, evolution of regionalization into an explicit ethno-territorialization, response to the Declaration of Sovereignty of BiH and the internationally-sponsored negotiations on the future of Yugoslavia. The discursive evolution was also transforming the internal relations within SDS, verticalizing the party hierarchy to the level of a military-like structure.

***Framing Mobilization.*** When seen through SDS's organic nation metaphor, the summer 1991 escalation of armed skirmishes in Croatia into a full-scale war signified the beginning of an *Ustasa* attack against one part of the Serb national organism. The metaphor here served to simulate sensibilities felt by the Serb population in conflict-ridden areas of Croatia to Serbs of BiH. If an organism is attacked on one side, the entire body feels pain and consequences. Moreover, the attack was not only aimed at the biological dimension of the organism, but also at its character and spirit. The injury was both physical and moral. As the Croatian war unfolded, SDS's discourse began to specify these large-scale understandings into the imperative of armed mobilization on the side of ethno-separatist Croatian Serbs. The ethno-national essence that was uniting each individual Serb into a collective self was calling on one to defend both the dignity

and body of one's national organism. A failure to answer the call was an immoral act typical of corrupt "Serbs". As Dobrica Cosic explained, an uncorrupted Serb could not simply stay out of it: "neutrality, today when war is being waged against Serb people, represents a lie and moral cowardice" ("Istorijska prekretnica za srpski narod", 1991).

SDS also continued to find utility in the deployment of semiotic commonplaces that could mobilize sentiments of *Jugoslovenstvo*. Although the conflict in Croatia was unmistakably waged to maximize territory that would remain in the revised, shortened Yugoslavia "for the people who want it", rather than to prevent secession of Croatia and Slovenia, SDS framed it as a struggle for the genuine Yugoslav union. This was only to be expected, considering that the mobilization was to the existing Yugoslav army, that the Army still hoped to attract non-Serb recruits, and that some Serbs would be more likely to mobilize if they came to perceive the defense of *Srpstvo* also as a defense of Yugoslavia as they knew it. Thus, at the July 27<sup>th</sup> celebration of the Uprising Day, which marked the beginning of Partisan uprising in BiH, the speakers from the ranks of SDS compared the contemporary conflict as a fight for Yugoslavia akin to the partisan one from the 1941-45 period (Buvac, 1991). In October, the political council of SDS framed the Croatian War as "not a war of Serbs and Croats, but Yugoslav-oriented citizens against a fascist consciousness" (Duric, 1991b). Yet, other political agents in BiH were channeling the pro-Yugoslav sentiments in a different direction, framing the War not as an aggression against Yugoslavia, but as the intra-Yugoslav conflict that no Bosnian should join. As non-Serbs (as well as some Serbs) increasingly deserted the army or failed to respond to the calls for mobilization against fellow Yugoslavs, SDS began mobilizing love for Yugoslavia in ways that served to produce resentment of Serbs toward the ethnic "others". In November, the presidency of the Autonomous Region of Bosnian Krajina demanded that JNA keep only those personnel who are "*ethnically* (emphasis added), politically and militarily oriented for Yugoslavia" ("Sve pod oruzjem", 1991). The ethno-political frames were thus anchoring the *Jugoslovenstvo* sentiments, common to Bosnians of all ethnic backgrounds, to two opposing narratives. A sense of an ethnic self, which the ethno-national agents in BiH had been intensifying for the previous year, emerged here as a decisive affective disposition that delimited what narrative one was cognitively inclined to embrace.

Compounding this was the new meaning that SDS's *Ustasa* threat frame acquired contextually amid the outbreak of the Croatian War. The conflict gave the frame a palpable armed entity onto which the alleged threat could be anchored. With the threat gaining in concreteness and immediacy, the sensibilities of fear, outrage and animosity associated with it corresponding intensified. The media images of destruction, the burials of fallen soldiers, the influx of refugees, the news reports of battlefield successes and failures, the militarized environment, the exchange of fire in border areas all served to escalate the emotions of Serbs in BiH to the intensities that were reducing the cognitive processes to simple dichotomizations of friends and enemies. SDS was also heightening the immediacy of the threat in BiH by claiming that the enemy planned attacks against Serbs in Bosnian Krajina. The ongoing reburials of the World War II-era *Ustasa* victims further added to the sensibilities. At a reburial ceremony near Glamoc in August of 1991, Biljana Plavsic used the opportunity for historical parallelism: "our enemies are sharpening their knives again and taking away our Serbian land" ("Sjecanje nas ujedinjuje", 1991).

To maximize the effects of its mobilization frame, SDS also sought to neutralize and discredit the widespread anti-war sentiments that were connecting many ethnic Serbs to other constituencies. When the August 1991 "Yutel for Peace" concert was held in Sarajevo in front of a crowd of approximately 100,000, *Javnost* framed it as a "parade of kitch", and warned Serbs not be fooled by peace rallies (Besarovic, 1991a). SDS also sought to discredit protest gatherings of mothers who were asking for their sons to return from front lines. To tarnish their authenticity, *Javnost* resorted to a fabrication. On the cover page of its August 31<sup>st</sup> edition, the paper featured an altered picture from one of the protests that showed a protester holding a sign "JNA-No, Ustase-Yes". Other reports have shown that no such sign or any expression of support for *Ustase* was present at the rally ("To je lice 'Javnosti'", 1991). To neutralize anti-war sentiments SDS also had to neutralize the evidence of suffering of Croats and Muslims, which were threatening to relativize the themes of Serb victimization. SDS deployed here the virtuous Serb/corrupt Other dichotomy of its master narrative to overpower a sense of empathy with that of resentment. It also politicized the human dimension of suffering of Muslims and Croats by framing it as the fault of their ethnic leaders. In October, when the news of JNA's destruction of the Herzegovinian village of Ravno circled the airwaves, *Javnost* blamed Croat politics and downplayed the extent of the damage ("Ko je Ravno gurnuo u rat", 1991). The same framing

tactic was applied when the images of a devastated Croatian city of Vukovar in the aftermath of its fall to the JNA shocked the Yugoslav and European public.

Yet, these armed mobilization frames had only a limited effect. The discursive mobilization of virtual memory faced a powerful counter-sentiment in one's fear of being sent to a war zone away from one's home. One existential threat, to the national organism, clashed with another, to the biological existence of a soldier in combat. That many Serbs were unwilling to mobilize in the defense of their ethnic brethren was evidenced in the fall of 1991, as SDS began to organize volunteers units in Bosnian Krajina to join JNA's operations. Local leaders were often unable to meet the volunteer quotas that the party elites had assigned them, prompting Karadzic to angrily complain that the entire Bosnian Krajina was "asleep" (Gazija Bosne, 2009). The later mobilization during the Bosnian War was more successful only because the perceived threat was at the doorsteps, involving not only the imaginary but also the actual livelihoods (Research Interviews, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013 & November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

***From Regions to Ethnic Areas.*** As the political and armed escalation further destabilized the established spatial imaginaries, SDS used the resultant fluidities as an opportunity for stepping up its constitution of new, ethno-territorial realities. ZOBK now behaved as a distinct government, passing decisions on territorial defense matters independent of, and even in defiance of, those made by the republican institutions. In September of 1991, SDS launched another stage of regionalization that openly assumed an ethno-separatist character. On September 12<sup>th</sup>, the Community of Municipalities of Eastern and Old Herzegovina declared itself a Serbian Autonomous Region (SAO) of Herzegovina, thus enshrining ethnicity in the region's name. Four days later, ZOBK assembly upgraded its status by declaring the Autonomous Region of Krajina (ARK). On 21<sup>st</sup> of September a SAO Romanija was declared. SDS also created two new regions, which immediately assumed an explicitly ethnic character. On 19<sup>th</sup> of September, the party joined a group of municipalities under its control in Bosnia's northeast into SAO Northeastern Bosnia. The same was the case with SDS-led municipalities in Northern Bosnia, which declared SAO Northern Bosnia on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

The collapse of a legal framework of Yugoslavia amid the secessionist moves by Slovenia and Croatia and the emotional polarization of the Croatian War gave SDS leaders greater discretion for legitimizing its escalation of ethno-territorialism. In September, Karadzic

appeared unconcerned with legal issues, focusing instead on the concurrent social realities: “At this moment BiH is divided in cultural, spiritual and economic sense, and that this needs to assume territorial contours” (Demirovic, 1991). SDS also had to address sensibilities that saw Bosnia-Herzegovina as one’s region, society, republic and homeland. These sentiments not only stood in tension with SDS’s ethno-territorialism, but also served as resources that the opposing parties sought to translate into support for BiH’s statehood. SDS’s frequent tactic here was to reduce the meaning of BiH to that of a mere geographic toponym. At other times, it went beyond such affective neutrality to link BiH to negative sensibilities. The ARK leader Vojo Kupresanin thus stated that “during and after the war Serb peoples fought for Yugoslavia, and not for the state of BiH. That it became a state was an act of Serbophobes headed by Tito (“Izlazak iz supe”, 1991). Nikola Koljevic mocked the famed Bosnian value of *komsiluk*: “there is no return to the ‘neighborly Bosnia’ in which everyone kindly asks one another about one’s health, but all work against each other behind their backs as much as they can” (Koljevic, 1991). Koljevic later commented on the potential division of BiH as something that “should not be seen as evil” (Preradovic, 1991e).

The alleged Muslim demographic threat also came in useful for legitimizing ethno-territorialization. In SDS’s metaphorical vision, a higher Muslim birth rate meant that another national organism would gradually erode the tissue of the Serb geo-body. SDS saw the solution in clearly defining the borders that would separate the entangled organisms. SDS not only saw parts of BiH’s territory as ethnically Serb, but demanded self-sacrifice from each Serb in order to keep it that way. One was expected to show the virtues of “true” Serbs by refusing to sell land to non-Serbs, thus surrendering personal material interest in favor of the national one. The moral code of the virtuous self/corrupt other, which operated behind the statement, served here to counteract the cross-cutting affective connections that transgressed the binary. Since the morality was firmly anchored in the righteousness of the national organism, which was opposed to the immorality of the ethno-national “other”, one needed not feel aggrieved about ethnicizing the land, and spatially separating from friends and neighbors that cohabited it. On the contrary, this was to be desired, as it removed the corruptness of the “other”.

***Responding to the Memorandum on Sovereignty.*** The SDS-led regionalization was an exercise of power politics, legitimized by the affective energies that had accumulated over the

preceding year. In the fall of 1991, SDS was also channeling these energies to radicalize its rhetorical threats against BiH's statehood. In October, Karadzic issued a public warning that any attempt at secession would "ignite the fire of civil war" ("Ostajemo u Jugoslaviji", 1991). At the October 14<sup>th</sup> parliamentary session that debated the proposal to adopt the Memorandum on Sovereignty, Karadzic went further, issuing the infamous threat that unilateral independence would "lead Bosnia and Herzegovina to hell and the Muslim nation perhaps to extinction"(Sense Agency, 2004). In conjunction with ethno-territorialization that had already occurred, the threat was assembling an image of the future independent BiH as the state without territory and without people.

When the rump BiH Parliament defied this pressure, and adopted the Memorandum of Sovereignty of BiH on October 15<sup>th</sup>, SDS leadership turned the resultant anger among the coalition's members into an affective resource for producing institutional separation at the BiH level. To prepare its followers for an impending confrontation, SDS heightened the drama surrounding the event, as evidenced in the "Proclamation to the Serb Peoples" that *Javnost* published in bold letters on the front page of its October 19<sup>th</sup> edition:

SDA and HDZ deputy groups, together with one part of the opposition, attempted a coup, adopting unconstitutional decisions by means of political terror, with which they wanted to annihilate the tradition of a common life between Serbs, Muslims and Croats ("Proglas srpskom narodu", 1991).

Three features of the statement are significant. First, it framed the Declaration as that of Muslim and Croat parties, suggesting that the parliament of BiH could not exist as such without its deputies from the ranks of SDS. Second, it portrayed the act as political violence against both the Serb nation and the existing constitution, which served to heighten the perceived imminence of the Muslim and Croat threat, while grounding the agenda of SDS in legal provisions. Third, it blamed SDA and HDZ for not only threatening the Serb nation but also for dividing the people of BiH, which deflected charges that SDS was the party endangering the tranquility of BiH's common life. Through these three features, the statement served to conjure and heighten the outrage of Serbs toward the imagined ethnic "other" and the fears of an uncertain future, a corollary of both being a heightened energy for collective action that would restore one's injured dignity, punish the corrupt offender and create new stability.

By mobilizing this affective complex, SDS was creating a favorable environment for escalating ethno-regionalization into outright ethno-separatism. On October 18<sup>th</sup>, Karadzic declared a state of emergency for all municipal boards, imposing round-the-clock duty watches and expecting them to meet daily (Hanson, 2002). That the event seemed to create a spike in the emotional charge, and hence an opportunity for policy radicalization, is suggested in the intercepted conversation between Karadzic and Milosevic held on 24 October 1991. The leader of SDS told Serbia's President that the moment needed to be seized for establishing a separate Serb assembly. When Milosevic expressed concern that radical measures could alienate sympathetic non-Serbs, Karadzic responded that people could not be mobilized "with mineral water" and that any delay could lead to apathy (Karadzic & Milosevic, 1991). Here Karadzic suggested that the relationship between mass sentiments and elite politics was that of mutual constitution. The sentiments varied in relation to the political context, but they also had autonomy that shaped political possibilities. The event of the Memorandum was an opportunity to radicalize framings, and consequently to intensify emotions of Serbs, but a delay between the favorable emotional states and political actions could settle emotions, create time for reassessment and take the opportunity away. Indeed, on October 24<sup>th</sup> the deputies from the ranks of SDS and SPO, as well as several deputies from the ranks of the opposition used the opportunity to establish an "Assembly of the Serb People of BiH", which, for the time, being existed parallel to the BiH Assembly (Rakocevic-Novakovic & Habul, 1991). By proclaiming the para-institution as a supreme representative of Serbs in BiH, the gathering translated the intense emotional investment of most ethnic Serbs toward the goal of preserving a Serb state union into a declarative force of its discourse. Despite the violation of *de jure* provisions, the Assembly could make implementable, politically relevant declarations by virtue of being seen as a legitimate institution amongst much of the target population. As the events would show, SDS would further translate this legitimacy to establish what it claimed to be a new *de jure* framework.

SDS's response also involved the first post-election mobilization of Serbs in a coordinated manner across the entire territory of BiH. At an October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SDS Deputies' Club, the party decided to hold a plebiscite on the issue of BiH's status. The plebiscite was held on November 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> in 101 municipalities, posing a question to Bosnian Serbs if they supported the Decision of the Serb Assembly to remain in the shortened Yugoslav union.

While SDS did not explicitly state how the policy would be implemented, the phrasing of the question suggested that the principle would be ethno-territorialism, and that the self-proclaimed Serb regions of Coatia would be equivalent to the established republics: “Do you agree with the decision of the Assembly of Serb Peoples from October 24<sup>th</sup> that Serb people would remain in the common state of Yugoslavia with Serbia, Montenegro, SAO, Krajina, SAO Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srymium, and others who declared for the same?” (Besarovic, 1991c). According to the organizers, 1,162,030 Serb residents of BiH and hundreds of thousands of others who lived elsewhere but hailed from BiH took part in the plebiscite, with over 99 percent choosing the “Yes” answer. The results subsequently became SDS’s rhetorical tool for legitimizing its policies.

While the mass turnout left little doubt that Serbs had in large numbers answered the call of SDS, the results are mired with validity problems that diminish their utility as indicators of levels of Serb political homogenization. In the municipalities where SDS was not in power, the organizers improvised by holding the vote in private premises, such as family houses and restaurants. Moreover, the fluidities and ambiguities embedded in the notion of an ethno-national identity had manifested themselves in the Plebiscite’s problematic criteria for defining the electorate. The voters thus included Hungarians, Slovaks and Romanians who had one parent of Serb descent, and a woman with a Muslim name who asked to vote as a Serb claiming that ethnicity wasn’t indicated on her ID (Bajcetic, 1991). Furthermore, a look at the April 1991 Census data suggests that more adult Serbs who lived in BiH participated in the Plebiscite than have declared as ethnically Serb. According to the census, there were a total of 1,366,104 Serbs in BiH, which included the population under 18.

Despite dubious validity and lack of any legality beyond that of the self-declared “Serb” institutions, the outcome of the plebiscite became a valuable rhetorical tool in SDS’s discursive repertoire. Although the party organized the event from the beginning to end and had no political opponent that would campaign for a “no” answer, it interpreted the vote as a binding expression of the “will of the people”. Moreover, the “will” was to be fulfilled in all areas of BiH, regardless of whether the Serbs constituted an ethnic majority or minority. In the immediate aftermath of the plebiscite, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the Serb assembly, SDS announced that all local communities in which 50 percent of Serbs voted “yes” would remain in Yugoslavia (Srbinovic, 1991). The

announcement left unspecified how the Serbs who were intertwined with Muslims and Croats across BiH, down to the level of mixed apartment buildings in ethnically diverse cities, would exercise this right while giving non-Serbs the right to build a different state. With the method unspecified, SDS constituted the plebiscitary vote as a floating signifier that it could later stabilize with various possible territorial solutions.

Although the plebiscite constituted an escalation of Serb ethno-separatism, SDS continued to appeal to the sentiments of Yugoslav unity. SDS framed the event as not only a vote for Serb interests, but also for the preservation of the genuine Yugoslavia that Bosnians of all ethnic backgrounds had felt as their country. On some of the ballot boxes, the organizers displayed not a Serb but a Yugoslav flag (Kreativni tim SDS, 1991). SDS's plebiscite was also open for non-Serbs, who were able to vote on a separate, yellow ballot. The question on the ballot was phrased differently from that of a blue Serb ballot, recognizing BiH as a polity and leaving out any reference to the SAOs: "Do you agree that BiH remain in the joint state of Yugoslavia as an equal republic, with all others who choose so?" By posing a different question for the same policy, SDS recognized the political importance of framing. It suggested that the policy behind the plebiscitary question could not be fixed onto a single unambiguous interpretation, and that the best rhetorical strategy was to deploy diverse semiotic commonplaces that could mobilize diverse sentiment but still be channeled toward the same objective.

A large plebiscite ad published in *Oslobodjenje* on November 7<sup>th</sup> speaks of this diversity. The ad, signed by the Assembly of the Serb Peoples, explained the plebiscite separately to "Serb People", the citizens of BiH who had "Yugoslavia in their hearts", and "Muslim and Croat People" (Assembly of the Serbian People of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991). The top section, to "Serb people", alleged that the survival of Serbs would be jeopardized in the case of "unnatural" separation from their co-nationals. The section below, to the people who had "Yugoslavia in their hearts", stated that Serbs were not pursuing a "Great Serbia" or a "rump Yugoslavia" but a state of "equality, democracy, and concord". The section to the "Muslim and Croat people" invited Muslims and Croats to also attend the Plebiscite and vote for Yugoslavia, stating that they would be welcomed with "a smile of an old and trusted friend" and with the "bread and salt of a common life". Since both Serbs and non-Serbs could read the ad in its entirety, the three sections had a combined effect of simultaneously portraying the Plebiscite as an act of defense of

the Serb nation, Yugoslav union and BiH's common life. Yet, despite the diverse commonplaces, the frame's contextuality rendered it poorly-suited for mobilization of shared emotions. The Plebiscite was organized by a Serb ethnic party, and Yugoslavia that it spoke of was a shortened one. The differences in the pre-existing affective investments of most ethnic Serbs from those of non-Serbs served here to highlight different aspects of the complex frame and, hence, mobilize different sentiments.

*The Rise of a Civilizational Threat.* As the German and Vatican's lobbying efforts on the side of the Slovenian and Croatian governments became more manifest in the fall of 1991, SDS's framings of the threat to the Serb national being began to assume increasingly civilizational themes. The party deployed here the most suitable axis for the task, religion. While the people of Yugoslavia shared significant linguistic, historical and cultural commonalities, religious differences constituted a principal axis of ethno-distinction. Serbs, Croats and Muslims shared a field of religious meaning not with each other, but with other Orthodox, Catholics and Muslims outside of Yugoslavia. Moreover, the European geopolitical culture had traditionally been attuned to religious self-understandings, and the people of Yugoslavia had been historically making alliances with great empires based on religious commonalities. Thus, when SDS extended the frame of the Croat threat to that of Catholicism in general, the audience recalled both the most manifest difference between Serbs and Croats and familiar understanding of geopolitics. The same was true when Karadzic used the opportunity to also civilizationalize other threats: "...everything they have been preparing against us for decades is now at a finale. All intents of the communist, catholic and Islamic international have become clear" (Komlenovic, 1991).

SDS also had at its disposal a rich reservoir of historically resonant semiotic commonplace that could heighten the resonance of these civilizational frames. In particular, the German threat frame could mobilize sensibilities of outrage and animosity associated with the World War II era suffering of Serbs against the Nazis, as well as the feelings of pride associated with Serb resistance and victory. That Karadzic's discourse targeted these sentiments is evidenced at a SDS-organized "Rally for Yugoslavia" held in Banja Luka in late October 1991. In his address to the crowd of 40,000, Karadzic linked the concurrent conflict to Serb historical struggles, and victories, against the Germans: "Our enemy is Germany, Tudjman is only their

servant...Hans must bow down before our people as every Hans did in the past” (Bekan & Preradovic, 1991). That the leader of SDS was not speaking spontaneously, but was consciously manipulating linguistic elements to maximize their political utility is evidenced in Karadzic’s intercepted statement to Milosevic prior to the rally: “...we have to separate Germany from Europe and direct everything at it. We are doing the rallies now, with slogans and signs exclusively against Germany” (Karadzic & Milosevic, 1991). Occurring against the background of affective polarization, the civilizational frame further reinforced the radical “othering” of Croats and Muslims. It also channeled anger onto international actors who stood in the way of SDS agenda, heightening the sentiments of defiance.

*Verticalization of SDS.* While SDS’s discursive performances were producing effects on political self-understandings of the population at large, the emotional environment also affected the relations within the coalition. The escalating ethno-political context meant that the leading officials of SDS would come under a continuous media spotlight, and hence become household names. While the growing cultural capital of leading individuals was reflected in SDS’s July 1991 statute that expanded the capacities of the President, the concentration of powers was also a logical corollary of the imperative of national unity. If the nation was to act as a single agent, the diversity of individual perspectives would have to give way to a single voice that would stand in as that of all Serbs. Since the decisions were being made continuously, some voices had to be silenced and others privileged. Moreover, the affective intensities of the time that were focusing cognitive processes on the organic national struggle came with auxiliary sentiments of reverence for the leaders, fear of defamation, and habitual conformism, which jointly served to delegate authorities in the hands of the party elites.

As the imperative of Serb national unity heightened in late 1991, the corresponding verticalization of relations within SDS became increasingly manifest in Karadzic’s communication with lower-ranked party officials. The President of SDS was demanding strict party discipline, issuing orders and threatening with sanctions. As early as August, Karadzic was giving obligatory instructions to municipal and local boards to meet at least once a week. In an October 18<sup>th</sup> conversation, Karadzic told a high ranking ARK official Radoslav Brdjanin that he would personally declare a traitor each person who got in his way (Brdjanin & Karadzic, 1991). Karadzic’s address to SDS activists published in *Slobodna Bosna* on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1991, is

perhaps the best illustration of such top-down style of communication within the party. It also shows Karadzic depriving the discursive alternatives of access to media outlets:

You must take power decisively and completely. Wherever the party holds power, you must not allow a single enterprise manager to be disloyal to the party. It is impermissible for anybody to be a radio director or newspaper editor, if they do not implement the policy of the party in power. ...I am asking you, this very week, promptly and decisively to dismiss by decision of the executive council all managers and radio directors who do not obey or respect party policy..."

The ethno-political escalation was thus translating the imperative of unity into a concentration of powers, which the leaders could then deploy to entirely monopolize the ethno-discursive space. The established dissemination modalities that extended through local boards to dispersed Serb households were now being used to involve the population at large in the execution of party's policies. Karadzic himself warned that "not a single Serb house must be left without contact with the party" (Karadzic, 1992). In early 1992, the top leadership of SDS led both the negotiations and the creation of the Serb statelet. While this was nominally a task of the deputies making up the Serb assembly, the SDS Krajina leader Vojo Kupresanin described Karadzic's influence by stating that "5 of his words are able to change the course of a session" (Dokic, 1992).

**Post- Badinter escalation and ethno-separatist mobilization.** When the Badinter Arbitration Commission handed down a series of legal opinions pertaining to the Yugoslav crisis in November 1991, the political opportunity structure shifted radically against both of SDS's policy options for keeping Serbs of BiH in union with Serbia. The Commission's interpretation that Yugoslavia was in a state dissolution undermined SDS's "status quo" frame, as it disputed the very existence of the country in which the party sought to *keep* BiH. The opinion no.3, which stated that the republican boundaries should become "frontiers protected by international law", meant that separation of "Serb ethnic areas" from BiH would be left without European recognition (Pellet, 1992). The Commission thus opened the way for internationalization of BiH's borders, a condition that SDS saw as severance of the Serb flesh.

The decision forced Serb nationalist discourse coalition to adjust the agenda of Serb state unity to the new constraints. It triggered deliberations among the top leaders on how to preserve the existing *de facto* unity while also receiving *de jure* international endorsement. The transcripts of a December 12 expanded session of the rump Yugoslav presidency, attended by Radovan

Karadzic, suggest that the policy deliberations were informed by the same historical and metaphorical understandings that they preached to the masses. Karadzic thus cited famous Serb poem Mountain Wreath to warn that the moment demanded unity and steadfastness of leaders in pursuit of national goals: "...And those who serve our kings became untrue, crimson they bathed themselves in kingly blood, our noblemen God's curse be on their soul: did tear and rend the kingdom into pieces." ("Continuation of the Working Meeting in the Presidency", 1992). Yet, Karadzic continued that politics should not be led by emotions, apparently drawing a distance between "rational" methods for achieving political goals and the emotional investments that were at the roots of the goal. Publically, SDS was defiant and continued to mobilize affect, with Biljana Plavsic responding that Serbs would continue to fight for Yugoslavia with their own capacities and at the United Nations (Duric, 1991e). Privately, however, SDS leaders recognized that the framework of an independent BiH had to be acknowledged if their efforts were to gain international endorsement (Research interviews, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013 & November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). They also came to share an understanding that the creation of a desired *de facto* situation should continue in order to enhance the party's negotiating leverage on the future of BiH.

The party that had built affective momentum against BiH's independence was now gradually introducing the possibility that some form of an independent BiH could be tolerable. The form, however, would have to appear as minimally invasive upon the Serb geo-body. To create this perception, and to maximize its negotiating leverage, SDS launched a proposal that would create a con-federal BiH while at the same time keeping "Serb areas" in a federation with Serbia (Rakocevic-Novakovic, 1991). Although the workability of this formula was dubious, it introduced into the public discourse SDS's acceptance of BiH's international subjectivity without making it appear as a violation of Serb state union. Over the next few months, this frame would continue to adapt to the unfolding political developments.

In the period from the Badinter Commission decision until the onset of war in BiH, the performative structure of SDS's discourse was manifested in the framings of four developments: the formation of the Republic of Serb BiH, the Carrington-Cutillero negotiations, dissent within the Serb nationalist coalition, and descent into war. Each warrants a distinct discussion.

***From ethnic regions to the Serb republic.*** On December 21<sup>st</sup>, one day after the BiH Presidency decided to submit an application asking the European Community to recognize BiH

as an independent and sovereign state, SDS held a large meeting of 200 officials in Sarajevo's Holiday Inn that discussed the party's response to the new situation. It gathered the party's Main Board members, representatives in republican institutions and municipal leaders. The meeting was significant for two developments that brought the process of ethno-territorialization close to culmination. First, the attendees announced their intent to establish the Republic of Serb BiH by the January 14<sup>th</sup> Serb New Year. The existing SDS-created regions would thus be united into a single ethno-institutional framework, while the party's discourse would gain the modality of Serb national institutions. The Republic was eventually declared on January 9<sup>th</sup>.

Second, the meeting inaugurated SDS's extension of ethno-territorial separation to local communities and villages in municipalities where it did not hold power. It was facilitated by a confidential document marked as from the "Main Board" that was unbeknownst to most people at the gathering, including the prominent members of the Main Board (Research Interview, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013). In testimony to his authority, Radovan Karadzic brought the copies of the document with him and distributed them to municipal representatives, with none of the present officials raising the objection that the production and distribution of the document violated the party's procedures. The document was a set of instruction for organizing Serb institutions in emergency conditions that called on municipal leaders to perform extraordinary duties, such as forming crisis staffs, establishing round-the clock duties, mobilizing Serb police, and stocking up on commodity reserves. Significantly, the instructions referred to both the municipalities where Serbs constituted an ethnic minority as well as those in which they were a majority. SDS deputies in municipal assemblies and presidents of SDS local boards in Serb-minority municipalities were instructed to convene and proclaim a separate Serb assembly and establish other Serb municipal organs. In the following weeks, many local SDS organs established new, Serb municipal institutions made up of Serb deputies in the assemblies of existing municipalities, as well as the representatives of local communities that joined new Serb municipalities. Those localities that were adjacent to the existing SAOs and ARK also joined the SDS-declared regions. Others would implement the instructions in March, after the Assembly of RSBiH declared them mandatory. The institutional modality here had the effect of turning the instructions into an order, and local SDS organs into law enforcement officials.

At this late stage of ethno-territorialization, SDS's framings continued to mobilize diverse sensibilities beyond those associated with the ethnically exclusive themes and the masculinity of power politics. Despite international recognitions of Slovenia and Croatia, and the looming recognitions of BiH and Macedonia, SDS continued to find utility in the deployment of Yugoslav semiotic commonplaces. The Serb assembly thus continued to display the flag of SFRJ next to Serb ethnic symbols even after it became an assembly of RSBiH ("Velika Bosna", 1992). In SDS's presentation, the Serb republic was not separating from BiH but remaining in Yugoslavia. At the same time, there was a growing understanding among SDS elites that Yugoslavia was no more and that it was time to transition to exclusively Serb symbols. While Milosevic's regime in Serbia contemplated a new union of Serbia and Montenegro that would be framed as a legitimate successor of SFRJ, and hence maintain continuity of symbols between the two, the leadership of RSBiH preferred traditional ethnic symbols. Momcilo Krajinic argued that the issue was of vital importance: "Symbols are what people have died for, what people have gone to war for, what they have sworn the oaths for" ("Tape recording of the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Assembly of the Serbian People in BH", 1992). With all republics except Serbia and Montenegro declaring independence, the emotions of Serbs toward Yugoslav symbols diversified, and lessened political utility. When seen through SDS's narrative of the political moment, they now represented not only a dear country, but also Serb naivety and the "betrayal" of a common country by non-Serbs.

Since SDS was now firmly on the path of carving out a separate Serb state, its discursive inscription of ethnicity onto territory adjusted accordingly. SDS was now deploying two new frames toward maximizing the size of Serb geo-body. One was the attachment of ethnicity to territory by virtue of ethnic background of landowners. SDS claimed that 64 percent of BiH belonged to Serbs, alleging that this was the percentage of privately owned land in possession of Serb landowners. Although SDS portrayed the data as coming from cadastre records, the claim was dubious. No state agency or relevant institution in BiH kept records of ethnicity of landowners (Golic, 1992). The principle was also rendering irrelevant 53 percent of the socially owned territory ("Uzurpacija zajednicke zemlje", 1992). Despite misrepresentations, SDS frequently deployed the assertion to legitimize its territorial pretensions. SDS also paired ethnicity to territory by mobilizing historical memories. The emotionally salient memories of past injustices helped SDS legitimize its ethno-territorial engineering as a policy of righting the

wrongs. The party argued that the concurrent territorial demarcations should correct the demographic consequences of *Ustasa* atrocities committed half a century earlier. In Bosanska Krupa, SDS claimed a right to absorb several Muslim villages into the Serb municipality on the ground that the villages had been built on the land of Serbs murdered in World War II (Hodzic, 1992). Similarly, when local Serbs established a separate municipality near the Croat-majority town of Capljina, they laid claim not only to the land owned or inhabited by Serbs, but also to socially owned land that belonged to Serbs in the past (“Formirana srpska opstina”, 1992). The shift in SDS’s priorities to ethno-territorial demarcation was thus directly affecting individual livelihoods and aspirations in ways that further polarized the affective rift along ethnic lines. The party no longer aspired to appeal to trans-ethnic sentiments that could obscure the zero-sum effect of its policies.

***Framing the Carrington-Cutiliero Plan.*** By the time the EC mediated negotiations between BiH’s leading political agents commenced in February 1992, the *de facto* situation had already to a large degree corresponded to SDS’s *de jure* objectives. Much of the republic’s territory, and its Serb population, were absorbed into the framework of RSBiH. There was no state border between BiH and Serbia, and the nascent Serb republic had control of many localities adjacent to Serbia that could prevent the establishment of one. The para-statelet also had access to superior firepower with which it could seize additional territory. The imagined Serb geo-body was intact, albeit SDS’s inscription of its reduced but more visible contours was still ongoing. By March, the pressure of this *de facto* situation resulted in an important political victory of SDS. The EC-proposed Carrington-Cutiliero plan called for a cantonization of BiH based, first and foremost, on an ethnic principle. The European diplomatic pressure was now directed at SDA.

Yet, the Carrington-Cutilliero plan effectively called for the establishment of an international border between the Serbs of BiH and their “Parent body” Serbia. The Serb national flesh would be injured after all. Ethnic cantonization was a victory here insofar as it enabled SDS to discursively alleviate the imagined anguish of this injury. Since the principle was still to be specified with territorial demarcation and division of jurisdictions, SDS had considerable leeway in interpreting it. Here the party did not initially act as a single agent. Top leaders and negotiators faced a challenge of overcoming the affective commitment of RSBiH Assemblymen to the no

longer attainable agenda of *remaining* in Yugoslavia. At the February 28<sup>th</sup> SDS Deputies' Club meeting, Karadzic was talking *realpolitik* sense and offering affective compensation:

Please, until two or three months ago we were hoping to be able to play the 'Yugoslav card,' and to say, the Yugoslav army, Yugoslavia, legality, etc. This is slipping out of our grasp. That's why we started on another track: Serbian Bosnia and Hercegovina. Our sovereign right, our army (Lokic, 1992, p.40)

The Serbian BiH thus served to moderate the pain of an independent BiH. Although the institution of the armed forces was still undefined, the thought of a joint BiH Army in the place of JNA was too much to bear at the time. Karadzic thus spoke of a separate Serb army.

SDS leadership was also lowering the significance of a state border between BiH and Serbia by framing it as a temporary sacrifice. At the February 25<sup>th</sup> session of the RSBiH Assembly, Karadzic likened it to the politics of a celebrated 19<sup>th</sup> century Prince of Serbia Milos Obrenovic, which produced a gradual expansion of Serbian autonomy vis-à-vis the Ottoman center: "Let me recall Milos Obrenovic who received one Hatiserif (Sultan's order) in 1830, and another in 1833. Between the first and the second he had to consolidate the state and create opportunity" (Dukic, p.15). The message mobilized the historically resonant rhetorical commonplace of the celebrated prince to suggest that the leadership of SDS possessed the political wisdom comparable to those of the greatest figures of Serb history. The current political opportunity structures did not allow for the fulfillment of the ultimate goal, but SDS would continue to create new opportunities just like Obrenovic gradually affected concessions from the Sultan. The struggle for a healthy, fully integral national body would continue.

Although the production of emotional acceptance of the Carrington-Cutilliero Plan primarily involved addressing the perceived violation of the national body, there were other affective challenges. Emotional dispositions toward BiH as one's homeland, region and society were for some Serbs still intense enough to rival ethnic solidarity. In February, SDS's political opponents intensified mobilization of these sensibilities to gain support for the EU-mandated referendum on independence of BiH that the republican institutions had scheduled for the end of the month in face of SDS's objections. The proponents of independence had their own body politic, which involved discursively translating the sensibilities of Bosnians toward their homeland into dispositions for preserving the integrity of the geo-body of BiH. The referendum campaign messages were frequently superimposed against the background of a map of BiH in its

long-standing republican borders. The messages themselves consisted of popular folk songs about Bosnia's natural beauties and slogans that celebrated its cultural diversities.

A salvo of SDS's reactions suggests anxiety that this discursive agency could adversely affect Serb homogenization and gains made in the Carrington Cutilliero negotiations. The Main Board reacted by issuing a Proclamation to the Serb people warning that a referendum on an independent BiH was just a first step toward setting up an Islamic state of BiH (Karadzic, n.d.). Karadzic asked SDS leaders from the region of Krajina to distribute leaflets to Serbs against participation in the referendum, particularly expressing concern that Serbs who lived in the ethnically mixed areas could positively respond to the referendum campaign (Dokic, 1992). Indeed, the party appeared wary of being perceived as an agent that partitioned BiH. Its leaders occasionally disputed the very claim that ethnic cantonization constituted a division of BiH. In a sharp contrast to the belief in ethno-segregation he expressed at the RSBiH Assembly, Momcilo Krajisnik called the borders between three Bosnias "merely administrative, claiming that the "wish was not to tear up BiH"(Stanisic, 1992). Karadzic asserted that "maybe some day life will bring us together so that we may have a strong unitary Bosnia again, but now, at this moment, this is not possible" (Duric, 1992b). In testimony to the presence of mixed emotions, Karadzic would state the exact opposite only a couple of weeks later: "BiH will never again be a unitary state" (Caric, 1992b).

SDS also continued the deployment of the Islamic threat frame to distinguish between the homeland of BiH and the menacing independent BiH. During the Carrington Cutilliero negotiations, it found here an unlikely ally. As EC's recognition of Croatia and BiH became imminent, HDZ's priorities shifted from separating BiH from Yugoslavia to carving out Croat ethnic areas that would have as much independence as possible. The prevailing faction within HDZ, led by Mate Boban, was now lending support to the SDS-advocated principle of ethnic cantonization, framing it as a safeguard measure against what would otherwise become a unitary Islamic state of BiH. Karadzic used *realpolitik* understandings to welcome the partnership:

Izetbegovic is hoping that Serbs and Croats in BiH would always be on separate sides, oriented as enemies, which works the best for his position, not understanding that such disagreements could end at any time (Rakocevic-Novakovic, 1992a).

A week later, in an interview to Slovenian *Delo*, Karadzic stated that Croats and Serbs had good relations prior to the establishment of Yugoslavia, and that there was no reason why such relations would not continue after the demarcation (Einspieler, 1992). The reference to Croats as the inherently evil *Ustasas* was thus sidelined in favor of reducing the conflict to the impassionate understanding of the incompatible territorial claims. The statements came a month after a January 8<sup>th</sup> visit of SDS delegation headed by Nikola Koljevic to Franjo Tudjman, in which the two parties discussed the details of their common strategy in BiH. The transcripts from the meeting reveal that this was a strategy of ethnic demarcation in BiH that involved population exchange (“Meeting between the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tudjman, and his associates with members of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Professor Nikola Koljevic and Mr. Franjo Boras”, 1992). After a year and a half of producing Serb ethno-homogenization in relation to the imagined threat of the profane and immoral *Ustase*, SDS joined political forces with them in dividing BiH into ethnically pure territories.

This radical shift was testimony to the complex relationship between discourse and the layered nature of affect. The production of pairings between emotions and discursive stimuli is never a finished task. The intensity of paired emotions has to be continuously produced in discourse to be maintained at certain levels. As the evolving context pressures for redefinition of problems and solutions, this production may placate in favor of other pairings to different stimuli. SDS’s partnership with HDZ during the Carrington Cutilliero negotiations showed that the affective imperative of the moment had sidelined the sensibilities toward the Croat ethnic “other”. The context allowed SDS to legitimize the partnership with the more rational, deliberative themes, and correct System 1 responses with System 2 *realpolitik* rationales. This is not to say that the previous year and a half had not produced relatively stable dispositions. The prolonged process of ethno-politicization had left more durable affective marks in the form of lower-level tendencies to feel the pleasures and pains of what one imagined was one’s national community. What these pleasure and pains were, however, was constituted by the more intense, but also more fleeting emotions conjured by the collective action frames. These emotions focused on a specific aspect of the situation at particular time-places, while relegating others to a secondary status.

When it came to the BiH independence referendum itself, SDS ethnicized it as that of a Muslim and Croat nation. However, SDS's campaign against Serb participation belied the anxiety that the campaign for an independent and integral BiH could mobilize some Serbs as well. In the Bosnian Krajina region, SDS resorted to the familiar tactic of framing such Serbs as national traitors. Its activists distributed leaflets stating that whoever came out to vote would fall victim to a curse of Tzar Lazar. Printed on the leaflets was the text of the famous curse (Grubic, 1992). SDS also obstructed the voting process in a number of Serb majority localities. The Executive Board ordered all lower organs to explain to every adult Serb that he or she should neither take part as a voter nor as a member of any commission connected with the referendum (Dukic, 1992). Indeed, the organs of SDS-controlled municipalities refused to accept voting ballots and provide premises and stamps for setting up polling stations (Jahic, 1992). In Drvar, the referendum commission was unable to set up a single station (Sabljić, 1992). In Prnjavor the elections commission worked illegally due to the safety concerns ("Komisija u ilegali", 1992).

*Serb dissent as a challenge to unity.* In the aftermath of the successful independence referendum, Radovan Karadzic warned that "not a single Serb will accept an independent BiH" (Pudar, 1992). The statement was a performative exaggeration of the state of national unity. While SDS indeed succeeded in producing high levels of Serb political homogenization, the policy preferences did not strictly follow ethnic categorizations. SDS did gain additional Serb support in late 1991 that it did not have earlier, as several SRSJ deputies of Serb ethnic background joined the assembly of RSBiH. However, there were others who did not, and many Serb members of leftist parties remained loyal to the statehood of BiH throughout the war. There was also little doubt that, at a minimum, a small minority of Serbs defied pressure and found themselves among nearly 63 percent of eligible citizens of BiH who voted in favor of independence.

Moreover, SDS's definition of Serb national interest, or the "will of the Serb peoples" faced opposition from several prominent people with whom it shared the common master narrative. Ironically, these included two individuals who had been the leading activists on establishing SDS, but were since ousted. Vladimir Srebrov, one of the earliest such activists in BiH, gave support to BiH's statehood. Srebrov accused the leadership of SDS for inciting ethnic hatred, and helped establish a Serb Civic Council, an association of several thousand Serbs who

supported the civic statehood of BiH. The second person was Jovan Raskovic, the founder of Croatian SDS, a leading organizer of SDS BiH, and one of the most popular Serb nationalist politicians of early 1990. Raskovic now regretted his role in “igniting” Serb nationalism, and claimed that things would have developed better if Serbs had shown more willingness to compromise (Zafirovic, 1991). Raskovic saw BiH’s statehood as potentially acceptable and different from that of Croatia because it “would not be genocidal. Maybe it would not be Serbophilic, it would be Serbophobic, but it would not be Serbocidal” (“Karadzic nece mir”, 1992).

While these dissenting views suggest that there was no automaticity between Serb nationalism and the policies espoused by SDS’s top leadership, they posed little threat to mainstream understandings. None of the dissenters were in a position of power from which they could amplify their discursive challenges. Another prominent Serb nationalist who raised loud opposition to the policies of Slobodan Milosevic and Serb nationalist leaders in BiH, Vuk Draskovic, was labeled a traitor. Draskovic, one of the most radical Serb nationalists from early 1990, was now blaming Serbian elites for inciting ethnic hatred and leading Yugoslavia to war (“Draskovic najavio mobilizaciju clanstva”, 1991). The voice of an opposition politician in Milosevic’s Serbia, however, could be heard neither very far nor very frequently.

A more serious threat to SDS leaders came from the party’s faction in Bosnian Krajina that sought more regional power. Here regional self-understandings anchored to the national ones, resulting in a challenge to national unity. Drawing upon a strong regionalist tradition, a group of high-ranking ARK officials demanded a redefinition of Serb BiH that would locate original sovereignty in Serb-majority regions or cantons rather than in RSBiH as a single polity (Trkuljic, 1992). While most deputies in the RSBiH assembly opposed any such devolution of powers, including an influential Krajina leader Vojo Kupresanin, Karadzic estimated that about one fifth of the Krajina Serbs followed the dissenting faction (Dokic, 1992). In late February, the political council of SDS called on loyalty to the elected leaders, labeling the Krajina dissenters as “little dukes” (“Opasni mali ‘knezevi’”, 1992). With most people in SDS seeing unity as priority, and with top leaders having superior access to media resources, the demands from Krajina were left unmet. Yet, the presence of the dissenting voices speaks to the difficulty of arranging the

affective terrain in ways that would strictly follow ethnic lines and translate into adherence to the mainstream collective action frames.

*Framing the descent into war.* Despite the polarizing political climate, the fragmentation of monopoly on the legitimate use of force, and the arming of civilians, there was little spontaneity in the onset of the Bosnian War. The sequence of events suggests that Serb political elites retained ability to channel mobilizational energy of the masses. SDS often organized events that it would frame as a spontaneous reaction of Serb peoples. One such event was the March 1<sup>st</sup> blockade of Sarajevo in the aftermath of a murder of a groom at a Serb wedding procession (Research interview 1). However, the available intercepts show Karadzic issuing orders to put up barricades and shut down Sarajevo (Karadzic & Dukic, 1992). While the barricades were removed within two days, SDS used the event to both heighten war readiness of Serbs against BiH's independence and to warn international mediators of a potential for war. SDS of Prijedor commented on the groom's murder as an "attack on Serb national being, the result of great-Muslim politics, and a proof what awaits Serbs in independent BiH" ("Sad se vidi kakva sudbina cekta Srbe", 1992). In messages resonant with international mediators, Karadzic deployed civilizational themes and parallels to longstanding global conflict areas. One was to the east of BiH: "I think we cannot avoid interethnic and interreligious war such as the one erupting when India and Pakistan were being divided" ("Karadzic: pokusacemo da zadrzimo srpski narod da bude miran", 1992). Another one was a warning that sought to strike closer to heart of Western observers: "Northern Ireland would look like a summer vacation in comparison to BiH" (Pavlovic, 1992).

Indeed, it was SDS's reaction to the sequence of political developments in late March and early April that inaugurated the Bosnian war. In late March, when Alija Izetbegovic withdrew his earlier consent to the Carrington Cutilliero principles and international agents expressed intent to recognize BiH nonetheless, SDS was left with few political instruments other than the superior technologies of coercion and mobilizational energy among Serbs. The Serb assembly responded by building a legal framework of Serb Republic and strengthening its control on the ground. The assembly passed a constitution of the Serb statelet, while its minister of interior Momcilo Mandic began to implement the decision with the creation of a separate Serb police force. The first war operations were not a spontaneous escalation. Arkan's Tigers, an organized paramilitary group

from Serbia, launched the takeover of Bijeljina, while JNA attacked Kupres. In the following weeks, Serb paramilitaries, the forces of SDS, and JNA would launch pre-planned conquest of many ethnically diverse areas and lay siege to Sarajevo.

Even with the outbreak of first cases of violence, the boundaries between the adversaries had still not fully crystallized. SDS continued to deploy diverse commonplaces that mobilized both Serb nationalism and *Jugoslovenstvo*. Much of the force that would become the Army of Republika Srpska was still in the modality of JNA, and included a minority of non-Serb soldiers and officers. Opposed to them were the BiH police and territorial defense units, which included a substantial number of ethnic Serbs. Perhaps the safest criterion for distinguishing the opposing sides was that between those who fought to defend BiH's statehood and others who opposed it. However, even that did not entirely resolve the entanglement of different motives and self-understandings. Many genuinely found a strong motive in the resistance to ethnic divisions. When the April 5<sup>th</sup> protesters took to the streets, they did not carry any ethnic symbols, or even the new symbols of independent Bosnia. Rather, they displayed semiotic commonplaces that still mobilized widespread positive sensibilities despite no longer having a referent in legal and social realities- the flags of Yugoslavia and the Socialist republic of BiH. A moment of irony thus occurred when SDS gunmen located in the nearby Holiday Inn fired shots toward the crowd, creating a dramatic scene of thousands of people falling to the ground to seek cover. Some of the gunmen wore on their shoulders the flag of SFR Yugoslavia, the same symbol held up by the protesters that were being targeted (NinetysWarVideos, 2013).

However, the sharing of semiotic commonplaces would not last much longer. As firefights, shelling, casualties and atrocities mounted, the logics of violence took over. The discursive framings here were in a dialogue with personalized, phenomenological experiences of human suffering. While the political discourse had been constituting the "us versus them" sensibilities, the visuals of death and destruction, the sounds of sniper fire, the smell of gunpowder, the vibrations of shelling and other sensory stimuli were autonomously escalating mistrust, bitterness and animosity into fear, outrage and hatred. This emotional charge favored and demanded simplified categories at which the feelings could be directed. The violence was homogenizing semiotic commonplaces by singling out those that corresponded to its emotional intensities.

Yet, the agency of SDS was no less important. The movement had monopolized the media space on much of BiH's territory by taking over the entire media infrastructure. The discourse itself evolved into war propaganda, covering up mass atrocities against non-Serbs, and exaggerating, at times even fabricating, the cases of Serb suffering. It also ethnicized everything that could be ethnicized. The RSBiH assembly called the April 5<sup>th</sup> protests an "unbelievable manipulation with Muslim people" ("Proglasena nezavisnost srpske republike u Bosni i Hercegovini", 1991). When 6,000 Sarajevo Serbs signed a petition against SDS in the aftermath of first shelling of their city, Karadzic dismissed it as an act under duress (Knezevic & Mrkic, 1992). The Bosnian government forces were regularly referred to as "Muslim forces", and "Mujahedeen". Serb nationalists were thus ethnicizing the enemy, a discursive work for which they had help from many others who saw the conflict as an ethnic one.

In the next several months, SDS would specify its repertoire of semiotic commonplaces by dropping the themes that appealed to the sentiments toward *Jugoslovenstvo* and the tradition of common life in BiH. It would also take the frame of the profane Muslim "other" to new heights. Karadzic was now, for the first time, publically referring to Muslims as "Turks". Later in the war, Plavsic would give an interview depicting Muslims as "biologically degenerate" Serbs (Popovic, 1993). Apparently, the times of war allowed "good neighbors" to become a decadent lower race. In August 1992, the SDS-created statelet dropped the commonplace of Bosnia and Herzegovina from its name, thus becoming *Republika Srpska*. The following three and a half years of conflict for its survival would give rise to a new body politic, distinct from that of the wider Serb national organism. The geo-body of *Republika Srpska* would come to embody the pleasures and pains of Serbs of BiH. It was the body born out of discursive erasure as much as inscription. Ironically, the erased identity, of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was *Republika Srpska's* condition of possibility.

### **Concluding Remarks**

When SDS emerged as a political agent in 1990, the three dominant ethno-national categories in BiH corresponded to only one of many clusters of shared affective pairings that had been underpinning the axes of collective identification of Bosnians. In the following two years, SDS worked to progressively intensify the cluster shared by the people of Serb ethnic background. That it succeeded was no more an outcome of pre-existing affective energies than of

a tactical discursive stimulation that constituted these energies across space and time. It was no coincidence that the early locus of SDS's agency was on the ethnicization of cultural space, and that this was done jointly with the two other ethno-national parties. Cultural revival was a largely undisputed discourse that could heighten a sense of ethnic distinctness without aggravating the cross-cutting sensibilities. It was similarly unsurprising that SDS's pre-election discourse foregrounded the affectively pleasing floating signifiers, such as "democracy", "will of the people", "freedom", "unity", "equality" and "dignity", which would become firmly fixed to specific policies only in the aftermath of the elections. The anxieties created by the nationalist policies of HDZ in Croatia represented here an opportunity for SDS to contextually constitute the ethnic "self" in opposition to the existentially threatening "other" without triggering the backlash for instigating nationalism. SDS amplified the *Ustase* threat not so much to mobilize Serb nationalist passions as to heighten anxieties of ordinary Serbs against which it could portray itself as the only party that could protect them. Albeit the three ethno-political agents had also publically expressed their different visions of Yugoslav future, one could hardly get an impression that these would lead to a violent disintegration. With joint press conferences, rallies and statements of mutual respect, the parties were sending a message that, rather than war, a more genuine peace was coming.

This discursive structure intensified shared sensibilities of ethnic Serbs in ways that not only translated into an electoral victory of SDS, but also created pre-conditions for the subsequent radicalization. As the "Serb" affective cluster began to prevail over a diversity of cross-cutting sensibilities, it focused cognition on only one or a few aspects of a complex political moment. The individuals of Serb ethnic background increasingly *felt* their communion, praising its virtues, ignoring flaws, and giving precedence to its pleasures and pains over those of the ethnic other. The leaders of SDS used each manifestation of the concurrent ethno-political crisis, such as the negotiations on the future of Yugoslavia, parliamentary debates over sovereignty of BiH, mobilization into JNA, ethno-regionalization, peace plans and armed mobilization, as an opportunity to both sustain these affective energies and map them onto the sharply dichotomized understandings of self and other, good and evil and friends and enemies. The unidirectional affective charge allowed SDS to produce new affective pairings that could not have been produced at the beginning of its activism. As the party used these energies to alter the cross-cutting pairings in ways that transformed the meaning of *Jugoslovenstvo*, created suspicion

between friends and neighbors, and delegated authority to ethnic leaders, the floating signifiers of its early discourse were moving into a state of greater fixation.

*"Georgia is in need of upbringing, political awareness, awakening, development of ethnic traits..." -  
Zviad Gamsakhurdia, June 1991*

## **Chapter 5**

### **Comparing the Georgian National Movement and SDS BiH**

The causal relevance of ethno-structural factors for affecting the outcomes of ethno-politicization can vary significantly across different cases. The previous three chapters have discussed the limits of structural explanations of Serb mobilization in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Structural tendencies were closely circumscribed by political contextuality and the availability of rich dissemination capacities, both of which favored national movements over their non-nationalist rivals. Despite these advantages, a considerable discrepancy between homogenized groups and dominant ethnic categorization remained as late as the April 1992 outbreak of the Bosnian War. In contrast, Georgian ethno-mobilization of the late 1980s in the then-Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia was primarily driven by the pre-existing affective dispositions, which allowed nationalist dissidents to overcome organizational deficiencies. When the ethnically motivated conflicts erupted in Georgia's autonomous entities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the opposing sides closely corresponded to official ethnic categorizations.

Yet, an agent-centered analytical approach is appropriate for understanding ethno-politicization in the cases of both Georgia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Despite the primacy of structural factors in Georgia, the leading dissidents autonomously affected the timing and policy direction of the nationalist mobilization. The dissidents actively worked on discursively amplifying the sensibilities that preceded them, and on articulating political demands that could stand for the voice of the Georgian nation. In late 1988, they began to take advantage of an increasingly favorable political opportunity structure by initiating nationalist demonstrations. In the coming months, this initial agency would bring to the forefront the full political potency of structural dispositions, which in turn had repercussions for subsequent agency. An April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1989 bloody Soviet attempt at a crackdown turned a progressive accumulation of support for national sovereignty into a mass eruption of Georgian nationalism. The intensity and breadth of this eruption "from below" would pressure Georgian political actors to unite around a policy of pursuing an independent Georgian state.

While the pre-existing mass sentiments loom large as an explanatory variable of Georgian homogenization, it was the agency of only a few nationalist elites that was crucial for the direction of Georgian conflict with the Abkhaz and Ossetian ethnic “other”. When it came to the status of non-Georgians who lived on the republic’s territory, the political space was not nearly as homogeneous as it was on the issue of the national sovereignty and independence. Here the elites often advocated different collective action priorities. The outcome of the conflict between the mutually exclusive ethno-political demands in Abkhazia and South Ossetia thus largely depended on the agency of leading Georgian political personalities.

An agent-focused analysis that maintains attention on the mutual constitution of agency and structure can be useful for understanding both this nationalist agency and the pre-existing tendencies with which it interacted. The analysis of political opportunities, dissemination modalities, and discursive framings achieves this by situating the agency within a three-fold account of broader discursive configurations that enabled and constrained it. As such, the approach is also useful for comparing the contribution of dissident movements to Georgian homogenization with that of SDS to Serb homogenization in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The discussion that follows analyzes political opportunity structures, dissemination modalities and discursive framings both as distinct dimensions that defined and delimited the agency of Georgian dissidents, and as parameters for comparing it with that of SDS BiH.

### **Comparing Political Opportunity Structures**

The conjuncture of structures that created opportunities for nationalist dissident activism in Georgia bears remarkable similarities to the transformative processes that culminated in the collapse of the party-state hegemony in Yugoslavia. The resemblances extend back to the times of the communist imposed stability. For nearly seven decades, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had been dealing with public expressions of nationalism through both repression and concessions in face of the challenges. As in the case of Yugoslavia, the productive and repressive dimensions of power had a mutually reinforcing relationship. The communist rulers imposed a hierarchy of collective identifications that prioritized class solidarity and stigmatized ethno-nationalism. This was a regime of truth discursively performed in all segments of public life in an attempt to internalize it in the desires, passions, needs and beliefs of Soviet subjects.

For most citizens of the Soviet Union who lived in the 1980s, this structured the only public field of meanings they knew.

As in the Yugoslav case, the Soviet suppression of nationalism co-existed with the recognition of ethnic nations as naturally existing modes of human existence. The regime institutionalized ethnic identifications that preceded them in the internal organization of the Union. Ethnicity was enshrined at three tiers of Soviet internal territorial order. Each of the fifteen constituent republics had a titular ethnicity, and a constitutional right to self-determination. At the level below were five autonomous republics that also enshrined ethnicity in their names but were not defined as geopolitical units that could exercise self-determination. The Soviets also created a dozen autonomous *oblasts* (regions), each of which bore the name of an ethno-cultural category but had even fewer institutional capacities than the autonomous republics. With this organization, the Soviet communist regime inscribed ethnicity upon much of the union's territory. When it came to the territories of autonomous republics and oblasts, two of such ethnic labels overlapped.

This complex ethno-territorial system reflected an enormous challenge of dealing with national grievances in the Soviet Union, which were far more numerous than in the case of Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union covered vast expanses of Eurasia and dozens of different ethnic and religious affiliations. This often involved sharp linguistic and cultural differences that structurally imposed ethno-differentiation among the Soviet population, and thus autonomously conditioned official categorizations. While the regime promoted Russian as a common language and encouraged Soviet togetherness, this was only creating commonalities on top of the differences. A radical contrast between the conspicuously distinct cultural, religious and particularly linguistic practices diminished the productive ability of the official discourse to blur the axes of ethno-differentiation. Furthermore, the coercive dimension of Soviet power was directed at imposition of control rather than the destruction of ethnic differences, as evidenced in their territorial institutionalization of ethnicity.

Moreover, Soviet rule had very little original legitimacy in some areas of the Union. Unlike the case of the Yugoslav partisans, whose takeover of power had a considerable indigenous component in all of the six republics, the Soviet annexation of territories in the Baltics and the Caucasus was a result of military conquest. In the case of Georgia, the Soviet

communists established their rule only after the 1921 Red Army invasion deposed an immensely popular and democratically elected Social Democratic Labor Party of Georgia. The Soviet Union was imposed on Georgians (Lilienfield, 1993, p.221). Also unlike the constituent republics of the communist Yugoslavia, which emerged out of the ashes of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and World War II, the Red Army takeover of Georgia meant a loss of Georgian state sovereignty and independence that had been won in 1917. While the Yugoslav communists were fashioning a sense of “brotherhood and unity” with resonant performances that celebrated the joint struggle and victory of Yugoslav peoples against fascism, the Soviet hegemon would have to build its legitimacy in Georgia with few discursive resources that could genuinely resonate with the Georgian masses. This translated into a greater Soviet reliance on repressive power, which allowed the regime to impose communist narratives and promote class consciousness in the public sphere. The resonance of communist ontology was also bolstered by the government-sponsored healthcare and education, industrialization and other improvements in Georgian economic condition. The Red Army’s victory in World War II provided another source of legitimacy. By the 1980s, a sense of Sovietness may not have been deeply embedded in non-Russians, but it wasn’t entirely absent. Yet, with much of the Soviet control resting on coercion and economic legitimacy, its fate in Georgia was tightly linked with the fate of the ruling party and Soviet economics.

These characteristics of the Soviet condition would have a decisive influence on the political opportunity structure facing Georgian dissidents in the late 1980s. The Soviet legitimacy deficiency, the recent memory of national independence and the self-evident distinctness of Georgian language provided rich material for a counter-discourse that nurtured ethno-national sentiments. The resiliency of this discourse, maintained in private social networks, served to resist and undermine the productive power of the decades-long efforts at Sovietization. When the communist hegemony began to weaken in the mid-1980s, the availability of strong national sentiments made the opportunity for the emergence of nationalist activism all the greater. While private resistance to official narratives also existed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the differences in the sociopolitical condition, such as the widespread legitimacy of the Yugoslav state, the common language, the lack of clear ethno-territories, and the dense cultural exchange, had made the Yugoslav regime better equipped to neutralize challenge to its

discursive hegemony. Conversely, ethno-national mobilization required a more favorable political context and resourceful nationalist agency.

However, an account of the pre-existing dispositions does not explain how the challenges that had been successfully repelled for decades mount at certain times to produce transformative effects. Indeed, nationalist dissidence in Georgia had existed throughout the Soviet era despite the oppressive nature of the regime. Its magnitude and sacrifices far exceeded any comparable dissidence in the Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. A major dissident uprising occurred in 1956, when thousands of young Georgians gathered in towns across the Republic to protest the de-Stalinization policy of Stalin's successor Nikita Krushchev. The demands for reversal of the policy mixed with the display of the forbidden pre-Soviet Georgian symbols and calls for secession from the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Army launched a crackdown on March 9<sup>th</sup>, the resultant bloodshed took between several dozen to several hundred lives (Svante, 2002, p.146-149). Although the casualties exceeded those that occurred on April 9<sup>th</sup> 1989, the 1956 structure of political opportunities was not conducive for transforming the event's affective intensities into a cascade of national mobilization. While the tragedy left a legacy of resentment that fueled Georgian counter-discourse, the regime's overwhelming coercive capacities and a willingness to deploy them ensured that dissidence would be removed from public space.

The ethno-national sentiments of Georgians erupted again in 1978 in reaction to the regime's plans to promote Russian into an official language on par with the Georgian language. While the Soviet government this time defused the buildup of emotions by giving in to popular pressure and dropping the proposal, the approach exposed the complexities of dealing with competing ethno-national grievances. In May of 1978, Abkhaz leaders protested the appeasement of Georgian demands, petitioning for the transfer of the Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic from Georgia to Russia. While the Soviets dismissed the possibility of any such transfer, they compensated the Abkhaz with large economic investments, greater cultural rights, and ethnic quotas that gave them a greater degree of political power. The latter provision triggered the protests of ethnic Georgians who lived in Abkhazia and constituted its ethnic plurality. This ethnopolitical dynamic in Abkhazia would escalate again in the late 1980s, only with far greater consequences amid the erosion of the mediating power of the Soviet regime.

Besides these periodic public outbursts of the latent Georgian nationalist sentiments, dissident activism also assumed a more continuous, albeit discrete, character. Some of the leaders of these activities were the same individuals who would emerge at the head of the national movement in the late 1980s. Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava were teenagers in 1955 when they established the youth underground organization *Gorgasliani*, which disseminated reports of Soviet human rights abuses (Jones, 2014, p.183). Over the next several years, both Gamsakhurdia and Kostava would spend time in prison, either for participation in the 1956 protests or for circulation of anti-regime literature. The two rose to greater prominence in the 1970s as they initiated several human rights monitoring groups. In 1977 Gamsakhurdia and Kostava co-founded a human rights monitoring NGO, Georgian Helsinki Group (“Georgian Helsinki Group”, 2006). The NGO was modeled on the Moscow Helsinki Group, which had been founded a year earlier to monitor Soviet compliance with the Helsinki Accords of 1975. The Accords, which the Union signed together with US and western European state in an effort to improve Cold War relations, included clauses calling for recognition of universal human rights.

When it came to undermining the Soviet party-state hegemony, however, the decades of this dissident activism amounted to little palpable effect. The regime arrested both Gamsakhurdia and Kostava shortly after the founding of the Georgian Helsinki Group. The following year, the two were sentenced to three years in labor camp and two in exile for “anti-Soviet activities” (“Two dissidents sentenced Soviet writer makes admission of slander”, 1978). In hope of winning leniency, Gamsakhurdia made a filmed statement during the judicial proceedings in which he confessed to his “crimes” and apologized for slandering the Soviet state. In the confession, Zviad went so far to revisit the legacy of his celebrated father, Georgian writer and politician Konstantin Gamsakhurdia. He asserted that the elder Gamsakhurdia “tried to cultivate in me love for and devotion to the Soviet people. I now profoundly regret that I did not heed my father's voice and embarked on the road of anti-Soviet activities.” (“Dissident on Soviet TV, Confesses His 'Crime’”, 1978). It was this expression of regret that led the Supreme Soviet of Georgia to grant a pardon to Zviad Gamsakhurdia in 1979, while the unrepentant Merab Kostava remained in prison until 1987.

These proceedings testified to the enduring strength of the regime's coercive apparatus. The televised images of a resigned and apologetic Gamsakhurdia were a far cry from the defiant and steadfast leader of a mass movement he would become less than a decade later. His defiance, it thus appears, was constituted in relation to political opportunities. Indeed, an understanding of the rise of the Georgian national movement in the late 1980s and its role in the outbreak of violence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia involves tracing the shifts in the configuration of political opportunities and constraints that eroded the regime's ability to crack down on the same kind of nationalist activities and activists that it had successfully suppressed earlier. This requires a targeted analysis of the transformative convergence of structures at particular time-places.

Three distinct configurations of political opportunity structures can be identified as crucial for shaping the agency of the Georgian national movement. The first one is the early Glasnost era, which opened new discursive terrain for dissident activism. The second configuration emerged in the aftermath of April 9<sup>th</sup>, which homogenized the Georgian public behind the demands for national independence. The third one refers to Zviad Gamsakhurdia's rise to power and its effect on political conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. A section is devoted to each in the discussion below.

**The conditions of emergence: *Glasnost*.** The convergence of structures that created new political possibilities for dissident nationalism in the Soviet Union began as an unintended effect of the developments that had little to do with ethno-national grievances. Namely, the structure of the Soviet economic system and the agency of a new generation of the party-state's leaders interacted to produce an initial liberalization of public discourse that would later expand far beyond the intent of its initiators. When Mikhail Gorbachev rose to the position of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in 1985, his priority was to address economic decline and widespread corruption, which were the principal weaknesses of the Soviet state at the time. Shortly after taking over the top spot in the Soviet hierarchy, Gorbachev attempted to alleviate economic mismanagement and corruption by launching the policy program of *perestroika* (restructuring). The political and bureaucratic resistance to the program's initial approach of targeted economic liberalization eventually led the Soviet leader to draw the society at large into the reform process (Bessinger, 2002, p.58). Gorbachev hoped that

the pressure of public debate and criticism would propel the reforms by exposing mismanagement and producing greater transparency. In the latter part of 1986, this hope gave rise to a relaxation of censorship and introduction of democratic elements within the organs of the party-state, a set of policies that came to be known as *Glasnost*.

The new political space opened by *Glasnost* can be retrospectively identified as an initial generator of a chain of developments that culminated in nationalist mobilizations across the Soviet Union. By spring of 1987, first signs emerged that the liberalization of the party-state's discourse would encourage nationalist challenges. Jewish refuseniks, Russian nationalists and Baltic dissidents engaged in small-scale demonstrations that tested the borders of permissible discourse (Bessinger, 2002, p. 60). Unlike the years past, the police did not attempt to disperse the demonstrators. Larger gatherings occurred in mid-1987 when Tatar and Latvian activists publically expressed their traumatic collective memories that stemmed from the Stalin-era expulsions. The Crimean Tatars launched a sustained campaign demanding a right to return to their homeland, while Latvian activists organized large commemorations of Latvian exiles to Siberia. Again, there was no large confrontation between the protesters and the police. The lack of intervention encouraged more daring expressions of nationalism in August of 1987, which involved large coordinated gatherings in Latvia and Estonia that lamented the incorporation of Baltic republics into the Soviet Union (Bessinger, 2002, p.63).

The transformative moment of the latter part of the 1980s thus initially consisted of a three-fold conjuncture involving the Soviet economic structures, internal relations within the regime and the structures of ethno-national self-understandings. These structures should be understood here as behavioral tendencies that are themselves constituted and reproduced through agency, rather than as rigid and enduring configurations with some transcendent properties external to agency. The Soviet economic structures that Gorbachev inherited in the 1980s were in part a product of earlier gerontocratic agency of Leonid Brezhnev, while the surge of ethno-national sentiments required bold and ambitious nationalist activists who amplified and widely disseminated them. The implication is that a *Glasnost*-like relaxation of systemic violence against discursive alternatives may have a political impact that far exceeds simple liberalization of national self-expression. The effects of *Glasnost* were also those that the newly liberalized performances had on the structures of coercion themselves.

This understanding, however, does not identify why the convergence of structures that invigorated nationalist activism in the USSR had such profound structural effects. It is easy to imagine a scenario in which relaxation of censorship does not cascade into any politically transformative event. A search for explanation thus requires recognizing the peculiarities of the Soviet conjuncture of structures that transpired in the late 1980s. Indeed, the conjunctures come with their own logic autonomous from both the pre-existing structures and agent intentionality. Marshal Sahlins has described these regularities that emerge in the seemingly fluid and chaotic times with the term “structure of the conjuncture” (as cited in Sewel, 2005, p. 220). The structure here refers to those patterned dynamics that condition the effects of agency during the event of the transformative conjuncture of structures. In Yugoslavia, this structure was characterized by the dynamic of the mutually reinforcing rival nationalisms. The Milosevic-led rise of Serb nationalism and the effective disruption of the inter-republican balance were bound to promote mono-ethnic understandings of the Yugoslav condition and produce affective resources for counter-nationalism. As these developments helped propel Franjo Tudjman to victory in Croatia, the conjuncture came to be structured by a spiral of escalating rival emotions. With principal political agents only escalating this dynamic, Yugoslavia had little chance to escape violent disintegration. When it came to the more specific case of BiH, the conjuncture was structured by similarities and partnership between the three ethno-national parties for several months of the 1990 election campaign, which reflected the presence of strong sensibilities that cut across ethnic lines. Yet, the conditions of the parties’ emergence were defined by a broader weakening of hegemony amidst the rivalry dynamic, and, after the elections, the partnership quickly gave way to nationalist conflict.

In contrast, the conjuncture that energized a rapid rise of the Georgian national movement, and which culminated in the collapse of USSR, was principally structured by similarities between the goals of the various nationalist movements rather than the differences. Unlike the case of BiH, in which the ethno-national parties initially joined forces in the pluralist race to neutralize undesired mass sentiments, nationalist movements in the USSR directed their efforts at challenging the monopoly of the party-state. As the activities of one movement created perceptions of new political possibilities for others, mass expressions of nationalist sentiments radicalized both in size and political ambition. The rise in dissident activities in early and mid-1987 marked the beginning of this dynamic. While the early expressions of national sentiments

did not mount to threaten the regime, their detection of a new terrain for protest politics encouraged more massive and consistent expressions of nationalism that began several months later. This is not to say that this dynamic was free of ethno-nationalist rivalries. As Mark Bessinger (2002) identifies in his seminal study of the Soviet collapse, the rising perceptions of new possibilities first produced an eruption of the competing Azeri and Armenian claims to the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. This exposed hesitancy and the divisions within the Soviet leadership on how to deal with the competing nationalist demands, thus encouraging further challenges against the regime.

Also heightening the perception of new political possibilities was liberalization of public access to the inner workings of the regime. In mid-1988 it gave rise to various local informal groups whose initial task was to influence the selection of delegates for the 19<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Communist Party scheduled for June. In the Baltic republics, these groups quickly evolved into popular fronts for national independence. Since the Baltic ethno-nationalists shared this agenda with their Ukrainian, Armenian and Georgian counterparts, they had strong incentive to cooperate. By June, they developed regular communication, including the establishment of a coordination committee. The political chances of these movements also received a boost from the outcomes of the 19<sup>th</sup> Conference. Despite opposition from conservative apparatchiks, the conference affirmed the reformist course by transitioning the party's strictly hierarchical power system into the one of open political competition. As Beissinger's study has shown, this unambiguous liberalization of political expression allowed for a rapid proliferation and diffusion of challenging acts.

The early nationalist activities of the *Glasnost* era, in conjunction with the continuation of the reformist course, had the effect of opening new discursive terrain for subsequent nationalist activism. Yet, the dissidents could not achieve this through a rapid and unambiguous release of radical nationalist ambitions, which was still certain to invite regime suppression. *Glasnost's* rollback of censorship introduced new rhetorical resources for criticizing official policies and voicing demands for democratization, environmental protection, crackdown on corruption and economic liberalization. When secessionist nationalism first entered Soviet public discourse, it did so by means of mixing with or linking to these ostensibly non-nationalist rhetorical commonplaces. The 1987 Karabakh crisis erupted when the Armenian protests over air pollution

transformed into demands for the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan to Armenia (Bessinger, 2002, p. 65). As mentioned above, the Baltic popular fronts began as groups that aspired influence the selection of candidates for the offices of the party-state. Even when nationalism did take hold, it initially avoided directly challenging Soviet rule. Its early focus was on demands for decentralization of the Union, ethno-territorial adjustments, and the challenges to the validity of Soviet history as it had been propagated by the regime for decades (Boyd, 2006).

The Soviet dissident tactic of introducing new rhetorical elements by linking them to the existing commonplaces has analogies in the Yugoslav case. Milosevic's embrace of nationalism during the anti-bureaucratic revolution was intertwined with his mobilization of mass dissatisfaction stemming from bureaucratic entrenchment and economic decline. As discussed in Chapter 2, the first public manifestation of nationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina occurred when Croat nationalist slogans appeared at an ecological protest in the town of Duvno. Yet, when it came to the accumulation of challenging nationalist acts, there were notable differences between the Yugoslav structure of the conjuncture and the Soviet one. In the latter case, the period of initial caution relatively quickly gave way to a massive surge of national grievances. Mark Beissinger's data shows that by the end of the Soviet protest cycle ninety-four percent of its participants were involved in the voicing of ethno-nationalist demands (Bessienger, 2002, p.76). In contrast, prior to the January 1990 demise of the League of Communists, most of the mobilization in Yugoslavia consisted of strike activities related to economic grievances. The initial eruption of nationalism in Yugoslavia occurred in relation to the specific issue of Kosovo, and only after the rising communist leader Slobodan Milosevic embraced the nationalist cause. In 1988, Milosevic was constructing and amplifying popular grievances, while Gorbachev was struggling to control the eruption of mass nationalism from below. Nationalist mobilization accelerated only after the communist monopoly had collapsed, immediately assuming the character of voter mobilization by the newly legalized ethno-national political parties. Even then, economic grievances, demands for greater democratization, peace activism and calls to Yugoslav unity continued to represent important mobilizational vectors for many Yugoslavs, and particularly those who lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was only the dynamic of violence that eventually neutralized them.

The early stages of both mobilizational cycles also speak of the ability of strong ethno-structural tendencies in one social field to affect the outcomes in another with comparably weak ethnic predispositions. In the Yugoslav case, early mobilization of ethno-national sentiments occurred in Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia, which prepared the discursive terrain for the later nationalist activism in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. In the Soviet Union, the persistent and progressively larger protest activities in the Baltic republics led the way, with the dissident movements elsewhere borrowing their programs and tactics to intensify their own activities. This relatively quick and early rise of Baltic nations was indicative of strong pre-existing ethno-structural tendencies. The opposite is true in the case of the Central Asian republics, which joined the nationalist tide only after the collapse of USSR had become imminent. Georgians can be classified here among the early risers. Georgian nationalist dissidents stepped up their activities shortly after the advent of *Glasnost*. In October 1987, they established the Ilia Chavchavadze society, which launched a program of Georgian cultural revival and advocated delegation of greater economic and political powers from the center to the republics (Yunusov, 1999, p.156). By the following fall, Georgian mobilization around ethno-national grievances would assume a mass character, albeit the discursive terrain was still not favorable for challenging the Soviet rule itself. In November 1988, a time when much of nationalist mobilization in USSR was still to come, the dissidents led the gathering of up to 200,000 people in Tbilisi to protest proposed constitutional amendments that would further centralize the Union.

Moreover, the early disagreements between Georgia's nationalists suggest that political opportunities did not impose themselves independent of subjective perceptions. In March 1988, the dissidents who perceived the new political context as an opportunity for directly challenging the Soviet presence in Georgia diverged from the rest of the Ilia Chavchavadze society to form a separate "Fourth Group". Two months later, the "Fourth Group" organized a demonstration to mark the seventieth anniversary of Georgian independence. However, the attendance of only 100 people suggested that the perceptions of radical political opportunities were still limited to only a narrow circle of activists (Beissinger, 2002, p.179). In August 1988, Baltic developments encouraged Giorgi Chanturia and a number of young nationalists from the "Fourth Group" to form the National Democratic Party, which openly demanded reinstatement of Georgia's independence. The "Fourth Group" itself was renamed the Society of St. Ilia the Righteous, and was led by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Merab Kostava and Irakli Tsereteli. It was these leaders who

spearheaded the protest mobilization of November 1988, the primary vectors of which were the specific policies of the regime, rather than the regime itself.

**The fallout of April 9<sup>th</sup>.** By the spring of the following year, however, the Georgian masses would homogenize behind unambiguous demands for national independence. The constant accumulation of protest activities certainly contributed to the rising political ambitions. As the expressions of ethno-nationalist grievances evolved from bold acts of dissidence to daily occurrences, the aspirations that previously seemed unattainable began to appear as genuine political possibilities. Yet, the changing perceptions were also a function of a sharp, event-generated escalation of national sentiments. The event, the April 9<sup>th</sup> tragedy, can be identified as a structuring moment that turned the rise of nationalist activities of the early *Glasnost* era into a surge of mass protests that overwhelmed the Soviet state and rendered irrelevant the remaining institutional constraints. Unlike the crackdowns of the past, *Glasnost*'s relaxation of censorship allowed the Soviet public to learn of the full extent of the tragedy. As a result, the event was able to generate widespread effects on the Soviet audiences.

The shift in the political opportunity structure in the aftermath of April 9<sup>th</sup> consisted of two mutually reinforcing dimensions. First, the shock of the tragedy intensified solidarities of the masses with national movements and hostility toward the regime. In its aftermath, the protests only grew in size and political ambition. In Georgia, the shock of the event went a longer way in mobilizing national sentiments than all prior efforts of leading dissidents. In contrast to the crowd of 100 people that gathered to mark the anniversary of Georgian independence a year earlier, the April 1989 anniversary was commemorated by a massive crowd that numbered in hundreds of thousands. Second, the tragedy produced infighting and a growing reluctance among Soviet officials to use force against future nationalist dissidence, thus undermining what was perhaps the only viable method for reasserting control. As Mark Beissinger's study shows, forceful suppression of nationalist protests across the USSR sharply declined after the Tbilisi events. Realizing that the regime was being deprived of both any legitimacy and the mechanisms of coercion, the republican communist parties in Georgia and the Baltics themselves turned against the center in Moscow. By summer of 1989, the same Communist party of Georgia that had asked for a crackdown against protesters on April 9<sup>th</sup> joined the national movement in demanding reinstatement of Georgian independence. In March 1990, the party adjusted the

legislation to the new discursive landscape by declaring Georgia a sovereign republic and lifting the ban on non-communist political organizations.

The sentiments of the masses had thus homogenized the elites prior to Georgia's first multi-party elections held in November 1990. Since virtually all participating political parties now advocated the republic's independence, the election outcomes themselves were not decisive for Georgia's decision to exit the Soviet Union. In contrast, nearly all political parties competing in BiH's November 1990 elections advocated preservation of a federal Yugoslavia, with HDZ's confederal position being a notable exception. More importantly, these positions were also reflecting popular sentiments. The electoral victory of SDS, SDA and HDZ represented a crucial shift in the political opportunity structures toward ethno-separation that would ensue in BiH in the latter part of 1991. Unlike the Georgian case, there was only a tenuous link between many of the divisive policies the parties pursued from mid-1991 onwards and the positions advocated prior to the elections for which they received a popular mandate.

Yet, the elections in Georgia and other nationalizing republics did create new opportunities insofar as the pursuit of independence now moved from the streets to legislative chambers. By mid-1990, even Russia, the republic regarded as the core of the Soviet Union, declared sovereignty and sought to gain more power vis-à-vis the Soviet center. Unlike Milosevic's regime in Serbia, which sought to turn Yugoslav institutions into proxies for advancing Serb nationalist agenda, Russian president Boris Yeltsin focused on democratization and transition to market economy within his republic. On April 10<sup>th</sup> 1991, Georgia joined the Baltic republics in declaring itself an independent state. In August, a group of communist hardliners attempted to forcefully take over the Soviet state from Mikhail Gorbachev and restore central control over the republics. The coup failed within two days, marking the demise of one last attempt at using force to save the USSR. It also marked another shift in the political opportunity structures of nationalist movements insofar as it made the end of the Soviet state a de facto reality. The various claims to national self-determination internal to the USSR were now internationalized by default. Like in the case of Yugoslav disintegration, Western states were the ones defining the principles for their international recognition. The principle, *Uti possidetis juris*, or "as you possess under law", identified only the Union republics as eligible for recognition as Soviet successor states in their existing borders.

**The structures of ethnopolitical conflict.** While the tidal dynamics of mutually reinforcing and progressively accumulating nationalist challenges against the Soviet state conditioned Georgian mobilization for national independence, it was an escalating spiral of ethno-nationalist rivalries that structured Georgia's ethnopolitical conflicts over the statuses of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The two are understood here as interconnected properties of the structure of the conjuncture. On the one hand, the tension between Georgian nationalist ambitions and those of the Abkhaz and the Ossetians constituted one of the initial vectors for mobilization of Georgian masses behind the national movement. Similar to the Serb nationalist storyline that the republican borders of Communist Yugoslavia were a plot against the Serb nation, many Georgians had viewed the Soviet creation of South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast and the autonomous republic status of Abkhazia as the Communist sponsored fragmentation of Georgia's ethnic territory. In the days leading up to the April 9<sup>th</sup> massacre, thousands took to the streets of Tbilisi in response to the March 18<sup>th</sup> Abkhaz gathering in the village of Lykhny that resulted in a declaration demanding reinstatement of Abkhazia into a full union-republic.

The Georgian demands for national independence and ethnopolitics in Abkhazia and South Ossetia were interrelated here. The longstanding structures of Abkhaz national discourse that saw Abkhaz culture and language under perpetual existential threat of Georgianization only amplified with the imminence of Georgia's independence. Similarly, the growing prospects of Georgia's secession served to revive the Ossetian collective memory of a massacre that occurred in 1920, the previous time when Georgia existed as an independent state, and in which Georgian troops massacred thousands of Ossetians (Souleimanov, 2013, p.113). While the ethnic relations in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia were generally good during the Soviet era, as manifested in dense interactions and even intermarriages, ethnic distinctions remained palpable. Unlike the case of BiH, in which the entire population shared the same mother tongue, a language barrier constituted a crucial axis of ethno-differentiation in Georgia. The Georgians, the Abkhaz and the Ossetians all had their own ethnic language, and all were expected to acquire Russian as the official Soviet language. In practice, however, many Georgians never acquired Russian. This Soviet-imposed linguistic configuration came with its own productive power- it created commonalities that oriented the Abkhaz and the Ossetians toward Russia while leaving in place the "otherness" of ethnic Georgians. In the context of the late 1980s, this served to heighten the

perceptions among the Abkhaz and the Ossetians that Georgian independence would mean the severance of ties to Russia in favor of imposed Georgianization.

Yet, the peculiarities of the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, rather than the rivalry dynamic per se, were decisive for their culmination into widespread violence. While the dynamic has its own causal autonomy, this is a causality circumscribed by political agency and structural preconditions. In the cases of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two related contextual factors were crucial for the violent culminations. One is the Soviet-era institutionalization of nationality that inscribed dual ethnic identifications to a single territory. The Soviet regime had officially recognized Georgia's Abkhaz and Ossetians as ethnic peoples worthy of titular ethno-territorial units, but only within the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. The availability of these units served to anchor the imaginaries of sovereign national states to the already existing institutions and territory. As Svante Cornell (2002) observes, territorial autonomy provides resources for elevating grievances to the level political action by creating spatial realities, a palpable government that could pass laws and receive external support, cultural institutions that strengthen a group identity, and legitimizing leaders. Indeed, the cases of Georgia's breakaway provinces speak of territorial autonomy as a resource of ethno-separatism. The decisions of Abkhaz and South Ossetian elites to separate from Georgia were made not at some ad hoc gathering, but in the form of official positions of the Supreme Soviets of Abkhazian autonomous republics and South Ossetian autonomous oblasts. In Abkhazia, a disproportionate presence of ethnic Abkhaz in the institutions of the autonomous republic translated into an ability of the demographic minority to pass separatist laws. The administrative boundaries drawn during the Soviet era served as ready-made territorial frameworks for implementing the decisions. In contrast, another ethno-political rivalry in Georgia, the one between Georgians and the Azeri in the Azeri-majority areas, did not culminate in war partly due to the absence of the Azeri ethno-territorial administration in the Soviet hierarchy.

The influence of these institutional pre-conditions on the structures of political opportunities was also constituted in relation to the broader international context. Once the Soviet state collapsed, its internal borders were the only existing models of territorial demarcation available as potential criteria for recognition of successor states. The decision to recognize only the Union republics in their existing borders internationalized the borders of the

Georgian SSR while relegating those of Abkhazia and Ossetia to the status of Georgia's internal boundaries. The Abkhaz and Ossetians could thus separate the territories they claimed only by force, and without broader recognition. One could have imagined a different criterion of also recognizing autonomous republics and oblasts, which would have reversed the configuration of opportunities and constraints. With the Soviet institutional legacy of overlapping ethnic territories, however, any criterion could have only a zero-sum influence on the two ethnopolitical aspirations.

Another contextual factor is agency. While the rivalry dynamic autonomously shapes political understandings, the elites can also have a degree of control over the intensity of the dynamic and its translation into political agenda. Indeed, the agency of Georgian elites crucially affected the direction of conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Unlike the popular ambitions for national independence that had by mid-1989 united Georgia's elites in confrontation with the Soviet center, the rivalry with ethnic minorities within Georgia did not have such a homogenizing effect. Here the uneven distribution of cultural capital had a decisive say for resolving the differences between the leading activists. A long-term dissident with a historically resonant last name, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, emerged as the personality whose individual preferences would inform Georgia's policies in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Gamsakhurdia accumulated the cultural capital that distinguished him from other national leaders not so much through his past dissident activism as through a conversion of capital of his famed father Konstantin, perhaps the greatest Georgian novelist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and an anti-Soviet dissident himself. In the political moment of the late 1980s, the reverence Georgians felt for Konstantin Gamsakhurdia came to be transposed onto his activist son in ways that gave him an advantage over other leading nationalist personalities.

While all leading dissidents envisioned independent Georgia as a state of a Georgian ethnic nation in its Soviet borders, Zviad Gamsakhurdia went further than others in confronting the Ossetian territorial claims. Gamsakhurdia's inflammatory rhetoric, which included labeling the Ossetians as "guests" on Georgian land, went a long way in heightening Ossetian fears, and homogenizing the ethnic Ossetians behind the radical secessionist agenda of their *Ademos Nykhas* (Popular Shrine) movement. Other Georgian leaders saw Gamsakhurdia's preoccupation with the status of South Ossetia as detrimental to the primary objective of independence from the

Soviet Union. This included Giorgi Chanturia, the leader of National Democratic Party and one of the most radical advocates of Georgian secession from USSR (Zurcher, 2007, p.136).

Indeed, the political opportunity structure that enabled and constrained the violent escalations of political conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia was distinct from that which shaped broader Georgian mobilization for independence. While the latter is significant for liberalizing public discourse and creating perception of new possibilities, the former was a function of individual agency willing to resort to violence against the rival ethnic “other”. Important here were the October 1990 parliamentary elections in which Gamsakhurdia’s coalition “Round Table- Free Georgia” won an absolute majority of votes. The victory propelled Gamsakhurdia, whom ethnic minorities had perceived as the embodiment of Georgian chauvinism, to the position of the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Georgia. Prior to the elections, Gamsakhurdia had aggravated the nationalist rivalry in South Ossetia with maximalist demands and discursive treatment of Ossetians as secondary citizens. In November 1989, Gamsakhurdia nearly provoked mass violence in the Autonomous *Oblast* when he led thousands of Georgians to Tskhinvali under the pretense of defending the allegedly threatened Georgian population. The conflict was prevented only by the Soviet Ministry of Interior forces that prevented the marchers from entering the town. After the elections, one of the first decisions of Gamsakhurdia-led Georgian Supreme Soviet came in response to the Ossetian proclamation of the “South Ossetian Soviet Democratic Republic”. On December 11<sup>th</sup>, it announced abolition of South Ossetia altogether (Kaufman, 2001, p.111). While his massive authority could have been deployed toward creating conditions for a compromise, Gamsakhurdia further escalated the conflict. The accompanying emotional charge created an opportunity for a new set of agents, violent entrepreneurs, to inaugurate their contribution to the dynamic. By February 1991, Georgian paramilitary units, many of them consisting of common criminals motivated by the prospects of looting, set up a blockade of Tskhinvali and expelled thousands of Ossetians from their homes. They thus autonomously escalated the emotions of ethnic animosity, suspicion and fear to the threshold at which ethnic categories turned into axes of widespread armed mobilization.

In testimony to the importance of agency in shaping ethno-political rivalries, Gamsakhurdia had a different, more conciliatory approach to the conflict in Abkhazia than in 1991

fended off an escalation of political conflict and intermittent violence into a full scale war. In the summer of 1991, Gamsakhurdia reached an agreement with Abkhaz leaders on ethnic power-sharing. The agreement divided seats in Abkhazia's parliament according to ethnic criteria, giving the ethnic Abkhaz a disproportionately greater parliamentary power than their share of the population (Kaufman, 2001, p.116). While the continuing ethno-political tensions hampered the functionality of this model, the war in Abkhazia erupted only when Georgia's new leader, Eduard Shevardnadze, moved to militarily restore control of Abkhazia in August of 1992. This is not to say that a single leader willing to compromise could have prevented the war altogether. Certainly, Georgians living in Abkhazia were unhappy with the Gamsakhurdia-brokered deal, the Abkhaz leader Vladislav Ardzinba continued to mobilize separatist passions, and Russia's markets supplied weaponry to both sides. Yet, Gamsakhurdia's ability to de-escalate the rivalry during his reign left open the possibility that the political conflict could enter a different contextual moment more favorable for reaching a long-lasting solution. The hostilities of the war and its consequent emotional legacy served to foreclose such prospect regardless of the broader context.

The political opportunity structure that shaped the approach of Georgian nationalist leaders to the issues of Abkhazia and South Ossetia had both similarities and differences with that which conditioned the reaction of SDS BiH to independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Both conflicts were structured by the progressively escalating rivalry. Yet, rather than progressing on their own from some inherent properties, the ebbs and flows of this dynamic were responsive to the agency of leading political actors. For this reason, the first multi-party elections were crucial for structuring the conjunctures that led to warfare in both Georgia and BiH. As the tidal dynamic propelled Zviad Gamsakhurdia to electoral victory in October 1990, the configuration of opportunities and constraints shifted decisively toward the violent culmination in South Ossetia. The unambiguous Georgian vote for Gamsakhurdia only heightened the fears of non-Georgians and popularity of rival nationalists. Similarly, the electoral victories of SDA, SDS and HDZ reduced the possibility of an agreement on BiH's future to that of a painful compromise between the ethnically exclusive parties that pursued radically different agenda. There were also similarities in the transition to violence, with paramilitary gangs carrying out many of the initial attacks, and atrocities, on behalf of nationalist elites in both Georgia and BiH.

The difference between the two political opportunity structures stemmed primarily from the different tasks facing Georgian nationalists and SDS BiH. In Georgia, the tidal and rivalry dynamics interacted with the well-preserved ethnic structures to relatively quickly result in mass homogenizations. Ethnicization progressed unopposed, resulting in political divisions that tightly conformed to ethnic categories. In BiH, SDS had to invest considerable discursive effort to overcome major obstacles to Serb homogenization, which came in the form of alternative collective sentiments, the presence of non-ethnic political forces and the civic state discourse of proponents of BiH's statehood. Unlike the Georgian case, the collapse of communist hegemony was alone insufficient for bringing together the people who fell into a single ethnic category into palpable political groups. Moreover, SDS BiH could not rely on the existing administrative categories in its pursuit of ethno-territorial separation. It had to violently create both Serb institutions in BiH and the borders of the envisioned Serb state.

### **Comparing Dissemination Modalities**

One of the more remarkable aspects of Georgian nationalist homogenization is that it developed rapidly at a time when avenues for dissemination of dissident discourse were scarce. In contrast to ethno-nationalist agents in BiH, which formed three-years after the emergence of first non-ethnic civil society organizations, the precursors to the Georgian national movement were among the earliest non-state organizations to form in Georgia in the era of *Glasnost*. As such, they formed at a time when the repertoire for organizing national dissidence was limited to small networks of personal ties. All organizations visible to the general public, from schools and workplaces to cultural groups, were managed by the ruling party. Thus, when dissident activists organized the Ilia Chavchavadze Society in October 1987 as a first non-regime organization with an ethno-national agenda, they had no access to institutionalized social networks, mass media outlets, or any other avenues of ritualized public interaction that could broadly disseminate their activities.

That these leading activists were able to organize mass protests by November 1988 was testimony to the strength of latent national sentiments. Yet, the activity could succeed only if the word of the gatherings somehow reached the wider masses. The role of dissident agents in mobilizing the Georgian masses, then, cannot be understood without looking at the modalities through which their discursive efforts were disseminated. This is particularly relevant for

understanding the phase of mobilization that preceded the April 9<sup>th</sup> tragedy. In the tragedy's aftermath, the ruling party itself adopted nationalist discourse, effectively joining the nationalist discourse coalition along with its rich organizational repertoire and mass dissemination technologies. When it comes to the escalation of ethno-political conflicts within Georgia, however, the analytical focus shifts on the modalities for dissemination of discursive acts of the then-Georgian president Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

**Organizing dissent.** The individual contributions to mass mobilizations are highly uneven, ranging from proactive agency of a single leader with rich organizational capacities and/or cultural capital to the reactive contribution of a single follower who joins in only after the mobilizational thinking had become dominant. In the case of Georgian mobilization for independence, the breadth of national sentiments served to diffuse nationalist agency across the population at large. Yet, only a small circle of dissidents constituted the initial collective agent that would inspire the activities of others and progressively expand with new activists. This leading circle maintained a disproportionate contribution to protest activities throughout the cycle, defining their timing and policy directions at specific political moments. When street politics gave way to voter mobilization, leading activists became candidates for the highest offices of the state.

The organizational development of the Georgian national movement is thus tightly related to the activities of core leadership that had the highest influence on collective action. Although the movement lacked an official hierarchy, this core can be clearly identified in a circle of dissidents that included Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Merab Kostava, Irakli Tsereteli, Gia Chanturia, Avtandil Imnadze and Tamar Chkheidze. All these individuals enjoyed high cultural capital, and a long history of dissent. They commanded respect among Georgians for proactively challenging the Soviet rule in times when fear and apathy ensured compliance from the rest of the society. When *Glasnost* created new political possibilities, they were the first to form organizational precursors to the national movement. Once the movement gained mass following, they remained its faces.

The earliest organizational repertoire for Georgian nationalist mobilization is thus coterminous with the ability of these leading dissident activists to organize themselves into a collective agent. As in the case of SDS BiH, personal ties between the future leaders had long

preceded the first movement organizations. The two most recognizable dissidents, Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava, had worked together on challenging the regime for decades. The two were teenagers in 1954 when they participated in one of the first underground nationalist organizations, the Gorgasliani youth group. In the aftermath of the 1956 protests, both Gamsakhurdia and Kostava served time in prison. In 1973 they established a group for defense of human rights, which after the signing of the 1975 Helsinki accords became the Georgian Helsinki Group. In 1977, they were arrested again. Gamsakhurdia's repent won him an early release two years later while the defiant Kostava served out his sentence. Kostava was released in 1987, just in time to take advantage of *Glasnost* for renewing his dissident activism.

Other leaders also came from a background of challenging the regime. After the arrest of Gamsakhurdia and Kostava in 1977, Avtandil Imnadze, Tamar Chkheidze Irakli Tserekeli and Gia Chanturia emerged as their supporters (Cornell, 2001, p. 142). In the following decade these individuals carried on the torch of dissident activism, organizing protest gatherings and producing underground publications. In the aftermath of the 1978 student protests, Imnadze was imprisoned for filming the event. In 1981, Chanturia and several other activists restored the National Democratic Party. In 1983, it began disseminating anti-Soviet propaganda in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Zestafoni and Sukhumi (Dolidze, 2005, p.51). That same year, Chanturia was also imprisoned for "organizing and actively participating in mass disturbances", remaining in prison until 1985 (Cosman, Denber & Laber, 1991, p.12).

When the *Glasnost*-era challenges began to intensify in 1987, all of these leading Georgian dissidents were out of prison. This was a time of new opportunities not only for voicing grievances but also for publically organizing them into collective action. Gorbachev's government permitted the formation of informal groups, or *neformaly*, which were allowed to voice concerns about issues that the regime perceived as politically non-invasive, such as those dealing with environmental protection, literature, history and arts. The decision seemed to re-energize the previously apathetic Soviet public for political activism, with *neformaly* mushrooming across the USSR by the thousands. On December 1, 1987, Georgian dissidents joined them by forming the Ilia Chavchavadze Society, the first public organization in the *Glasnost*-era to voice Georgian ethno-national grievances. The Society's organizational building-

blocks were personal ties between activists. Namely, it gathered the best-known and most experienced dissidents, Gamsakhurdia, Kostava, Chanturia, Chkheidze and Tserekeli.

The Society would itself become an organizational site for including the wider population behind the program of Georgian cultural revival. That the affective potential among Georgians existed for this task is evidenced in the rapid growth of membership. While the Society numbered no more than 300 people at its founding, the membership had grown to 50,000 within a year (Alekseeva & Fitzpatrick, 1990, p.105). Yet, the discursive landscape to which it had to conform was still tightly restrictive. Unlike the case of the SDS coalition in BiH, which launched *Prosvjeta* at a time when the regime hegemony had formally ended, the Ilia Chavchavadze Society faced ongoing restrictions on activities that disputed the legitimacy of the Soviet rule. The SDS BiH coalition would hold the founding assembly of the political party within days of founding *Prosvjeta*, while the Georgian Society grew into a mass political movement only after a year of successful cultural activism. Until the massacre of April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1989, anti-regime protests continued to be led by underground organizations (Slider, 1991, p. 65). In this early stage, political dissidents linked with another organizational network that had a proven record of proactively mobilizing around Georgian ethno-national grievances- the students of Tbilisi State University. Student mobilization constituted the core of protests in 1956 and 1978. The pattern continued in February 1988, when 600 students held a gathering in support of Ilia Chavchavadze Society's opposition to military maneuvers near the ancient Georgian monastery of David-Garedzh (Alekseeva & Fitzpatrick, 1990, p.105).

Soon after the formation of the Society, however, it became apparent that the leading dissidents were not a homogenous, like-minded group. Since organizational capacities for dissident activism rested on personal ties and cultural capital of charismatic personalities rather than routinized relations, leadership differences had a decisive influence on the organizational development of the Georgian nationalist mobilization as a whole. The principal differences were about the methods for achieving the goal of national independence. Chanturia and Tserekeli, the radicals who rejected any compromise with authorities, diverged from the rest of the Ilia Chavchavadze Society in 1988 to lead their own political parties. Tserekeli founded National Independence Party, while Chanturia built up his National Democratic Party. In summer 1988, the latter became the first organization with an explicitly separatist program (Zurcher, 2007,

p.119). Opposed to them were Gamsakhurdia and Kostava, who founded the Society of St. Iliia the Righteous. As dissidence intensified during the course of 1988, other former dissidents also launched their own organizations. Avtandil Imnadze and Irakli Shengalaya thus formed the Union for National Justice in November 1988 that called on Georgian sovereignty within USSR.

Despite organizational fragmentation, these various dissident organizations can be easily identified as elements of a single discourse coalition. Their shared nationalist master narrative, which they translated into the common political agenda of Georgian national independence, provided enough of an incentive for working together on anti-regime protest activities. One of them was the November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1988 rally of 200,000 people against a proposal to curtail the rights of Union republics in which all informal organizations took part (Alekseeva & Fitzpatrick, 1990, p.107). While different movement groups also organized protests separately, each of these activities provided a congregational site at which the master frame was disseminated to the wider audiences. Moreover, the leaders compensated for the lack of an umbrella organization by holding frequent meetings at which they coordinated street mobilization and other activities designed to advance the goal of independence. Some protests, such as the one on April 9<sup>th</sup>, were organized by an Independence Committee that included Merab Kostava, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Giorgi Chanturia, Irakli Bathiashvili, and Irakli Tsereteli.

As this collective agency continued in early 1989, progressively intensifying Georgian ethno-national solidarity, the organizational repertoire began expanding to include social networks that had previously been under communist control. On April 4<sup>th</sup>, several Tbilisi enterprises went on strike calling for Georgia's secession from USSR. With the collapse of hegemonic discursive structures in the aftermath of the April 9<sup>th</sup> tragedy, the dissident discourse absorbed virtually all modalities of social organization. On April 13<sup>th</sup>, strike committees in several factories and institutes in Tbilisi joined the demands of the Society of St. Iliia the Righteous, NDP, NIP and several other informal organizations for the secession of Georgia from USSR (Alekseeva & Fitzpatrick, 1990, p.107). In the following months, numerous Georgian intellectuals and other public individuals joined the pro-independence activism by forming dozens of small organizations and societies. In June 1989, a group of activists led by a distinguished scholar Nodar Natadze founded Georgian People's Front, an organization modeled on the Baltic popular front with a declared aim of promoting "a free and democratic Society and

the restoration of Georgia's complete state independence.” (Banks, 1992, p.280). In the latter part of 1989, the Communist Party itself appropriated nationalist agenda. The discourse of independence all but monopolized Georgian political space, together with its elaborate web of social ties. The public expression of these sentiments continued, with *Komunisti* estimating a total of 1500 protest gatherings held by February 1990. Of these, 73 were mass demonstrations.

While the April 9<sup>th</sup> tragedy homogenized all Georgian political actors around the nationalist master narrative, large disagreements continued over the most appropriate collective action for achieving the goal of independence. Hence, the collective action frames that would define policies toward the minorities and the pace of the process of seceding from the Union were a function of power relations within the movement. These relations were largely defined by the differences in the cultural capital of leading personalities. Here Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava clearly stood out among the rest. The two had the longest tenure as dissidents, having spent much of their adult lives challenging the regime. Gamsakhurdia was the son of one of the most celebrated Georgian writers, Konstantin Gamsakhurdia, while Kostava had a reputation of an untarnished leader of Georgian resistance for defying the authorities in face of the 1977 arrest. When Kostava died in a car crash in October 1989, Gamsakhurdia’s personality acquired even greater political relevance.

Gamsakhurdia’s reputation as the principal leader of the movement was cemented with his victory in the November 1990 elections for the Georgian Supreme Soviet. This institutional rise was aided by the decisions of rival nationalist organizations, Chanturia’s NDP and Tsereteli’s NIP, to boycott the elections, which effectively marginalized one segment of the opposition (Gonenc, 2002, p.185). While NDP and NIP went on to form a separate “legislative body” Georgian National Congress, this would remain only a political organ of the opposition, deprived of discourse dissemination and law enforcement capacities of the sanctioned institutions of the state. Gamsakhurdia decided to run, and was backed by seven political organizations that united into a coalition “Round Table- Free Georgia”. The coalition constituted a distinct collective agent within the national movement for it unified the activists who supported Gamsakhurdia’s leadership and collective action priorities. It was made up of two Gamsakhurdia-led organizations Helsinki Union and the Society of St. Ilia the Righteous, as well as the Merab Kostava Society, the Union of Georgian Traditionalists, National Front-Radical

Union, Liberal Democratic Union and National Christian Party. Each organization had nominal veto powers and was represented with four members in the working process of “Round Table-Free Georgia”. In practice, however, the coalition was a gathering of Gamsakhurdia’s “yes-men” (Jones, 2014, p. 140).

The victory of “Round Table- Free Georgia”, and its leader Gamsakhurdia, was decisive. It won 54 percent of vote for the Supreme Soviet, ahead of the 29.6 percent that had been won by the Communist Party. While the victory was that of the coalition as a whole, it was most notable for propelling the coalition’s leader to the highest position of the Georgian state. On November 14<sup>th</sup>, Gamsakhurdia was elected chairman of the Supreme Soviet. In the April 1991 presidential elections, Gamsakhurdia won nearly 90 percent of votes. With these victories, the discourse he advocated absorbed Georgian state institutions, which would have major repercussions for the direction of conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

**Dissemination technologies.** The ability of Georgian activists to disseminate nationalist discourse to mass audiences varied widely in relation to their repertoire of available dissemination technologies. This was a repertoire that underwent three radical changes in the period between the advent of *Glasnost* and the outbreak of war in South Ossetia. In the initial stage of the *Glasnost* mobilizational cycle, Georgian dissidents had at their disposal only rudimentary technologies with which they had challenged the regime for decades. Like other Soviet dissidents, Georgian nationalists had relied on underground samizdat publications written either by hand or typewriter, carbon copied and circulated discretely from hand to hand. The advent of *Glasnost* enhanced the samizdat dissemination capacities by allowing the underground publications to surface as periodicals of the *neformaly* organizations (Shlapentokh, 1990, p.135). Yet, the dissidents remained entirely cut off from the technologies of mass dissemination. The Georgian mass media, which included state TV, radio and the daily *Komunisti*, continued to disseminate only the official party-state discourse. When a massive crowd of 200,000 people gathered in Tbilisi for the November 1988 protests, *Komunisti* entirely ignored the event. The activists thus had to continue relying on the word of mouth and handouts to inform the public of protest gatherings. That hundreds of thousands attended the activities nonetheless was testimony to the mobilizational quality of the pre-existing national sentiments.

This impoverished repertoire of dissemination technologies would radically change in the aftermath of the April 9<sup>th</sup> tragedy. Prior to the crackdown, *Komunisti* reported on the Tbilisi protests only twice, once in a tiny report published on April 4<sup>th</sup>, and again four days later in a critical commentary. The shock of the April 9<sup>th</sup> bloodshed, however, could not be ignored. The paper heavily reported on the tragedy, initially laying blame on protest organizers. In face of the widespread eruption of anti-regime sentiments, these narratives had no resonance. In the following months, this eruption pressured the Georgian ruling party to abort loyalty to the Soviet center in favor of Georgian nationalism. The regime's mass media technologies were thus effectively re-inscribed with nationalist discourse. By fall of 1989, *Komunisti* began referring to Georgia's secession as an unambiguous goal of all Georgians. While it still prioritized the communist party, the paper was now also reporting on the activities of Gamsakhurdia and other opposition leaders. New publications also emerged at this time. In June 1989, the newly established People's Front launched a periodical by the same name that promoted the Front's anti-communist agenda, and the leadership of Nodar Natadze. In April 1990, the regime's newspaper *Ahalgazrda Komunisti* (Young Communist) changed its name to *Ahalgazrda Ivereli* (Young Iverieli). As the discursive changes progressed throughout the USSR, even the Soviet-wide newspapers began diverging from the communist party doctrine. The Moscow based weekly "Arguments and Facts" thus evolved from a recorder of social statistics circulated among party officials into a liberal paper with a circulation of 26 million (Putzel, 1989).

The third event that changed the repertoire of dissemination technologies was the victory of Zviad Gamsakhurdia in the November 1990 elections. The institutional takeover provided Gamsakhurdia with firm control over state media. Since the Soviet era had left very little beyond control of the state, this translated into dominance of public discourse. As early as December 1990, *Komunisti* changed both its name and political loyalties. Renamed *Akhali Sak'art'velo* (New Georgia) it now began a heavy dissemination of Gamsakhurdia's discourse. The paper frequently published lengthy interviews with Gamsakhurdia, often on the front page and accompanied with the leader's picture. Moreover, the availability of weaponry became a factor in implementing Gamsakhurdia's South Ossetia policy. Gamsakhurdia ordered the formation of the National Guard of Georgia in December 1990, shortly after assuming office, with intent to use it in South Ossetia. However, his government was strapped for money that could fund a standing army. The Guard was ultimately formed almost entirely out of volunteers, many of

whom came from the underground criminal milieu. Paramilitary groups such as Mhkedrioni and White George were well suited for the South Ossetia task, for they funded themselves through illicit activities, were well armed and willing to use violence against the Ossetians. When it came to Gamsakhurdia's success in leading Georgia to independence, the technologies of coercion and exclusion were far less important. In contrast to SDS's policy of ethno-territorial separatism in BiH, there was no rival discourse that could threaten Georgian unity, and no new ethno-territorial borders needed to be created for exercising the future independence. Moreover, the rapid disintegration of USSR ensured that the mighty Soviet army would not be deployed against the new Georgian leadership.

The Georgian nationalist discourse coalition thus faced far greater challenges in disseminating its discourse to the masses than did SDS BiH. Much of this difference can be attributed to the lengthier roots of the Georgian movement, which can be traced back to the era of communist stability. There was no comparable continuity of Serb nationalist activism in BiH. The SDS coalition emerged in 1990, a time when the scandal-mired League of Communists of BiH had already lost much of its control of public discourse. The founding members of the coalition were not longstanding dissidents who risked livelihoods to challenge the regime, but accomplished university professors, poets and intellectuals who adopted ethno-nationalism only after the process of ethno-politicization had inundated the Yugoslav political space. Even a long-time friend and colleague of Karadzic, Koljevic and Ekmečić, was unable to recall any sign of their latent nationalism prior to the 1990 activism (Research Interview, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Unlike the dissidents in Georgia, who stood at the front of the nationalist mobilization, the leaders of SDS followed in the footsteps of leading intellectuals in Serbia and the regime of Slobodan Milosevic. Once SDS BiH was formed, Serbia's regime and SANU remained its sources of rich dissemination avenues. The centralization of these mobilizational resources was crucial for ensuring that the coalition avoids organizational fragmentation such as the one that beset the Georgian movement. In coordination with Dobrica Cosic, the organization of SDS BiH quickly evolved from a network of personal ties into a formal hierarchy. Those who challenged the hierarchy, such as Vladimir Srebrov, were cut off from the dissemination resources, labeled as traitors and pushed to political margins.

Access to dissemination technologies was thus crucial for both the success of Serb nationalism and the eventual concentration of power within a narrow circle of leaders. Karadzic's stature rose by virtue of occupying the top slot of a hierarchy that had received endorsement from Dobrica Cosic and Serbia's regime. In contrast, Gamsakhurdia emerged as the undisputed Georgian leader due to his celebrated family background, history of activism, the death of Kostava, and the election to the institutional position of a president. The influence of Cosic and elder Gamsakhurdia in both cases here manifests a translation of literary space into an immanent politics that finds its grounding in the vast moral authority of the celebrated writers. It was this immanent understanding that shaped the relations at the top of both movements and was converted into the rise of Gamsakhurdia into an iconic national figure.

The dissemination repertoire of SDS BiH was from the outset far greater than in the case of the Georgian coalition. In contrast to the restrictive *Komunisti*, which went so far to ignore a rally of 200,000, Sarajevo's *Oslobodjenje* published interviews with SDS leaders and reported on the party's numerous rallies across BiH. More importantly, SDS's repertoire included Serbian state media, whose dissemination capacities were the largest in all of Yugoslavia. The party also had the backing of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which had regained much of its vigor and political influence. After the electoral victories held in the fall of 1990, the discourses of both SDS BiH and Gamsakhurdia's faction of Georgian National Movement absorbed state institutions. However, the capabilities of SDS BiH to break the ethno-political stalemate with a violent exclusion of discursive alternatives were far greater. While Gamsakhurdia struggled to form the Georgian National Guard, SDS BiH had at its disposal the mighty technologies of exclusion of JNA.

### **Comparing Discursive Framings**

The success of Georgian dissidents in taking advantage of and expanding new opportunities at a time when they had few dissemination capabilities suggests that their discourse found abundant mobilizational resources in the pre-existing structures of feeling. While these ethno-structural tendencies explain much of the movement's rise, the agency itself was crucial for translating the tendencies into the particular collective action and policy directions. The agent-specific discursive performances were mobilizing the feelings from the virtual memory of Georgians in unique ways, distinctively affecting the intensity of feelings at particular time-

places and the type of signifiers to which they were paired. Here Gamsakhurdia stood out, for his performances linked to the sensibilities of an ordinary Georgian in opposition to the intellectualist tone of his rivals. Certainly, the sentiments that pre-existed the movement were widespread and intense enough to all but ensure that a major nationalist organization would emerge with the weakening of Soviet mechanisms of coercion. Yet, one could have imagined different processes with different personalities at its head. The leaders may have avoided physical confrontation with the authorities, or even emerged from the ruling party itself. They could have shown greater sensitivity to minority grievances. Whether these agent characteristics could lead to significantly different outcomes or merely constitute another path to the actual ones depended on nationalist agencies elsewhere in the Soviet Union. Yet, when the Georgian national movement began rising to prominence in 1987 and 1988, no outcomes were structurally inevitable.

This discussion of discursive framings analyzes the content that constitutes the Georgian National Movement as a distinct agent. While it looks at the entire period from the formation of first public movement organizations until the onset of war in South Ossetia, the focus is on the discursive acts that had taken place after April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1989. This focus is shaped by the Soviet hegemon's discursive monopoly prior to the April 9<sup>th</sup> tragedy, and the consequent scarcity of public records through which the dissident discourse is accessible. Moreover, most of the analyzed rhetorical acts are those of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, as they are representative of the wider discourse coalition for the period under the analytical focus. Despite organizational fragmentation, Gamsakhurdia had emerged in the latter part of 1989 as the unambiguous leading personality of the movement.

The discourse analysis that follows utilizes the same conceptual framework used for analyzing the discourse of SDS BiH in Chapter 4. The first part deals with the master frame, both as an ontological narrative and a large-scale interpretation of the political moment. The discussion then proceeds to the collective action frames across three time-specific configurations of political opportunities. The first period ranges from the movement's inception until the April 9<sup>th</sup> tragedy. The second period ranges from April 1989 until the November 1990 elections. The third one is the post-election period that ends with armed mobilization in South Ossetia of early 1991.

**Comparing master frames.** The master frame that distinguished the Georgian national movement as a single discourse coalition is remarkably similar to that of SDS BiH. This is particularly the case with the two ontological understandings. The Georgian coalition's numerous discursive acts have either implicitly or explicitly referred to the Georgian nation as a natural community whose membership is acquired by birth. As in the case of Serb nationalist master frame, this understanding of a nation was the least contestable frame, reinforced by hegemonic understandings institutionalized in the USSR's ethno-national categorizations and the global political order that recognizes nations as primary political agents. Gamsakhurdia made use of the latter as a rhetorical resource, claiming that Georgian people are "ancient and organic part of mankind" ("Election Program of Presidency Candidate of Georgian Republic Mr. ZviadGamsakhurdia", 1991).

A more remarkable similarity is that the Georgian nationalist master frame also sought to heighten the feelings of ethno-national solidarity by linking the pre-existing sentiments of ethno-national belonging to a metaphorical understanding of the Georgian nation as both a spiritual and corporeal being. Like in the case of SDS BiH discussed in chapter 4, this master metaphor served to foster the imaginary of spiritual and organic ties between dispersed individuals that fell into the same ethno-national category. The more ethnic Georgians internalized it as an accurate description of their social existence, the stronger their feelings of kinship and perceptions of sharing the same fate. For one, the metaphor's image of a living national body was transposing one's sense of national self onto both the imagined co-nationals and the territory it labeled as Georgian. It was not only replicating the pains and pleasures of Georgians living in the various parts of the republic as one's own, but also producing sensibilities toward the distant geographic spaces. The troubles of Georgians in Abkhazia thus also became those of millions of other Georgians, while the loss of sovereignty in Abkhazia represented an amputation from the living body of Georgians. The frame is only too familiar to the Serb geo-body discussed in Chapter 4.

Yet, there are also the differences between the two geo-bodies that point to pragmatism in the assembling of national imaginaries. While Serb nationalist coalition used ethnic demographics and selected historical understandings as criteria for mapping the Serb geo-body, the leaders of the Georgian national movement relied on the existing Soviet ethno-territorial inscriptions. The difference here was in the availability of resources for translating the

imaginaries into a tangible and feasible political agenda. Serb nationalists were seeking to centralize the existing state or create new borders, while Georgian dissidents pursued secession from one. The former had access to the overwhelming mechanisms of coercion with which they could implement their vision by physically defeating the overlapping claims to the same space. The latter also had historical resources that could have been mobilized for maximizing the imagined Georgian geo-body, but the existing power relations had made it difficult to imagine a way for Georgia to incorporate territories outside of the republic that once belonged to it. On the other hand, Soviet ethno-territorial institutionalization and the theoretical right of the existing Union republics to self-determination had made the goal of Georgian independence in its existing borders more palpable. Hence, the Georgian geo-body that the dissident movement was enacting in the late 1980s corresponded to the borders of the Georgian SSR. It thus appears that the production of national imaginaries is guided not only by the emotional salience of longstanding cartographic fantasies, but also by the availability of broader rhetorical commonplaces that shape perceptions of political possibilities.

Despite the differences in geographically mapping the imaginaries, their metaphorical contents were largely the same. In both cases, the agents deployed the metaphor toward framing the imagined threat from the ethnic “other” as that of corporal injury. The language used by Georgian nationalists for interpreting the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia substantively corresponded to SDS’s framing of BiH’s independence as severance of “the living flesh of the Serb nation”. Gamsakhurdia thus told the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazian SSR that Abkhaz separatists had been trying to “tear Abkhazia from Georgia’s living body” (“Address to the Deputies of the Supreme Council of Abkhazian SSR”, 1991). The body also came under threat in South Ossetia, with Gamsakhurdia stating that “Georgia’s every deep and bitter wound is open in Shidakartli”<sup>16</sup> (“Address to the Population of Samachablo”, 1991). The metaphor here reflected a broad understanding rather than merely a figure of speech of the Georgian leader. In August 1992, the post-Gamsakhurdia era, Tbilisi’s *Sak’art’velos Respublika* published a commentary that depicted the conflict in South Ossetia as Georgia’s “bloody wound” and blamed the enemy for “trying to axe Georgian body” (“Remember Samachablo”, 1992).

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<sup>16</sup> Shidakartli refers to a region that includes Tskinali, the capital of the then-South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast, and in this context signifies the dispute over the status of South Ossetia.

Accompanying the commentary was a visual- the cartoon of Georgia represented in the form of a boat being sawed to pieces (See Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1**

**A Cartoon Published in *Sak'art'velos Respublika* on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1992 Representing Georgia as a Boat Being Sunk**



Yet, national existence also transcended that of a corporeal earthly organism. While Georgia’s body was earthly, and hence vulnerable to earthly injury, the national spirit belonged to divinity. It pervaded each Georgian, mystically defining one’s collective self independent of one’s conscious choice. Yet, the spirit could not overpower worldly tendencies alone. Each individual had to invest effort in finding, liberating, and nurturing it in the world of material and ideological deceptions. The success of this effort defined one’s spiritual afterlife. A person who placed the imagined national essence above the worldly material needs was assured of heavenly rewards. Here the leading dissidents exemplified a “good” Georgian. At a funeral of Merab Kostava, Gamsakhurdia spoke of his fellow dissident as “our saint brother” who continued his

spiritual life in the “heavenly Georgia” where he would meet “our heroes, martyrs and saints” (Mikava, 2014b). Gamsakhurdia thus portrayed Kostava as a divine choice for a national leader. Moreover, by stating that Kostava’s lifelong sacrifices for national liberation were a sign of divine intervention, Gamsakhurdia implicitly spoke of himself, Kostava’s lifelong partner in dissidence, as akin to a living saint. The suggestion is reinforced in a filmed statement by a Georgian Orthodox priest who referred to Gamsakhurdia as “blessed by God”, “divinely wise politician” and a “soldier of Christ” (Mikava, 2014a).

Gamsakhurdia’s deployment of “heavenly Georgia” here was not accidental. The term was a rhetorical commonplace coined by the Catholicos-Patriarch of the Georgian Orthodox Church Ilia II to represent a place in which national organism achieves its full spiritual and physical vibrancy. “Heavenly Georgia” here served to transpose Christian duality between the earthly material existence and the spiritual afterlife of each individual human being onto the realm of an imagined national community. It stood for an eternal, virtuous and morally pure spiritual existence of a nation to which its earthly counterpart should aspire in the same manner that Christian faithful aspire to get close to Christ. Yet, “heavenly Georgia” also transposed Georgian historical space into a sacral one. When Gamsakhurdia spoke of “heroes, martyrs and saints” who inhabited this heavenly space, he referred to the celebrated figures of the medieval Georgian kingdom, a state idealized as an earthly embodiment of “heavenly Georgia”. The eventual loss of this virtuous and morally pure state amounted to a national eschatological catastrophe. Reaching “heavenly Georgia” was thus not only about a steady progress, but also about looking back toward the glorious national heyday. Again, the assemblage’s intertextual roots can be identified in a dominant Christian understanding that celebrates the lives of historical Jesus and early Christians in opposition to the “corruptness” of the new age. “Heavenly Georgia” was thus setting moral principles that served the goal of ethno-homogenization. As such, its role was comparable to Tsar Lazar’s “heavenly Kingdom”.

***Master frame of the political moment.*** When Georgian dissidents established their first public organizations in the late 1980s, they faced a large discrepancy between the idealized and actual state of Georgian national self-understandings. Certainly, Georgian ethno-national boundaries retained their visibility throughout the era of Soviet discursive hegemony. Unlike the *Jugoslovenstvo* effect in BiH, Soviet national sentiments were neither strong nor widespread

enough to rival national self-identifications that preceded them. Yet, the dual productive and repressive power of the Soviet regime did diminish the social relevance of ethno-national categories. Ethnic self-expression was limited to performances that did not violate hegemonic understandings. The regime censored the celebrations of Georgian ethnic history and culture. The suppression of religious institutions resulted in many Georgian churches falling into disuse. The communist party monopoly politically disengaged the masses. For Georgian dissidents, this meant that the communist enemy had weakened the national spirit. Yet, the issue was not merely that of a violent suppression. The dissident discourse recognized the ability of the enemy to also produce, or internalize within the Georgian national being a condition that could continue to exist independent of physical repression that gave rise to it. Gamsakhurdia detected the condition as late as 1989: “we shouldn’t forget that our country and people, who have been poisoned by 70 years of Stalinist preaching, are apolitical, without religion, morally indifferent” (“ZviadGamsakhurdia – Memorable record for Georgia’s national parties and organizations”, 1991). The parallels to the early discourse of SDS BiH are only too familiar. The morally corrupt communist enemy had made the spirits of both Georgian and Serb nations sick with apprehensions.

Thus, the task facing the Georgian national movement was to return the national being to its pre-communist health. In policy terms, this translated into a dual agenda. First, Georgians had to revive the marginalized cultural artifacts of their pre-Soviet ancestors. They needed to relearn ethnic history, rehabilitate ethnic notables, observe long lost holidays, and return to the Georgian church. In short, the way toward revitalizing the sick national spirit went through a discursive replication of its healthier past. This was a necessary step toward the second goal that would fully restore the vibrancy of the national organism- a collective political engagement toward earning recognition in the world of nations. Gamsakhurdia summarized the duality of the task: “Georgia is in need of upbringing, political awareness, awakening, development of ethnic traits, and after that preparing for national-liberation movement” (“ZviadGamsakhurdia – Memorable record for Georgia’s national parties and organizations”, 1991).

Georgians, then, had to constitute themselves into a palpable ethnic group as a precondition for acting as a single political agent. Once Gamsakhurdia’s ontological description of the Georgian nation as an “ancient and organic part of mankind” found its counterpart in the

actual self-understandings of Georgians, the policy of independence would then fall in place. Indeed, Gamsakhurdia followed up the description with an explicit prescription that “only after a full restoration of independence can Georgia participate in integral global processes” (“Election Program of Presidency Candidate of Georgian Republic Mr. Zviad Gamsakhurdia”, 1991). This was, again, not so much a matter of leading Georgia to a novel condition as of restoring the celebrated past. Here national dissidents made use of a rich reservoir of historically resonant commonplaces stemming from the memory of an independent Georgian state that immediately preceded the 1921 incorporation into the Soviet Union. The dissident master narrative saw 1921 as a year of illegitimate occupation and forceful annexation. Consequently, the conditions needed to be created for restoring this independence. For his part, Gamsakhurdia wasted no words in amplifying the Soviet occupation frame, stating that “any material loss is incomparable to the huge loss that the Georgian nation, Georgia’s whole population, went through during 70 years of terror and genocide” (“Political and Economic Platform of Election Block “Round Table and Free Georgia”, 1990).

The Georgian dissident master frame was thus analogous to that of the early discourse of SDS BiH in both metaphorical structure and lexical content. The two nations were spiritual and corporeal beings, the communist villain weakened the spirit of both, and both needed to return to the glorified past times. When it came to ethno-political conflicts, both struggled to protect themselves from corporeal injury. Yet, the lexical content diverged with the divergence in political needs. Within half a year of SDS’s emergence in BiH, the communist villain was defeated and the threat shifted to the ethnic “other”. In the Georgian case, the Soviet center remained an obstacle to the goal of independence long after the November 1990 dissident victory. Moscow was also interpreted as the principal culprit threatening to amputate Abkhazia and South Ossetia from Georgia’s body. The difference with the case of the Serb living organism here was that of both concurrent political configurations and historical resources. Politically, the Abkhaz and the Osset were oriented toward remaining in the Soviet Union. In Gamsakhurdia’s interpretation, this was not an original ethno-political ambition, but a result of Moscow’s incitement in pursuit of a longstanding agenda of Georgia’s dismemberment. Hence, long after the eruption of a conflict in South Ossetia, Gamsakhurdia continued to claim that this was “not an ethnic conflict, but war of the center and extremists against Georgia and Georgian

population” (“Press conference of the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Georgian Republic, Mr. Zviad Gamsakhurdia”, 1991).

The second reason for blaming the Soviet center for conflicts within Georgia was a relative scarcity of rhetorical commonplaces available to Georgian nationalists that could heighten the perceptions of menacing ethnic “others”. While the history of Georgian relations with the Ossetians and Abkhaz were certainly not free of violent conflict, their discursive legacy was hardly comparable to the Serb collective memory of genocidal suffering during World War II and half a millennium of Ottoman Muslim occupation. The source of rich emotional resources for the Georgian victimization discourse was the historical record of oppression against Georgians at the hands of the Soviet regime rather than that coming from other ethnic nations. Georgian nationalists had access to comparably few popular folk songs, film and art presentations, religious narratives, physical monuments and other reproductions of historical suffering whose emotional resonance was transposable onto the concurrent ethnic “other” in a manner similar to Serb Nationalists’ associations of Croat and Muslim “others” with *Ustasas* and “Turks”. On the contrary, Gamsakhurdia repeatedly claimed that a history of ethnic relations within Georgia was one of mutual respect and peaceful co-existence. Yet, Gamsakhurdia’s South Ossetia policy was informed by a historical understanding that accelerated ethno-polarization and endangered this historic tranquility. The Georgian leader sought not only to eradicate the effects of Soviet discourse on self-understandings of Georgians, but also to remove Soviet geo-political legacy from the imagined ancient Georgian geo-body. Historical justice thus demanded abolition of South Ossetia, which had been created as a geo-political category only after the 1921 Bolshevik conquest. Gamsakhurdia saw South Ossetia as little more than a Soviet design intended to dismember the Georgian body. The Ossetians could not retain their titular unit within Georgia because it had been artificially created on a land that was solely and naturally Georgian. The Ossetians themselves were seen as “guests” on Georgian land (Domrin, 2006, p.100). While Gamsakhurdia did not see the Ossetian “other” as the main culprits of the injustices, he dismissed their political claims and denigrated their right to the land they inhabited. The only criterion that mattered was a historical one. This was a highly selective history, the one that naturalized the times of Georgian national heyday while dismissing much of what transpired since as artificial.

When it came to the issue of Abkhazia, this historic principle produced a sharply different approach. The history of Abkhazia had been closely intertwined with that of Georgia for more than a millennium. In contrast to South Ossetia's Soviet origins, Abkhazia had existed as a recognized entity even in times of the Georgian "Golden Age". The celebrated medieval Kingdom of Georgia emerged as a united entity in 1008 only after a dynastic succession unified the pre-existing Kingdom of Abkhazia with the principalities of the Georgian King Guran. In more recent history, the 1921 constitution of the Independent Republic of Georgia granted Abkhazia autonomous status. While the historical narratives of Georgian and Abkhaz nationalist differed in regard to the ethnic character of their shared land, these lengthy pre-Soviet historical roots were sufficient for Gamsakhurdia to acknowledge Abkhazia as a legitimate entity. Indeed the Georgian leader celebrated historical commonalities between the ethnic Abkhaz and Georgians, blaming the familiar culprit, the Soviets, for their concurrent problems: "Our common Kohlketian, genetic kinship between our people and our language, common history, common culture obliges us today to think about the future fate of our people...the (Russian) Tsar could not establish hatred among Abkhazians and Georgians. But today's communist empire unfortunately achieved its goal with the help of its agents ("Address to Abkhazian People", 1991). Emerging from this description was willingness to make concessions to Abkhaz demands. While Abkhazia was an organic part of Georgia, Gamsakhurdia assured the Abkhaz that they would continue to enjoy self-government in independent Georgia.

Yet, the Georgian nationalist interpretation of the political moment was not exclusively derived from the metaphor of an ancient national being. Like in the case of SDS BiH, Gamsakhurdia also deployed a more pragmatic, individualist frame that was autonomous from the imaginary of a corporeal and spiritual collective organism. Whether a Georgian felt a sense of solidarity and collective belonging with millions of other people who fell into the same ethnic category or not, their individual livelihoods would be bound by the same fate. The Soviet enemy targeted not only the "Georgianness" of Georgians, but also the physical existence of all those who fell into a Georgian national category. Gamsakhurdia explicitly opposed this dimension of his master political interpretation with the one that sought to appeal to collective sentiments and "awaken" Georgian ethnic traits: "unless every Georgian realizes that not only a nation but every individual is doomed in the existing regime, we cannot create a massive, stable dynamic movement...Moscow intends not only to russificate and demographically absorb our nation, but

also to destroy it physically!” (“Zviad Gamsakhurdia – Memorable record for Georgia’s national parties and organizations”, 1991). The individualist frame here sought to intensify feelings of collective national belonging by framing ethnic categories themselves as having existential implications for each individual independent of one’s ethnonational sentiments.

**Comparing collective action frames.** While the imaginary of a spiritual and corporeal national being constituted a macro-scale discursive foundation of Georgian nationalism in the late 1980s, the actual discursive output of leading Georgian nationalist agents varied considerably in relation to the immediate structure of political opportunities. When Georgian dissidents first formed public organizations in late 1987, an explicit articulation of the agenda of national independence was still likely to end in regime repression. Yet, *Glasnost* had opened sufficient space for heightening a sense Georgian cultural distinctness, or, in terms of the master metaphor, for revitalizing the national spirit. For this task, Georgian dissidents had access to an extensive reservoir of resonant semiotic commonplaces. Prior to the Soviet annexation, Georgian ethno-genesis had produced not only an independent state, but also a rich national literary tradition, religious practices, myths, symbols and heroes that remained engrained in Georgian collective memory.

The early stage of Georgian nationalist activism consisted of the performances that reproduced these long-censored cultural products. The performances began to permeate public discourse with signifiers that represented Georgian pre-Soviet past. Since the very beginnings of their *Glasnost*-era resurgence, Georgian dissidents sought to enshrine these signifiers in the names of their organizations. The first public national organization thus bore the name of Ilia Chavchavadze, one of the most celebrated Georgian writers and poets, and the leader of Georgian national movement in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The name choice was analogous to SDS’s decision to hold the renewal of *Prosvjeta* on a historically resonant St. Viscious Day. Just as this choice of a date symbolized a continuation of Gavrilo Princip’s struggle for national liberation and a cultural rebirth on an important date in the Serb Orthodox calendar, so did the name of the Ilia Chavchavadze Society imply both a rehabilitation of Chavchavadze’s literary achievements and the revival of his struggle for national independence. The names of organizations that emerged from a split within the Society also deployed the historically resonant commonplaces. In 1988, Gamsakhurdia and Kostava formed the Society of

St. Ilia the Righteous, again in reference to Chavchavadze who had been canonized by the Georgian Orthodox Church in the previous year. For his part, Chanturia named his new organization the National Democratic Party, thus framing it not as a new party but as a revival of the one that went by the same name during the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Georgian dissidents thus immediately set off on a task of structuring the discursive terrain in a manner that heightened the perceptions of continuity between concurrent Georgians and Georgia and their pre-Soviet counterparts.

The same was true with the early nationalist activities. In May of 1988, the dissidents organized a celebration of 70 years of Georgian independence in an attempt to draw new attention to independent statehood that had been taken away by the Soviet regime. While this performance largely failed, as it attracted only a hundred people, the November 1988 demonstration against a proposal for curbing institutional rights of the republics was far more successful. It thus appeared that in 1988 the Georgian masses were easier to mobilize for protecting the status quo than for pursuing greater national rights. Yet, the November gathering itself turned into a mass performance of national revival. The protesters proudly waved the banished flags of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, and chanted pro-independence slogans. The marginalized institution of the Georgian Orthodox Church experienced a public revival. Church bells rang in the background while the crowd chanted prayers and lined up to kiss a cross held by Georgian Patriarch Ilia (Dingley, 2010). The regime's forces observed, but did not interfere. The November protests thus inaugurated a public return of the performance that represented a pre-Soviet lifestyle, changing public discourse and, hence, the perceptions of political possibilities.

The next surge of mass protest activities began in March 1989, and would culminate in the April 9<sup>th</sup> tragedy. The dissidents began organizing protests in late March 1989 in response to Abkhaz aspirations to separate from the Georgian SSR. Yet, the collective action frames voiced at the gatherings far exceeded a reactive character. The protesters not only demanded preservation of Georgian territorial integrity but also a restoration of historical justices. For the leaders of the national movement, this meant ethnicization of the Georgian republic. Among the slogans performed at the gatherings was "Georgia for Georgians", a term coined by Gia Chanturia to signify Georgian ethnic ownership of the republic in opposition to a civic

conception of states and territories (Kaufman, 2001, p. 101). In policy terms, this threatened the very existence of ethnic autonomies within Georgia. At a time of a deteriorating ethno-political conflict in Abkhazia, Georgian dissidents were thus deploying a discourse that could only produce a zero-sum emotional effect and, hence, escalate ethno-polarization. They were translating the rising Georgian nationalist passions into a radical political agenda, the one that was mobilizing the Abkhaz and Osset worst fears of the Georgian ethnic “other”. That such radical nationalism found broad resonance among Georgians in the early stage of mobilization is yet another evidence of the emotional intensity of latent Georgian national sentiments. It also constitutes another difference with the early ethnic mobilization in BiH, in which the leading agents of ethno-nationalism cooperated to avoid the politically damaging perceptions of nationalist excesses and, hence, demobilize non-ethnic axes of collective identification.

However, it was the pursuit of national independence that would turn this rise of nationalism into a general collapse of hegemonic discursive structures. Decisive here was the emotional effect of the April 9<sup>th</sup> tragedy. The protest performances of late March and early April 1989 involved a mix of anti-Abkhaz and anti-Soviet messages. Yet, with the April 6<sup>th</sup> change in the leadership of the Abkhazian Committee of the Communist Party, the protests decisively assumed an anti-regime character. Rally organizers sent representatives to labor associations, universities and schools with a call to join the protests. The crowd’s chants were explicit: "Down with the Communist regime", "Down with Russian imperialism", " USSR - the prison of nations", " Down with Soviet power " (“Findings of the Commission of the USSR Congress of Peoples’ Deputies to Investigate the Events which Occurred in the City of Tbilisi on 9 April 1989”, 1993). In contrast, there was no comparable display of hostility toward Yugoslavia in the early stages of nationalist mobilization in BiH, even though it was occurring in a far more liberalized discursive space. The Georgian National Movement was unambiguously ethno-nationalist and anti-colonialist. Unlike SDS’s diversification of deployed semiotic commonplaces in BiH, its discourse was focused on mobilization of more targeted, ethno-national sentiments. The symbols it displayed were exclusively those of the pre-Soviet Georgia. The narratives and the expressed political agenda were unashamedly nationalist, often with little regard to the emotions of Georgia’s ethnic minorities. While the movement’s discursive intervention began by taking advantage of what *Glasnost* offered, it appeared that this space was sufficient for setting up a challenge on the prohibitions that remained.

It was the regime's response on April 9<sup>th</sup>, however, that would ensure the challenge was successful. The effects of the tragedy testify to the importance of immediate contextuality in the constitution of meanings. They also highlight the role of emotional resources in the production of political mobilization. Prior to the tragedy, the dissident messages were lacking the affective resonance that could overtake political apathy and lead to general mobilization. While the size of the April protests was substantial, involving tens of thousands of Georgians, much of the population was still politically indifferent and many labor organizations decided not to join protest activities ("Findings of the Commission of the USSR Congress of Peoples' Deputies to Investigate the Events which Occurred in the City of Tbilisi on 9 April 1989", 1993) The eruption of anti-Soviet sentiments that followed April 9<sup>th</sup>, however, was widespread, with strikes being held throughout the republic. The inventory of feelings in the virtual memory of Georgians that the dissident discourse was able to mobilize now expanded with the sentiments of shock and anger. The event enhanced the resonance of the existing anti-Soviet messages while providing semiotic resources for new assemblage. Mass commemorations and funerals turned into performances that reproduced a sense of national victimization. The rhetoric of dissident leaders adjusted to make use of new capacities for collective action. Gamsakhurdia was now referring to the Soviet state as a bloody empire: "blood of the martyrs of April 9<sup>th</sup> flows into the blood of one hundred thousand Georgian martyrs and this blood will save us" (Mikava, 2014b). The effects on the affective thinking of system 1 were profound and pervasive, and they translated into a cascade of the more deliberative system 2 decisions to end conformism and join nationalist challenges. By summer, the signs that the discursive hegemony had collapsed were omnipresent. The placards along the columns of Rustaveli Avenue in downtown Tbilisi read: "Russian occupiers go home", or "Long live complete freedom in Georgia" (Peel, 1989). The event also produced major personnel changes within the ruling Communist party. In June, the new leadership began to consider implementing "real" sovereignty of the Georgian SSR, which included introducing Georgian citizenship and restoring national armed forces ("In the Central Committee of Georgia's Communist Party", 1989).

While the events of April 9<sup>th</sup> effectively promoted the dissident Soviet occupation frame into a hegemonic understanding, the leaders of the national movement differed on the subsequent collective action priorities. Chanturia's NDP advocated an uncompromising and targeted mobilization for independence, rejecting any cooperation with the authorities. Gamsakhurdia

focused on erasing the effects of the communist regime of truth with further ethnicization of the Georgian state and society. The People's Front of Nodar Natadze took greater effort to attract non-Georgians, prompting Gamsakhurdia to criticize it for insufficient "national spirit" (Huseinov & Mikenadze, 1989). While these leadership divisions would keep the movement fragmented into smaller organizations, the discourse of Gamsakhurdia and Kostava, the two leaders with superior cultural capital, had the greatest effect on the movement's collective action. Indeed, Gamsakhurdia spent this capital toward turning the mobilization in the direction that would exacerbate ethnopolitical relations within Georgia. The immediate goal of the movement was to pressure the existing government to pass laws that would secure the ethnic Georgian character of Georgia:

Demographic catastrophe is on its way. If we don't make the government abolish harmful projects, if we don't make them stop artificial migration from Georgia and also artificial migration of non-Georgian people into Georgia, if we don't implement Georgian language program, if we don't stop discrimination from Moscow of Georgian people in Georgia – Georgian nation will not exist in the future, or will exist as a small minority on its previous territory ("Zviad Gamsakhurdia – Memorable record for Georgia's national parties and organizations", 1991).

The threat, again, was coming from the Soviet communist adversary, which here stood for the Russian ethnic "other". The Soviets sought to Russify Georgia by means of demographic engineering, which threatened the survival of the nation. The frame here serves the same purpose as SDS's frame of Muslim demographic takeover in BiH, mobilizing Georgians in defense of their national being against the subtle invasion of a foreign culture. The statement here implicitly contradicts Gamsakhurdia's national ontology however. While the threat was itself not one of physical destruction of Georgians, the nation would end nonetheless with the loss of language and demographic preponderance. The existence of the "natural" national community, it thus appears, was dependent on the sociopolitical reproduction of language and a particular ethno-demographic condition.

Gamsakhurdia's discourse also sought to reverse the infiltration of other cultures that had occurred during Soviet times. All ethnic "others" living on the territory of the Georgian SSR needed to acknowledge that they inhabited not merely the territory of the Georgian republic but also the Georgian national geo-body. In March 1990, Gamsakhurdia defined the criteria under which the presence of ethnic minorities would be acceptable: "The part of the non-Georgian

population whose ancestors lived in Georgia, who know Georgian language and respect it, who support the national liberation movement, will have guaranteed rights...” (“Resolution of Special Conference of Georgia’s National Liberation Movement”, 1990). The corollary of the statement suggested a threat to the livelihoods of many non-Georgians residents of the republic. The rights were not guaranteed to those who settled there during Soviet times, those who did not know Georgian language and the one’s who opposed Georgian secession. The threat was most palpable to the part of the population that migrated into Georgia. While the Georgian language could be learned and the expression of political views consciously managed, no behavioral adjustments could extend the family history of inhabitation of Georgia. When it came to the status of Ossetians, Gamsakhurdia made clear that the restoration of historic justice involved the abolition of their titular autonomous oblast. In a September 1989 statement, which alleged that Moscow and the Ossetian Popular Front were seeking to dismember Georgia, Gamsakhurdia referred to South Ossetia as “so-called” (“New Year’s Address of the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia – Zviad Gamsakhurdia”, 1991).

In spring 1990, seven movement organizations that supported Gamsakhurdia united into a coalition “Round Table-Free Georgia”. This was a distinct coalition within the national movement insofar as its members shared both master and collective action understandings. Indeed, the collective action frames that distinguished the coalition from the movement’s radical secessionist factions were evident in the preamble to its Working Principles. The coalition’s declared goal was to define incremental steps needed to advance the goal of independence without ruling out “a dialogue with any political organization or individual” (“Regulations of the Round Table of Georgia’s National-Liberation Movement’s Political Parties and Organizations”, 1990). In a sharp contrast to both Chanturia’s NDP and Tsereteli’s NIP, “Round Table- Free Georgia” decided to participate in the November 1990 elections to the Georgian Supreme Soviet, running on a platform that both affirmed independence as the ultimate goal and defined immediate legislative needs. The platform legitimized the coalition’s decision to participate in the regime-held elections by asserting that “civil disobedience and parliamentary method are two sides of the same strategy that should lead to the restoration of independence” (Political and Economic Platform of Election Block “Round Table and Free Georgia”, 1990). It also specified that the coalition would use the existing institutional framework for gradually acquiring greater sovereignty. This involved passing legislation independent of, and in defiance of, the Soviet

center, such as those that would declare Georgian land, air space, water resources and fossils national property, create national armed forces, establish a customs service, and define citizenship, immigration policy and minority rights (Political and Economic Platform of Election Block “Round Table and Free Georgia”, 1990).

The convincing victory in November 1990 elections reaffirmed that no other political party or group could match the resonance of Gamsakhurdia’s discourse. This electoral outcome had a dual effect on Georgia’s discursive terrain. First, the takeover of institutional capacities allowed the movement to legislatively remove shrines to the communist discursive hegemony and re-inscribe public space with its ethno-national ontology. The Georgian Orthodox Church acquired semiotic presence in the institutions of the state. The new parliament was blessed by the Catholicos-Patriarch Illia II. Gamsakhurdia’s public appearances in the capacity of the Chairman of Supreme Soviet, and later as President of Georgia often occurred in the company of Orthodox priests. At its inaugural session held on November 14<sup>th</sup>, the new regime renamed the state from Georgian SSR into Georgian republic. It also reinstated the flag of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, as well as the Republic’s anthem *Dideba* (Praise). In August 1991, a large statue of Lenin was torn down on Lenin Square in central Tbilisi. The square itself was remained “Freedom Square”. Indeed, the Georgian nationalist re-inscription capacities were greater than those of ethno-nationalist parties in BiH. While the tripartite rule of SDA, SDS and HDZ often produced a stalemate of republican institutions in BiH, the Georgian nationalist control of institutions of Georgia was absolute.

Second, Gamsakhurdia’s collective action frames found new resonance. The former dissident’s newfound executive powers and influence in the parliament were now translating his frames into official policies. The policies of the new Georgian government toward Abkhazia and South Ossetia were informed by Gamsakhurdia’s understanding of historical justice and collective action priorities. Gamsakhurdia had been in the office for less than a month when the government passed a decision to abolish South Ossetia. The decision constituted another re-inscription that brought Georgian discursive landscape closer to its pre-Soviet condition. All official use of the Soviet-era term of “South Ossetia” now came with a prefix “so-called”, which served to sever any link between the signifier and the world external to language. Contextually and intertextually, the term signified a tool of rhetorical manipulation by the enemies of

Georgian national being. More frequently, Georgian officials entirely avoided any reference to “South Ossetia”, referring to the territory instead by two pre-Soviet Georgian names that signified roughly the same geographic region, Shida-Kartli and Samachablo. The deployment of these toponyms, both of which date back to the “national heyday” of the Georgian medieval kingdom, represented another performance of the “glorious past” as somehow eternal and superior to the categories of the present. In contrast, a different historical understanding meant that no such treatment was forthcoming in the case of Abkhazia. In a July 1991 address to the Supreme Council of the Abkhaz SSR, Gamsakhurdia expressed openness to extend the autonomy of Abkhazia, declaring it “topic for negotiations” (“Address to the Deputies of Supreme Council of Abkhazia ASSR”, 1991).

The institutional takeover also provided new framing opportunities. The restoration of historical justice became less a matter of dissident challenges against the Soviet “occupier”, and more about implementing the laws of the new Georgian government. Indeed, Gamsakhurdia made use of legal commonplaces to legitimize his government’s policies in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In a February 1991 press conference he addressed the minorities: “Let’s live in peace, we will never violate your rights and you do not break our laws” (“Press conference of the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Georgian Republic, Mr. ZviadGamsakhurdia”, 1991). After the April 1991 Georgian declaration of independence, the policy built on an understanding that Georgia was now an equal member of the global community of nations, with all of the membership’s rights and obligations. In May, Gamsakhurdia asserted that Georgia was merely protecting its territorial integrity in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, something that any other country would do. He further suggested that Georgia was under no obligation to preserve South Ossetia as a geo-administrative unit since “international human rights practice and conventions consider only cultural autonomy”( “Election Program of Presidency Candidate of Georgian Republic Mr. ZviadGamsakhurdia”, 1992). In effect, the Georgian leader was legitimizing the policies with floating signifiers that could have also been specified in an entirely opposite direction. And indeed they were. In the Georgian sociopolitical context, the signifiers of “laws”, “rights” and “territorial integrity” acquired meaning only after an encounter with ethnically polarized affective predispositions. For the Ossetians, the decision to abolish South Ossetia was a violation of rights that could not have the force of law. It was not South Ossetia that was violating the territorial integrity of Georgia, but Georgia that was violating the integrity of the

Soviet Union. In contrast, the system 1 predispositions of Georgians would ensure that Gamsakhurdia's use of legal commonplaces found system 2 resonance. The more one was affectively invested into the pursuit of Georgian statehood, the more likely one was to rationalize that the minorities had to respect the laws of the state. It made simple, logical sense.

With the escalation of conflict in South Ossetia, however, Gamsakhurdia's language increasingly targeted neural pairings of system 1. Fighting broke out in January 1991, less than two months after Gamsakhurdia's election to the Georgian Supreme Soviet. In the first months of violence, the Georgian leader issued calls to armed mobilization that were summoning the feelings of pride, shame, anger and fear. The frame of Georgian victimization in South Ossetia was mobilizing resentment and existential fear of the Ossetian "other". Gamsakhurdia likened the alleged discrimination of Georgians "on their land" to "apartheid" (Martirosian, 1991). The national defense frame, in contrast, referred not so much to individual fates as to the condition of the national imaginary. The locus of affective mobilization here was on the sentiments of national belonging, as evidenced in Gamsakhurdia's message to Georgian refugees from the conflict zone:

Every family that will return to Samachablo will equal Georgia's firm fortress. Men from Tskinali: I ask you to participate in restoring Georgian villages and defending our historical land. And the one who will not do it will be considered a traitor. We should all remember that Georgian fate is being decided in Shidakartli. ("Address to the Population of Samachablo", 1991).

The metaphor of the "firm Georgian fortress" served here to conjure up the feelings of national pride associated to the mythic tales of the "golden age" of Georgia. Each individual act of return was important for deciding the fate of the collective. Gamsakhurdia's warning that failure to return equaled treason served to set up a moral standard separating "good" and "bad" Georgians. By virtue of finding oneself on a threatened part of the national imaginary, an individual decision of a Georgian acquired collective significance. As the voice of the imagined community, Gamsakhurdia was reducing individual choices of these Georgians to a simple dichotomization. The one who answers the call gains social recognition and elevation, while a rejection of it damns one to the despised status of a traitor.

The discourse of the Georgian National Movement, then, had both remarkable similarities and differences to that of SDS BiH. The two agents shared the same ontological

foundation of a spiritual and corporeal national being. Both claimed to be on a dual mission; that of “awakening” the imagined national spirit from the communist deceptions and oppressions, and of protecting the integrity of the imagined geo-body. Both first emerged in the modality of a cultural organization. There were also similarities in the performative impact of the two leading personalities. Gamsakhurdia, like Karadzic, linked to the sensibilities of “ordinary” people and appeared as anti-elitist (Jones, 2014, p.132). Yet, the raw discursive material available to the two movements was different, leading to the remarkably different assemblages. In Georgia, much of the pre-Soviet ethnic self-understandings had been well-preserved. Crucial as a vehicle of national distinctness throughout the Soviet era was preservation of linguistic difference. Georgia was one of the few republics where the predominant language was not Russian. Moreover, the Soviet rule was deficient in legitimacy, and Georgian independence that preceded it was still engrained in collective memory. This translated into a rich reservoir of resonant semiotic commonplaces that could allow Georgian nationalists to overcome the scarcity of dissemination modalities. The available commonplace enabled them to assemble performances that could orient the thinking of Georgians toward history, revival and continuities while thoroughly discrediting the legacy of the Soviet era.

The reservoir of commonplaces available to SDS BiH was of a different kind. While it also had access to Serb ethnic symbols, historical understandings, notables and cultural artifacts, these were more limited in resonance and harder to anchor to the project of ethno-national statehood. A distinctive Serb state had not existed in BiH prior to Yugoslavia, and the effects of the Yugoslav communist productive power were more firmly embedded in the self-understandings of BiH’s population. Yet, SDS BiH had resources that Georgian dissidents did not, both in the form of rich dissemination modalities and the affectively salient discursive material. The living memory of victimization at the hands of the *Ustasa* and a more distant but culturally reproduced collective memory of the Ottoman occupation were opportunities for Serb nationalists to discursively superimpose the villains of the past onto the concurrent political adversaries. Moreover, “Jugoslovenstvo” differed from “Sovietness” in that it provided a reservoir of commonplaces that could be joined and specified toward heightening a sense of ethnic communion. The project of a centralized or shortened Yugoslavia would achieve Serb nationalist goals, and, hence, Yugoslav sentiments could be mobilized in its pursuit. Indeed, both Georgian nationalists and SDS BiH were forces of revival that sought to return their respective

imagined communities to a certain previous, historical condition. Since the Communist era had produced fewer cross-cutting affective clusters among the Georgian population, the Georgian national movement was able to take a more direct route to this goal (See Figure 5.2 below for a summary of major similarities and differences).

**Figure 5.2 Comparing the Georgian National Mobilization with that of Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

Similarities	Differences	
	BiH	Georgia
Nation as a corporeal being	Economic grievances, discontent with corrupted elites dominate the early processes of liberalization. Nationalism emerges later	Nationalism emerges from the outset
Nation as a spiritual being	Nationalism emerges only after a full liberalization and broader ethno-political escalation.	Nationalism challenges the oppressive regime and leads to liberalization
“Awakening” needed due to communist misapprehensions	No history of dissent prior to liberalization	Rich history of dissent
Both nations as a geo-body. Borders as a corporeal injury	Non-nationalist parties as a principal threat to ethno-homogenization	No non-nationalist opponents; the communist elites embrace mass sentiments
Nation as a way to advance personal ambitions	Nationalists deploy a diversity of semiotic commonplaces, appealing to diverse sentiments	Unashamed, and unambiguous ethnic nationalism
Demographic threat from the ethnic other as a potential loss of identity	The frame of an immediate existential threat coming from the ethnic other	The primary threat targets an identity, implications for physical existence are slower and less dramatic
Historical symbolism of the performances. Revival of the Church and cultural life.	Rich dissemination avenue	Homogenization occurred in the absence of access to mass media
Both leaders populist, non-elitist	The movement’s roots outside of BiH. Continuous incitement from the outside.	A genuine Georgian movement. No outside incitement
Wars in both places initiated	Access to massive military machinery.	Few available weapons. Reliance on

by criminal gangs deployed on behalf of ethnic leaders		violent entrepreneurs
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## Chapter 6

### Conclusion: The Making of an Affective Community

When we ground structure and agency in the world of affect, we arrive at a far-reaching observation about the complex relationship between ethnicity and politics. Just as the pre-existing national sentiments produce ethno-political agents, the agents also produce ethno-national sentiments. Agency, it thus appears, is implicated in the production and reproduction of national communities. This further requires a conceptual replacement of “worldly” objects, as in bounded ethnic groups and objectivized interests, with social processes that address both ebbs and flows of ethnic groupness and political constitution of ethnic interests across time-space. Indeed, the contemporary national self-understandings of Bosnian Serbs and Georgians crystallized largely through the processes of ethno-politicization of the late 1980s and the early 1990s, in which the two agents analyzed in this study had leading roles. The deeply ethnicized Bosnian society of 1992 was quite different from the one that SDS inherited at the time of its founding, and as a result of which it had to “awaken” the Serb nation. The violent conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia of the early 1990s were a far cry from the dense social ties and intermarriages that had been habitually transgressing ethnic boundaries only a few years earlier.

To understand the processes that lead to such thorough transformations of national sentiments, two commonplace inclinations must be resisted. One is a cognitive bias to search for causes of a conflict through the lens of its consequences. In the postwar BiH, for example, ethnic categorizations largely correspond to collective loyalties, political preferences and cultural practices. This informative quality, coupled with commonplace static understandings of national identities, produces a heuristic inclination to project the postwar implications of ethnic categorizations onto those of a prewar BiH. The second assumption is the commonplace image of a rational, unified and fixed human subject. This understanding tends to interpret any change in human action in terms of rational and willful decisions without problematizing the cognitive processes involved in the constitution of that rationality. The recent literature on affective thinking has added nuances to our understanding of human behavior that help resist both inclinations. It has presented a wealth of evidence that deliberative thinking is deeply intertwined with affective energies, which are themselves constituted by a rich variety of diverse and even contradictory sensibilities. While these sensibilities are paired to external encounters, the

linkages are not rigid. New experiences produce new types of affective pairings, altering what we feel and, hence, what we think. It is not that ethnicized conflicts occur after the decades of peace and stability because the ethnic masses decided to reveal their true faces, as popular folk narratives in both Georgia and BiH would have us believe. The ethno-national sentiments of contemporary Bosnians should not be seen as indicative of the sentiments that had existed prior to the processes of ethno-politicization. Similarly, the sensibilities that had been cutting across ethnic affiliations for decades should not be seen as somehow less genuine than those that conformed to ethnic expectations.

These observations open a way for a better understanding of the productive power of discourse. They suggest that social transformations occur precisely because of the ability of discursive stimuli to intensify, mix, mutate and transfer a diversity of affective dispositions. This further opens up to the question of how agency affects social outcomes. As the previous chapters have argued, agents can have a decisive say in the shaping of the discursive environment, which in turn leaves a mark on the structures of human cognition. Aspiring to understand the agency of SDS BiH and Georgian dissidents, this study has explored the relationship between the discourses of the two agents and their emotional effects. It has treated images, sounds and other linguistic and paralinguistic dimensions of the studied performances as a contribution to the wider affective atmosphere that delimited what Bosnians and Georgians loved, hated, desired and feared at particular times and places. It explored how the emotional legacy of the previous deployments of the same linguistic elements participated in the mapping of brain patterns in each subsequent deployment. When Radovan Karadzic played the *Gusle*, for example, he mobilized the pleasing memories of other *Gusle* performances that rural Serbs most often associate with “genuine”, prototypical and morally uncorrupted Serbs. The image of Radovan Karadzic and this implicitly mobilized affect constituted here two simultaneous neural firings. These were the firings that produced new neural pairings and, hence, new ways of perceiving some aspect of the world.

Certainly, an understanding of the productive power of a discourse also required looking beyond the acts themselves to the broader contextual factors. For this reason, the analysis applied the three-fold framework of political opportunities, mobilizing structures and discursive framings. In the process, the study also redefined the framework, introducing the centrality of

affect across all three dimensions. The concept of the political opportunity structures thus earned its relevance as the realm of immediate contextuality that helps mobilize some sensibilities, sidelines others and, hence, orients thinking in a certain direction rather than others. The mobilizing structures emerged as significant not so much for their utility in mobilizing the masses for collective action as for controlling the mode of discursive presentation and the quantity of neural firings. Hence, it was useful to refer to them as modalities that disseminate a discourse.

Here, then, we can summarize how the three-fold framework of political opportunity structures, dissemination modalities, and discursive framings helps us understand the productive power of not only agency but also of each performance. The meanings of a performance are constituted contextually. Take the example of the *Ustase* threat frame. It would not have the same resonance had it not been for the anxieties produced by the victory of HDZ in Croatia. The rise of HDZ is the domain of the opportunity structures here. The meanings are also constituted through repetition and the mode of presentation. The *Ustase* frame would not have the same resonance without the grassroots activists that communicated the threat through a personable exchange of affect, or without the mass media that disseminated the graphic images and sounds widely and frequently. These are the dissemination modalities. There is also signification that is embedded in the deployed semiotic commonplaces, as well as that which comes together when the commonplaces are linked and specified with other signifiers. The *Ustase* threat frame resonated the way it did because SDS mobilized the affectively salient historicity of the *Ustase* commonplace, *and* skillfully mapped it onto the concurrent context. Here we deal with the discursive framings. If we are to grasp the productive power of agency, we need to understand how all three dimensions come together to mobilize old and map new affective pairings across time and space.

This is not to say that ethnic structures did not matter. Indeed, they conditioned the resonance of discursive acts in both BiH and Georgia. We can find them in the discrepant affective reactions to the same discursive stimuli on the opposing sides of ethnic categories, whether they be in the form of the varying intensities of the same sensibilities or in the different types of emotions altogether. During the three ethno-cultural revivals in BiH, for example, an individual of Serb background was certainly more likely to embrace the celebrations of the

revived Serb ethnic holidays than those of the Muslims, and vice versa. However small such discrepancy may be, it signifies a structuring tendency and some level of investment of a sense of self in the ethnic field of signifiers. Yet, when seeking to understand ethnicized conflicts, the intensity of the investment is crucial. In the case of BiH, the ethnic cluster of sensibilities overpowered the alternative affective affiliations only after a discursive intervention that was aided by favorable contextuality and rich dissemination avenues. Indeed, the hallmarks of both the nationalist agency and resilient cross-ethnic sentiments are all over the process of ethno-politicization that preceded the Bosnian War. In contrast, ethnic structures, or the pre-existing Georgian national sentiments, emerge as the single most important factor in Georgia's drive for independence. Despite the risk of a crackdown and the lack of any access to mass media, their intensities rapidly escalated at a favorable political moment, forcing even the communist elites to assume a nationalist position.

The argument here is also not intended to diminish the relevance of historical continuities, but to warn against drawing conclusions about the present based on the similarities with the past. Certainly, SDS was continuing a rich discursive tradition of Serb integralism that dates back over a century. During the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the leading choice of Serb voters in BiH was one such discourse coalition; the Radical Party. Its leader, Milan Srsbic, was known for advocating the annexation of parts of BiH to Serbia, and even stating that BiH should disappear as a geographical term. Earlier, during the Austro-Hungarian times, there were many other Serb activists in BiH who fought for Serb state unity. This historical evidence is indeed valuable for showing that some of the affective products of a regime of truth that preceded the communist Yugoslavia had been well preserved into the 1990s. But it would be an error to superimpose it onto the Bosnian politics context of the 1990s as a decisive explanation of why the Bosnian War erupted. It would entirely dismiss the forty-five years of the Yugoslav communist regime of truth as somehow irrelevant, reducing the power of the era to that of mere repression. It would neglect the fact that this era shaped the field of early socialization of a generation and a half of Bosnians, a time when, as the literature on affective thinking tells us, human sensibilities are most malleable to external influences. It would also disregard the abundant evidence that the era indeed produced intense affective affiliations that cut across the cluster of ethnic sentiments. A better way to treat these marks of the past is to think of them as resources that had to be revived and reproduced to turn into a determining factor in the politics of

the 1990s. They had to be amplified to produce emotional intensities that could override the affective pairings of the forty-five years of the Yugoslav communist regime of truth. This is precisely the task around which the founders, leaders and activists of SDS structured the party's discourse.

### **Nation as an Affective Complex**

The various strands of social constructivism have convincingly argued that the condition of possibility of national identity is its production and reproduction in the field of discourse. But, if we take the discursive landscape to have a mutually constituting counterpart in affective landscape, how is the concept of a nation affected? For one, it suggests that a nation is both a discursive and affective complex. It exists as a community of people who share a minimum of common affective investment in the same reservoir of signs representing a category of collective belonging to facilitate an imaginary of collective belonging. This minimum is the condition of possibility of group solidarity without which a national category can have no social relevance. Since a nation is an imagined community, the intersubjective manifestation of this shared affect takes place through flags, coat of arms, anthems and other visual icons, rhetorical signs and material surrogates that stand in for the shared sentiments. We see this when the act of kissing or burning a flag mobilizes the same or related affective reaction in millions of dispersed people whose sense of self is implicated with the sign.

This understanding poses a further question of how the discursive assemblages participate in the constitution of shared sentiments. Here we encounter an analytical challenge, for the meanings of an assemblage are greater than the sum of its constituent elements. A semiotic commonplace may mobilize one affective reaction when deployed on its own, and quite another one when deployed as part of a broader performance. Yet, by tracing the historicity of the commonplaces, and analyzing how the assemblages linked and specified them with other linguistic elements and paralinguistic modalities, we are able to better understand how performativity reshapes the resonance of semiotic elements in a manner that has implications for collective loyalties. One instructive example relevant for this study was the constitution of the Yugoslav nation, or the affective community of *Jugoslovenstvo*, which was born out of the assemblages that linked the ethnic field of signifiers to the heroic narrative of the Partisan struggle of World War II in ways that fostered the development of the supra-ethnic affective community.

Beyond the minimum required for the very constitution of national self-understandings, the national field of affect is highly uneven. It is here that the ethno-nationalist agencies analyzed in this study earned their social relevance. Each act of SDS BiH and Georgian dissidents represented an intervention upon the discursive landscape whose significance ultimately rested in the effects on the corresponding affective landscape. To turn a Serb ethnic category into a palpable political group, SDS had to elevate sentiments of Serb ethnic belonging above those of *Jugoslovenstvo*. The category here corresponded to a wide range of intensities, from only a minimal implication of a sense of self needed for one to identify with it to passionate feelings of ethnic unity. The agency of SDS helped release and politically articulate the latter, while intensifying the former. SDS also targeted those who didn't identify with the category but who could be conceived as falling into it independent of self-understandings. Here it made use of other symbols associated to a sense of self, such as one's name, cultural practices and ancestry, reinterpreting them as indicators of one's ethno-national essence. In Georgia the task was different, since nationalist agency departed from a higher degree of affective investment in ethnic signs. At stake here was not the intensity of affective investment in rival symbols, but the feelings of apathy and habitual conformism to the regime. Much of this was overcome through the dynamics of a nationalist wave, in which Georgian dissidents had an important role.

If the existence of a nation hinges on affect, and if the intensity of this mandatory affective complex ebbs and flows across time-space, then we can entirely dispose of a concept of a nation as a stable community. Indeed, Rogers Brubaker's concept of groupness as a variable here has implications for national ontology. The levels of groupness correspond to the intensity of sentiments that elevate or lower national solidarity. As the discursive field shifts and the productive power of regimes of truth produces new neural pairings, a sense of self can become entirely divorced from the national field of signifiers. Since this self is a condition of possibility for the existence of a nation, the nations are always under existential threats from rival political projects. Their stability thus rests on a regime of truth that reproduces attachments to the national community in the emotions of its members.

### **Affect and Structure**

How can this centrality of affect be incorporated into the concept of social structures? It is useful here to recall William Sewell's conceptualization of structures as consisting of schemas,

material resources and human resources. Here the schemas correspond to social conventions that inform human action across time-space. Chapter 1 has reworked these conventions, conceptualizing them as discursive assemblages that serve as recipes for social behavior, such as official rules, cultural rituals or institutional hierarchies. Human and material resources are here the media of power that define the capacity for reproduction of the corresponding discursive material, or schemas. It is in the link between this discursive material and human resources that we find social centrality of affective thinking. The very notion of human resources here signifies the existence of neural pairings between schemas and affect. Indeed, this work has shown that armed ethno-mobilizations occurred only after a process of ethnicization progressively accumulated human resources for the task by internalizing and intensifying particular schema, or understandings of self and society. Humans act on the schemas only when they mobilize affective investment, as in mobilizing for war out of love for the imagined community, resentment of the imagined adversary, or fear of an existential threat.

The challenge here is to trace the schema's complex contextual and intertextual associations to their affective sources. Sewell seems to acknowledge this generating, obscure and dispersed power of affect when discussing submission of subjects to the authority of kings. The fear and reverence for kings, he claims, are "manifestations of fundamental notions about the cosmic function of kingship, notions woven into a multitude of discourses and ceremonies at all levels of society (134)". What he omits to emphasize is that fear and reverence here are merely the transpositions of affect to which "fundamental notions" are paired. The authorities of Radovan Karadzic and Zviad Gamsakhurdia rested not on some rationally derived system 2 notions of national identity and political realities. Rather, the reverence for and fear of the two leaders, which assumed "king-like" intensities at times, were derived from successful affective internalizations of the metaphorical organic nation ontology and political narratives assembled around the emotionally salient binaries of good versus evil. The more intense the affect associated to this master frame, which is itself a function of pairings to its constituent semiotic commonplaces, the richer the human resources that underpin it as a fundamental notion that informs social behavior. The firmness of social structures that draw on this notion, as in the compliance of Serbs to the authority of SDS, is thus a function of these affective intensities.

When it comes to material resources, they are meaningful here as resources for reproduction of the affective landscape that gives rise to structural configurations. Their structuring effects are analogous to those of dissemination technologies, for they heighten the exposure to some discursive materials while obscuring others. Money, mass media, weaponry, buildings and so on require discursive inscription to be constituted as resources, but, conversely, their role in the structuring of experiences conditions affective commitment to the inscribed discourse. They are resources here insofar as they enable the enactment of the schema. Money is transformable into access to congregation sites and labor required for discursive performances. The visual displays of the schema in the form of inscriptions upon physical objects are performances in their own right. The weaponry and other technologies of coercion demonstrate power relations, while their deployment eliminates the alternatives. Access to mass media multiplies the quantity of performances. By delimiting exposure to different discursive acts, the balance of material resources delimits the amount of neural firings that associates signifiers to emotions. As such, it has a direct effect on the internalization of the schemas and, hence, on the stability of social structures.

Indeed, it is here that a difference can be identified in the causal significance of SDS BiH and Georgian dissidents. In BiH, SDS departed from comparably weak ethnic structures. Yet, the movement's promotion of the various ethnic schemas that served its goals progressed swiftly as a result of contextual shifts, effective discursive tactics and the acquisition of superior material resources. The peak of this process corresponded to the extreme emotional intensities produced by the Bosnian war, which left a legacy of firm ethnic structures that are today the defining feature of the Bosnian social field. In Georgia, the advocated set of meanings had a more pronounced counterpart in the affective sensibilities of Georgians, and, hence, the pre-existing ethnic structures. For this reason, Georgian dissidents were able to homogenize the nation at a right contextual period with few material resources and little concern about excessive nationalism.

### **Categories and Ethno-Nationalism**

Embedded in human cognition is a tendency for categorization, a feature that favored nationalist political projects in BiH and Georgia over their non-nationalist alternatives. Affect simplifies the arduous task of understanding sociopolitical complexities by highlighting some

possibilities and obscuring others. In doing so, it fosters categorical processing that brackets a multitude of intertwined relations and a wide spectrum of individual commitments into clear-cut binaries. This human biological tendency translates into greater resonance of discursive acts that sends simple but affectively charged categorical messages in opposition to those that invite an intellectually laborious attention to nuances. Indeed, the discourses of SDS BiH and Georgian dissidents were of the former kind. As in all identity politics, they departed from a fundamental binary of a descriptive “us versus them”, which served to obscure the multiplicities of “us” and “them”, the discrepancies between the binary and its referent self-understandings, and the permeability of its politically constituted demarcations. The ontological metaphor of a national being reproduced this binary, for it implied that a difference between imagined nations was akin to the self-evident difference between two or more living organisms. This understanding was enhanced by the equally categorical discourse of rival nationalist agents. Their shared task was to anchor a strong sense of self to a particular ethnic category, which simultaneously suggested an essential otherness with those outside of the bracket. In this sense, the deployment of available ethnic categories in nationalist discourse interacted with a human cognitive tendency for categorization to bring affective dispositions of the audiences closer to the categorical landscape of sharply differentiated affect.

Indeed, SDS and Georgian dissidents could find rich resources for this task in the peculiarities of BiH’s and Georgian sociopolitical conditions. For one, ethnic categories had been institutionalized to represent a socially and politically relevant demographic trait. Here the presence of a category was more than a mere descriptive; it was a performance of continuity. Each time one encountered a category, whether in the census questions, cartographic presentations or in the “ethnic key” policy, one’s thinking was implicitly directed to the past. To define what one was in the present meant here singling out one’s links to the past, whether they were in the form of selected cultural practices or family background. Yet, ethnic continuities cannot be neatly confined to a cultural field. The leap from cultural and family continuities to that of broader ethnic history is not great. This continuous temporality certainly helped the resurgent nationalists in the 1990s map collective memories of historical suffering onto the concurrent categories, which quickly escalated into a self-reinforcing dynamic. When history is mobilized to frame a present category as profane and malicious, it is likely to trigger an affective response of all individuals that happen to fall into the branded category in the form of the equally

categorical reciprocal frame. Such escalating rival emotions occurred in both BiH and Georgia, combining to legitimize the reductionism of categorical descriptions. As this affective inducement pushed ethno-homogenization ahead by sidelining the social and political complexities that stood in its path, loyalty to the homogenizing groups diminished the relevance of uneven individual preferences. This was evidenced in the verticalization of the hierarchy of SDS BiH and the increased authorities of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, which corresponded to the progression of homogenization and, hence, sharper differentiations.

### **Rediscovering the Lost Affect**

This discussion has argued that an understanding of conflicts fought on behalf of ethnicity requires a case-specific synthesis of structure and agency that assumes neither the deterministic quality of ethnic structures nor the discretionary quality of agency. As the three-fold analytical synthesis has demonstrated, the pre-existing ethnic sentiments in BiH and Georgia were only one aspect in the interplay of an intertwined multitude of causal factors leading to violent outcomes, and not always a dominant one. While these sentiments did progressively intensify to become a primary generator of collective action, this happened only as a consequence of favorable political contextuality and agency that promoted them as such. Even then, the violence began not as a spontaneous mobilization of the masses, but as a deliberative action of violent entrepreneurs acting on behalf of the elites. The violence was thus a tactic in pursuit of an ethno-political agenda. Hence, it was more appropriate to speak of ethnicized rather than ethnic conflicts.

This study has also aspired to reinstate the evidence of alternative cross-ethnic affective intensities that the reductionism of the “ethnic conflict” pushed to the analytical margins. This evidence came from the very entity that the paradigm identifies as the locus of causality- the national masses. The study considered a diversity of alternative affective commitments of mass proportions, as in pro-Yugoslav rallies, peace protests, troubles with armed mobilization, and rarity of spontaneous violence. That there was a discrepancy between elite politics and mass sentiments is also evidenced in the rare admissions of ethno-political leaders. Radovan Karadzic thus stated that “the relations between the Muslims and the Serbs are much better among ordinary people than the relations between the parties that represent those people” (“Bosnian Serbs Remain in Yugoslavia”, 1991). Momcilo Krajisnik was more frank, stating that “fear in

BiH has been most often stirred from the outside... mono-ethnic parties have contributed to this fear, accusing other mono-ethnic parties, which scored them some points among their own peoples” (“Jugoslavija postoji”, 1991). Yet, the most conspicuous example of the ability of political leaders to direct the behavior of the masses even at the height of the affective momentum would come later, in the middle of the Bosnian War. Fikret Abdic, a regional Muslim hero in the town Velika Kladusa, decided to carve out a local statelet of “Western Bosnia” by making peace with Radovan Karadzic. Abdic allied with the Army of Republika Srpska to lead the town’s Muslims to a bloody war against other Muslims who remained loyal to the Bosnian government.

While the processes of ethno-politicization analyzed in this study were producing a progressive ethnicization and indeed sidelining the sensibilities that linked Serbs of BiH to other constituencies, the social field never properly aligned with nationalist metanarratives. While peace rallies ultimately ended and armed mobilization began, there was a large discrepancy between the warring sides and ethnic groups. The so-called “Muslim” Army was initially made up of ethnic Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and its mobilization calls had nothing to do with any mono-ethnic or religious sentiments. The primary source of affective intensities conducive for their armed mobilization was that of an opposition between the virtuous and heroic Partizans who had united all Yugoslav peoples in a struggle against the evil and profane Nazi occupier and their Serb nationalist *Cetnik* collaborators. One rhetorical commonplace that these “Muslim” mobilization messages deployed was that of Vladimir Peric Valter, a celebrated Partisan commander who led the 1945 liberation of Sarajevo from Nazi occupation. Indeed, it was easier to mobilize an intense sense of self of a Sarajevan by anchoring it to the image of Valter than any ethnic signifier. As Serb paramilitaries launched their first operations in Sarajevo in April 1992, the spokesman of the BiH Interior Ministry Zoran Milanovic, a non-Muslim himself, issued an alarming TV plea: “All citizens get to your stairways and shoot at ‘White Eagles’. Because you are Valter!” (Bosanskehistorije kanal, 2012). Despite what SDS’s narration would have us believe, it mattered little, if at all, that Valter was an ethnic Serb. Yet, the narration continued. This is because there is neither a nation without narration, nor conflict fought on behalf of nations without the agents of politicization.

## Epilogue

In October 2004, I stood in a crowd of nearly 35,000 spectators who filled Sarajevo's Olympic Stadium to watch a World Cup qualifier between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro. The recent political history of the two countries ensured that this would not be an ordinary soccer game. For home fans, the event was an opportunity for expressing anger and animosity that stemmed from the involvement of Serbia and Montenegro in the 1992-1995 Bosnian War. Upon hearing the sound of the visiting side's National Anthem, most of the crowd reacted by whistling or turning their backs to the field. Yet, the bits of the tune that fought through a concert of whistles were also creating a moment of irony. The Anthem was *Hej Sloveni* (Hey, Slavs), the same one that the people in the stands would only a dozen years earlier greet with thunderous ovations. Then, it was the Anthem of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a former common state of the two sides that were now facing off on the soccer pitch.

I believe that we can learn much about national self-understandings by pausing to think about a diversity of sensibilities that a performance such as *Hej Sloveni* can mobilize in a single audience. The challenge here is to understand how contextual positioning can alter the meaning of a song, a symbol or a speech act so that it produces widely different affective experiences. For Bosnians of all ethnic backgrounds, *Hej Sloveni* had a recognizable tune, having been performed innumerable times in the past. Until the early 1990s, it represented a national self. When played in 2004 as an anthem of Serbia and Montenegro, many associated it with the resented ethnic "other". The meanings of each performance were also affected by previous usage. Lurking in the background of the intense anger and animosity that the playing of *Hej Sloveni* triggered in the context of the 2004 soccer game were the more pleasing emotional imprints of the times when the Anthem mobilized no less intense feelings of national pride. This is why many of those same people who whistled and turned their backs to *Hej Sloveni* would approve of it with nostalgia when situated in a performance that memorializes the lost times of the Yugoslav state. This is why an activist of the Bosniak ethno-national SDA party recently told me that he was proud of his involvement in armed mobilization of Muslims in his village near Sarajevo and the role in "bringing down Yugoslavia", only to add a short time later that he still got "chills" upon hearing *Hej Sloveni*, and lament the destruction of Yugoslavia. *Hej Sloveni* here testifies to the existence

of two eras in which Bosnians had two radically different national self-understandings, neither of which was more “real” and natural than the other.

One of the larger arguments of this work is that to understand conflicts fought in the name of an identity we must dispose of the assumption that collective self-understandings are arranged into a stable hierarchy. Rather, we need to analyze the dynamic sociopolitical processes that produce their evolution across space and time, the processes in which the political elites often have a decisive influence. As I progressed with this research, I began recalling the experiences of Bosnia’s turbulent political developments of the early 1990s that produced the evolution of national self-understandings of myself and my family. I decided to briefly share some of them here for several reasons: to reveal my positionality as a researcher, to ground the dynamics of ethno-politicization in the actual experiences of one Bosnian family, and to illustrate the evolution of identities over time and space with a representative example. For the latter purpose, I begin with generational differences. My maternal grandparents hailed from two villages in Eastern Herzegovina, a deeply ethnicized area with an extensive history of intercommunal conflict. Both were Muslims who narrowly escaped the murderous campaigns of Serb *Cetnik* forces during World War II. My grandfather’s father and brother were not so lucky. The *Cetniks* murdered them by throwing them into a deep natural pit. After World War II, my grandfather spent time in prison for being affiliated with *Mladi Muslimani* (Young Muslims), an underground organization that fought for greater religious rights of Muslims in the communist Yugoslavia. One of his prison mates was Alija Izetbegovic, the future Bosnian Muslim leader and president of Bosnia. My paternal grandparents were also devout Muslims from Herzegovina, albeit without the comparable suffering.

If we subscribe to the traditional understandings of ethnicity, my family would seem as a prime candidate for the perpetuation of ethnic self-understandings across different generations. Both grandparents had a strong sense of ethno-religious belonging, with one grandfather having connections to a dissident Muslim movement. Yet, a seemingly unremarkable event, their move from Herzegovina to the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, disrupted this continuity in ways that marginalized old and produced new axes of identification. My parents were born in Sarajevo at a time when Bosnia was undergoing urbanization and industrialization, which resulted in a large influx of people from mono-ethnic villages into the flourishing multi-ethnic cities. It was also a

time when the Communist regime promoted “brotherhood and unity” of Yugoslav peoples while discouraging the main set of practices that differentiated them- the religious expression. In a sharp contrast to the field of socialization of the deeply ethnicized Herzegovinian environment, many of my parents’ childhood friends, classmates, teachers, neighbors and colleagues were non-Muslims. Since there was no language barrier that followed ethnic lines, there was little to prevent these interactions from growing into dense and emotional ties that could define a community to which my mother and father felt a sense of belonging. Such experiences, in conjunction with the regime’s policy of brotherhood and unity, helped them acquire a strong sense of being a Yugoslav. Despite the wishes of their parents, and in contrast to the deeply felt Yugoslav identity, their awareness of belonging to a Muslim ethno-national category was only vague and passionless. My father, a former student of the Muslim *Madrassa*, joined thousands of other Bosnians of all ethnic backgrounds in embracing the ruling ideology and becoming an active member of the communist party.

Being born to the parents with such self-understandings meant that I would be even further distanced from those of my grandparents. Indeed, growing up in Yugoslavia of the 1980s, I did not have any sense of belonging to a Muslim ethno-religious category. I was simply a Yugoslav and a Sarajevan. I can say with confidence that most of my primary school classmates, whom I can retrospectively identify as a mix of ethnic Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks and several others whom I am still unable to ascertain ethnic background, felt the same. I can recall only two traces of ethnic practices that connected me to the era of my grandparents. One was a prayer from the Koran that my grandmother taught me and instructed me to recite every night at bedtime. Another one was the marking of the Muslim Eid holiday by spending the day over my maternal grandparents’ house. Moreover, I didn’t experience these practices as indicators of ethnic belonging. The Koranic verse was just something to be recited for good luck as protection against evil spirits. The Eid celebration was not so much my holiday as that of my grandparents. In contrast, the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, the Yugoslav Day of the Republic, was one of my favorite times of the year.

It was the process of ethno-politicization in Bosnia analyzed in this study that radically restructured my own conception of collective belonging in ways that linked it to the self-understandings of my grandparents, and, hence, to the field of meanings of rural Herzegovina of

the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. I vaguely recall the dramatic January 1990 exit of the Slovenian delegation from the 14<sup>th</sup> congress of the Yugoslav league of communists as the first challenge to my idealistic perception of Yugoslavia as a natural country and an indisputable reality. My father, a committed party member, reacted to the event by lamenting what he perceived to be the Slovenian attempts to secede from Yugoslavia, and praising Serbia's party leader Slobodan Milosevic for what he saw as a resolute struggle to protect the country against separatism. I recall his enthusiastic statement that in hindsight seems surreal: "this Milosevic, he is good, he is tough". The congress marked not only the demise of the party-state regime but also the emergence of new political actors and narratives that began to question the interpretations of history and national identity that I theretofore held as a simple, undeniable truths. In the following months, I remember hearing more and more about nationalist movements that were gaining mass support in some parts of Yugoslavia. Yet, since a label "nationalist" came with such negative connotations in my micro-world that it was akin to an insult, my parents and I perceived the nationalists as little more than an outlier comparable to a marginal underclass, or even a criminal group.

I recall the first event that genuinely destabilized the perceptions that my parents and I held as the taken-for-granted truths as the moment of emotional disturbance. The event was a friendly soccer game held in the spring of 1990 between Yugoslavia and the Netherlands in Zagreb, the capital of the then- Yugoslav republic of Croatia. We gathered to watch the broadcast, only to hear our Anthem, *Hej Sloveni*, drowned in whistles and boos by what was formally the home crowd. We watched in shock as the insults directed at our team continued for the duration of the game. In the following days, the event seemed like the only topic of conversations. The reactions were the same by everyone, including my grandparents- disbelief, hurt and outrage at Croat nationalism, which at the time seemed to only reenergize our love for Yugoslavia.

Yet, only more disturbance was on the way. I was spending my summer recess of 1990 on the Croatian coast with my parents and several other members of our extended family when the Croatian TV broadcast the event of the lowering of a Yugoslav flag in Zagreb and the raising of the historic checkerboard flag that the new nationalist Croatian government restored as the republic's official symbol. I remember my uncle Mirsad's outrage, accentuated by a hope that

the Yugoslav Peoples' Army (JNA) would forcibly remove the Croatian nationalists led by Franjo Tudjman. Whomever we perceived to be the enemy of Yugoslavia was the enemy of ourselves. Indeed, in the summer of 1990, Tudjman was the villain. When the ethno-political conflict in Croatia escalated in August with the "log revolution", my father's sympathies were on the side of Serbs resisting the writ of the Croatian nationalists. When the object of this study, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), first emerged in 1990, it did not leave any negative emotional imprint precisely because we did not feel it to be a threat to Yugoslavia.

The summer of 1990 brought to my immediate environment the campaign for Bosnia's first multi-party elections, which were held in November. We were suddenly learning about the resurgent *Ustase* and *Cetnici* movements, and hearing new narratives that questioned our deeply ingrained binaries of historical heroes and villains. I found these developments confusing and unsettling. My perceptions had been formed by the regime's official historical narratives and movie portrayals of both *Ustase* and *Cetnici* as the fascist, murderous hordes that the heroic Yugoslav partisans defeated during World War II to restore the rule of the good over evil. I also recall my grandparents' stories of the *Cetnik* atrocities they experienced in eastern Herzegovina. Yet, the regime narratives that de-ethnicized the two movements seemed to produce effects, as I never associated *Ustase* with Croat nationalists nor *Cetniks* with Serbs. For me, and for many others, both movements simply belonged to the negative side of the Partisan self/Fascist other binary that grounded the dominant portrayals of the World War II events in Yugoslavia. They also belonged to the past. While I wondered how *Ustase* and *Cetniks* could possibly reappear in the present, the inertia of what I held as a natural order of history assured me that such forces could not have any relevance. Indeed, most people in my surroundings were convinced that either a reformed communist party or the "reformists" of the Federal Prime Minister Ante Markovic would soundly win the elections and silence the nationalists. Most of the conversations I remember were about whether it was better to vote for the "reformists" or the Communists. My grandparents, however, expressed their intent to vote for the Muslim ethno-national party, SDA. I recall my grandfather's explanation that Muslims needed to unite behind an ethno-national Muslim party because Serbs would vote only for Serbs and Croats would stick with other Croats. When responding to my mother's disagreement, he seemed to be at peace with the differences between a man socialized in a Herzegovinian village in the 1930s and 1940s

and his daughter raised a couple of decades later in the urban bastion of “Brotherhood and Unity”: “you vote for whom you want, I will vote for SDA”.

The distortions of our perception of the society in which we lived continued with the victory of the three ethno-national parties, SDA, SDS and HDZ, in the November 1990 elections. It appeared that ethnic differentiations had been sufficiently preserved to allow nationalist elites to produce a dynamic in which most Bosnians would make political choices based on their ethnic category. More importantly, the victors quickly acted to turn their interpretations of the world into hegemonic understandings. As the Communists and other non-national parties faded from the media spotlight, many of the narratives that had dominated the public discourse for over four decades disappeared. The new regime worked to de-stigmatize ethnic nationalism, de-legitimize “brotherhood and unity”, and moderate a sense of Yugoslav belonging with ethnic solidarity. Political conversations increasingly referenced the wants, needs and deeds of Serbs, Muslims and Croats, as if these ethnic nations were somehow natural, undisputed and well-defined entities. As I heard more of this ethnic “we” and “they”, it seemed to obscure the Yugoslav “we”. Despite this, the strength of our deeply-felt Yugoslav sentiments ensured that my family and most people with whom we regularly interacted would continue to feel as having no other country than Yugoslavia. Perhaps this emotional commitment was the reason why I recall a general unease regarding the direction of the country but no expression of concern that the very existence of Yugoslavia was in jeopardy.

My family’s resilient refusal to identify with any political community other than a Yugoslav one began to unravel with the violent escalation of the political crisis that took place in the summer of 1991. In late June, Slovenia declared independence, a decision that triggered a JNA attempt to seize border posts in Slovenia and, hence, secure the international borders of Yugoslavia. The results of this operation came as the biggest disturbance to our perceptions of Yugoslav reality to date. JNA, our Army that we believed was invincible, and which we expected to quickly crush the separatists, suffered heavy casualties at the hands of the Slovenian territorial defense forces, and failed to complete the mission. An even bigger shock was the decision of the federal institutions to give up on Slovenia and entirely withdraw from the republic. We wondered how a Yugoslav army could just let a chunk of Yugoslavia go. For me, it represented a disturbing dismemberment of a territorial space that Yugoslav communist

metanarratives, map representations and the oft-repeated motto “from Triglav to Djevdjelija” (the former being a mountain in Slovenia, the latter a town in Macedonia) had turned into an imagined and emotionally felt place of the homeland. Perhaps it was the avoidance of this pain that was still giving us hope that something would be done to restore Slovenia to its proper, “natural” condition as part of Yugoslavia.

The devastating Croatian War, which followed a brief confrontation in Slovenia, seemed to move people in my micro-world from a state of denial to a growing acceptance that Yugoslavia was no longer a country that we knew. As we watched the TV footage of the destruction in Croatia, I recall my mother arguing with my father that JNA was becoming a Serb nationalist rather than a Yugoslav army. My father, a Captain First Class of the JNA reserves, continued to believe that the Army was only protecting Yugoslavia against the separatists. Yet, the progression of the war seemed to validate my mom’s point. In the fall, JNA decided to remove a five-pointed red star as its symbol, which it had carried from its inception. An even bigger shock came with the TV footages from the front line near Vukovar that showed JNA troops fighting alongside soldiers that carried the *Kokarda* insignia of the *Cetniks*. What we thought to be unthinkable was becoming a reality in front of our eyes. On the one side, there were the Croat and Slovenian separatists. On the other was JNA, which was becoming unrecognizable. My father finally became critical of Milosevic, while my mother became more forthright- JNA was turning into a *Cetnik* Army.

By fall of 1991, my family seemed to have begun a process of constituting new collective self-understandings in place of the old Yugoslav ones, which were crumbling along with the country. The disintegration of Yugoslavia was forcing us to increasingly think about alternative identifications, a process that began to take a toll on personal relations between my parents and their friends and colleagues of Serb ethnic background. In November, SDS organized a Plebiscite that asked ethnic Serbs who lived in Bosnia whether they supported the Party’s policy of remaining in a shortened Yugoslavia without the Slovenes and Croats. The occasion marked a first major political disagreement between my father and one of his best friends, Dusko, who was an ethnic Serb. Dusko asked my dad to participate by voting for Bosnia to remain in what was left of Yugoslavia on a separate ballot that was designated for non-Serbs, while my dad opposed the vote on the grounds that such a rump state would not be a “real” Yugoslavia. My mother, a

head nurse at a pediatric hospital, was coming home with stories of the divisions at her workplace that followed ethnic lines, with her Serb colleagues congregating and speaking silently, or abruptly ending conversations when non-Serbs approached them. Sometime in late 1991, ethnic differentiations began to penetrate my school life. I recall the talk of students having a right to take ethno-religious holidays as days off, with each choosing a holiday that was her or his own. My mom told me that a Muslim holiday, Bajram (also known as Eid), was the one that I may be able to take off. I also discovered that many of my classmates were somehow different from me in this regard, with some marking Christmas rather than Bajram. My best friend Damir was the same, however, as his grandparents also told him that his holiday would be Bajram.

Parallel to the radicalizing ethnic differentiations, the Yugoslav republic in which we lived, Bosnia-Herzegovina, was acquiring new relevance as a source of a political identity. In December of 1991, my father brought me a sticker that featured a modified symbol of the Medieval Kingdom of Bosnia, a blue shield with six lily flowers. It was a symbol I hadn't seen before, but which would in the following weeks frequently show up in newspapers and magazines, and eventually come to represent my own identity. We began hearing more and more about Bosnia's long lost history as a state, a discourse that was challenging our entrenched perceptions of Bosnia as little more than a Yugoslav republic in which we lived. With the growing realization that Yugoslavia as we knew it had been lost, the idea that we could reconstitute a sense of national belonging by identifying with the part of Yugoslavia in which we lived was gaining in emotional resonance. By March of 1992, it had convinced my parents to attend the Bosnian independence referendum, and vote "yes". When they cast their votes, they did not see it as a contribution to Bosnia's secession from Yugoslavia, or to Muslim ethno-national interests. Quite the opposite; they did so to resist the nationalists who dismembered Yugoslavia from absorbing the republic in which they lived. At least, in the latter case, they had little more of a say. Even after the referendum, they still clung onto the hope that some form of Yugoslavia would be restored.

In late March 1992, we began hearing rumors that Serb nationalist were planning an attack on Sarajevo as a way to decapitate the Bosnian state in its infancy. My father dismissed them, confidently asserting that JNA, or what was left of it, would act to prevent any violence in the Capital: "Maybe there will be problems in some villages in the countryside, but the Army

would not allow it in Sarajevo, no way”. However, the events in our immediate surroundings quickly proved him wrong. On April 4<sup>th</sup>, on the eve of Bosnia’s international recognition, we woke up to an armed checkpoint near Vrbanja, a bridge that is located in front of the building in which I lived with my parents. I remember walking by the checkpoint that day without disruptions, observing four individuals who wore the red blue and white Serb ethnic insignia on their blue uniforms. I later understood that those were the policemen of the nascent police force of the Serb Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a Bosnian Serb statelet unilaterally proclaimed by SDS. The next day, on April 5<sup>th</sup>, my dad and I joined tens of thousands of ordinary Bosnians who gathered in front of the building of the Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina to demand a peaceful resolution to the crisis. As we were leaving the gathering, which was less than a hundred meters away from our home, we heard gunshots and saw a scene of thousands of people falling to the ground. After making it home, we saw that TV Sarajevo broadcasted the event, and learned that the shots were fired at the crowd by SDS gunmen located in the nearby “Holiday Inn”. The Bosnian police restored order by entering the hotel and capturing the gunmen. However, the worst part of the violence was still to come. A group of protesters branched off to forcibly remove the checkpoint near Vrbanja Bridge, the same one that my mother and I walked by a day earlier. I watched from my window as Serb policemen opened fire from the checkpoint, sending into a panicked retreat the unarmed crowd that had begun crossing the bridge. Some of the protesters were pulling back with them several others who had fallen to the ground. We would later learn that two of them, Suada Dilberovic and Olga Sucic, were dead. They are considered by many today as the first fatalities of the Bosnian War.

The events of April 5<sup>th</sup> marked the beginning of continuous armed confrontations in the part of Sarajevo in which I lived. While there was a lot of military activity in my neighborhood, which happened to turn into a front line, we saw and heard very little of the ethnic dimension of the conflict. An armed group loyal to the Bosnian government established a post at one of the corners of our building closest to the Vrbanja Bridge. Some members of the group wore uniforms, others were in civilian clothes, and all wore the blue shield with lilies of the medieval Bosnian kingdom. Some of them were our neighbors. Their non-Muslim names, Goran, Narcis and Mladen, belie the Muslim ethnic label that SDS was at this time attaching to its enemy. On the other side of the bridge was the area patrolled by the loyalists of SDS. Despite their self-identification, I don’t remember a single instance of anyone in my surroundings referring to

these formations as Serbs. When people talked about them, they used the term *Cetniks*. It only made sense to differentiate the two, as there were more than a few ethnic Serbs who fought against them. While the month of April 1992 marks the beginning of violence in Sarajevo, the conflict was kept at a relatively low intensity. Damir and I stopped attending school, but we walked freely around my neighborhood, and even spent time with armed groups that were congregating near our building. The sporadic skirmishes and shelling became a daily occurrence, but they would most often begin after dark and cease by the morning. In addition to the paramilitaries and the police, the streets were also patrolled by JNA, an armed force that I still felt as my own. The sight of its vehicles, some of which still bore the five-pointed red star, continued to trigger pleasing memories of the mighty virtuous Army born out of the anti-fascist resistance.

This emotional memory would radically change with the traumatic events that took place on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. It was early afternoon when several loud explosions shook our building. We looked through the window only to see a column of JNA tanks on the opposite side of the Vrbanja Bridge whose guns had been turned in our direction. It was the beginning of a five or six hour-long firefight that wrecked destruction to our neighborhood and marked the beginning of the full-blown siege that would terrorize Sarajevo for three and a half years. We spent the first three hours or so hiding in the basement together with our neighbors, ducking in fear with each of the countless explosions of JNA tank shells that were hitting either our building or the nearby Parliament complex. With thunderous vibrations, the smell of dust and gunpowder, and the screams of horrified women, for the first time I feared for my life. It was dusk when several soldiers who wore the blue Bosnian shield broke open the back door of our building, loudly told us that the upper floors were on fire, and escorted us to a safer shelter in the neighboring building. Parallel to the events in our vicinity, another battle was taking place near the JNA headquarters in the old part of the town that had been besieged by the loyalists of the Bosnian government. My uncle Mirsad, the same person who in the summer of 1990 pleaded for the JNA to remove the nationalist Croat government, was now part of the besieging force, fighting for an independent Bosnian state. On May 5<sup>th</sup>, we learned that he died during the battle, in the explosion of a rocket propelled grenade fired by the JNA.

My parents and I eventually survived the battle of May 2<sup>nd</sup> physically unscathed, but our emotional dispositions were fundamentally changed. The trauma shattered old and produced new perceptions: of Bosnian soldiers, which managed to hold off the JNA on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, as our Army and guardian, and of JNA as a despised foreign force. This rapid restructuring of heroes and villains was also helping us reconstitute our national “self”. The confusion caused by the loss of Yugoslavia gave way to a clear, intense Bosnian identity. In the following weeks, our sense of belonging to a Muslim ethnic nation also grew amid the news of widespread ethnic cleansing and the killings of Muslims throughout Bosnia. Everyone who could conceivably be perceived as an ethnic Muslim now became a potential target of Serb nationalists. As this raised our awareness of Muslim ethnic background, the Koran prayers my grandmother taught me, the holidays I marked, and the beliefs and lifestyles of my grandparents acquired new meaning.

After the events of May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the besieging Serb nationalist forces intensified their indiscriminate shelling of Sarajevo. In their interpretation, they were fighting against Muslim fundamentalists who were guilty of attempting to secede Bosnia from Yugoslavia. In September, one of the thousands of shells they fired at the city killed Damir, my best friend who only a few months earlier had no awareness of his Muslim ethnic background. His death came four weeks after another tragedy, caused by a shell that exploded meters away from my mother, myself and several of our acquaintances. It killed a child, a woman, a man and left my mom permanently handicapped. I was more fortunate, with only a small piece of shrapnel piercing through my leg. I watched as the blood poured through a tear in the fabric, and covered several letters of a large inscription on my sweatpants. It was a word that signified a lost nation and a dying identity- “Jugoslavija”.

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