

INTRODUCTION

[or, Towards an Anthropology of Shared Concerns]



In the summer of 2009, I made an unexpected appearance in a Sarajevo newspaper. Illustrated by a photo capturing me in overacting teaching mode in front of a group of course participants, an article reported on that year's Regional Peace Academy under the title 'Far from normal life'.¹ Throughout my work in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)² since 2000, and in Serbia and Croatia before that, references to 'normal lives' have been ubiquitous and, without exception, positive. During my 2008–10 ethnographic research for this book in Sarajevo, this emic term again emerged as a signpost for a particularly important shared concern. On the one hand, in a forward-looking sense, it was the most common way in which people phrased their hopes and fears for the future: 'We just want a normal life'. To say this was to remove any need for explanation of what that life would look like – it was just normal – and the word 'just' denoted the perceived modesty of this desire, sharply set off against present conditions, which were believed not to allow the fulfilment of even such humble expectations. On the other hand, in a backward-looking sense, I found 'normal' to be a very common term to appraise previous lives in Yugoslav BiH. This again suggested self-explanatory consensus and modest criteria of evaluation, converging in an affirmation of the comparative superiority of conditions 'before' with regard to their facilitation of 'normal lives'.

A booklet produced at the tenth anniversary of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, which brought an end to almost four years of military violence in BiH (Helsinkiški parlament građana 2005), provides a sensitive insight into just how widely shared this concern was. Based on five hundred short street interviews across the country, it conveys the stark sense of entrapment that prevailed. Asked what they expected for their future, the vast majority of interviewees indicated strong limitations both in terms of what they felt they could expect

and in terms of the social reach of their hopes. Apart from the many who said they did not expect anything at all as long as the political situation did not change, most mentioned hopes for health, employment, education and family continuity. Many said they hoped to 'earn their pensions' and the most frequent reply transferred hopes to the next generation. Very few respondents formulated any hopes beyond their households. 'Normal lives' functioned as a very common object of yearning and as an indicator of the modesty of normative standards. Yet few felt that such lives were about to appear on the horizon. Indeed, the sense of lack of improvement in their predicaments, diagnosed as intimately related to the (geo)political stagnation and dysfunctionality of Dayton BiH, was itself a key pattern.³ If anything, the sense that one was not going anywhere had intensified during my research a few years later. In the booklet, when asked what he most frequently talked about with people, a forty-year-old hairdresser summarised the core of many ordinary conversations and public interventions during my research: he mostly talked, he said, about 'when things will improve' [*kada će ovo na bolje*: litt. when will this (move) towards better].

Based on research in an apartment complex in the outskirts of Sarajevo, this book is an attempt to ethnographically pry open such yearnings for 'normal lives' (a term I use exclusively in descriptive fashion) and the political reasonings they entailed. I focus on the embedding of life trajectories in the political ordering of sociality because 'normal lives' were widely believed to require 'a normal state'. Charting a narrative course through experiences of city transport, schooling, building maintenance, clientelism, war and geopolitics, this book shall time and again return to the questions raised by seemingly self-explanatory statements that one had once lived a 'normal life' and that all one wanted was to live a 'normal life' – nothing more and, importantly, nothing less, than that.

Shared Concerns: 'Normal Lives' and the State in Dobrinja

Most Sarajevans live in the city's post-Second World War settlements, of which the furthest outlying apartment complex is called Dobrinja. Dobrinja was built on agricultural land, in planned phases from the late 1970s onwards. While it contains a section with detached private houses, also relatively recent but known as *mahala* (a term more commonly used for hillside city quarters surrounding the Ottoman-era *čaršija* – the commercial centre), most of the settlement consists of

planned apartment blocks, relatively low-rise due to the proximity of BiH's main airport. A part of Dobrinja was erected as a press village for the 1984 Olympic Winter Games and the last prewar buildings were completed shortly before the 1992–95 war. During and after my research, this apartment complex was expanding again. The prewar construction of Dobrinja had unfolded within Yugoslav self-management socialism, financed mainly by so-called socialist giants, large socially owned firms that allocated inheritable tenancy rights to workers who paid contributions into special funds. The 1991 census found no absolute majority of any national grouping amongst Dobrinja's inhabitants, who were reputed to be relatively well educated and to have a predominantly middle-income profile.⁴ Solidarity housing policies reserved some flats for lower-income households. Most of Dobrinja's prewar population of over thirty-two thousand consisted of young households with children who had come from other parts of Sarajevo.

During the 1992–95 war (see Narrative Glossary below), Dobrinja was almost entirely encircled by Serbian nationalist forces, who also took full control over the easternmost section of the settlement. Later, I explore how this proximity to the siege line and the ensuing isolation from the rest of the city during the first months of the violence – a kind of siege within the siege – informed a specific war experience.



FIGURE 0.1. The logo of the 1984 Olympic Winter Games on a central Dobrinja apartment block (photo by Vanja Čelebičić, 2014)

At the time of my research, damage in Dobrinja remained extensive and visible. Due to wartime shelling, leaking roofs posed a widespread problem. Many buildings had been reconstructed, often at least partly with foreign humanitarian aid, but some flats were still uninhabitable. In the flat above the one where I lived, for example, outer walls had been repaired but its inside was bare concrete. Immediately beyond this building, the so-called Inter-Entity Boundary Line – dividing Dayton BiH into its two war-produced entities – ran through the easternmost section of the apartment complex. Hence, while living in one entity, the Federation of BiH, I looked out over the other: Republika Srpska.⁵

It is from this vantage point in the outskirts of the Sarajevo agglomeration that I embarked on my ethnographic study. I lived in Dobrinja from February to August 2008 and from February to June 2010, with shorter visits before, in between and after.⁶ So, who did I live amongst in Dobrinja, and how did these Dobrinjci live? I now sketch some aggregate patterns, to be elaborated upon throughout the book.

Who lived in Dobrinja? Amongst the scarce available figures for this apartment complex, the most exact ones are election results. In 2008 (local) and 2010 (general) elections, SDP (Socijaldemokratska partija) – a party with a less ethnonationally defined programme than other main parties – attracted by far the largest proportion of votes



FIGURE 0.2. A Dobrinja building several years after reconstruction (photo by Vanja Čelebičić, 2010)

here. This relative electoral dominance of the successor party to the Yugoslav League of Communists, then in opposition in most of BiH's numerous parliaments, was particularly notable amongst people with longstanding residence in Dobrinja, who are at the centre of this book. Further, in terms of population statistics, adding up the 2007 records of the four local communes in Dobrinja we arrive at a total of 24,589 inhabitants, of which over 53 per cent were women. Compared to the prewar situation, the total population of Dobrinja, as that of Sarajevo and BiH as a whole, had thus dropped dramatically. The nationality composition also changed strongly due to in- and out-migration. In the absence of a census, no confirmed figures existed but those that did circulate suggested that, despite the prewar and wartime exodus of most people declaring Serbian nationality (some of whom moved to the settlement's eastern outskirts), Dobrinja's population still remained less nationally homogenised than that of many other places in BiH. On the basis of 2007 figures from local communes, we reach these proportions: 77 per cent Bosniaks, 12 per cent Serbs, 8 per cent Croats and 3 per cent Others. I have been unable to find out how these percentages were reached and, if they involved a survey, how questions were phrased. Moreover, the secretary responsible for keeping them told me herself that population records had never been systematically updated. She suspected all figures – not just those concerning nationality – were roughly missing their targets by a third, but she did not hazard a guess in which direction. As we shall see in this book, such poor legibility of the population was of concern not only to state administrators, from whom this was to be expected, but also to many others.

The lack of reliable statistics was reflected in all other government organs whose mandate covered Dobrinja: those of the municipality of Novi grad, the City of Sarajevo, the Canton of Sarajevo, the Federation of BiH, the state of BiH and the in-country EU supervisory agencies. This is therefore a good point at which to apologise for the sense of bewilderment that readers may experience due to my dense references to BiH's labyrinthine administrative-territorial structure in the early parts of this book. A rational, pyramidal organigram of BiH's government apparatus as stipulated in the Dayton constitution would have served as a more conventional and easier overture, but instead of starting out with such a 'view from nowhere', I will provide this only in chapter 4. Until then I attempt to introduce the reader to BiH statecraft in ways that reflect my ethnographic findings as closely as possible. If 'the state' failed to establish a high degree of legibility of the population, people in BiH, in turn, found that the

state remained opaque from their perspective.⁷ Yet at the same time its categories were ever present. In the course of this book I aim to bring the institutional sites of statecraft in BiH into view in the manner in which (and insofar as) they emerged in the pursuits of Dobrinjci to attain 'normal lives'. More often than not they will therefore appear as undifferentiated parts of a confusing, muddled and always incomplete mirage that hovers over yearnings for 'normal lives'. Conveying initial disorientation and even lasting bewilderment, I am afraid, is a necessary dimension of my approach. No one in Dobrinja had an organigram of Dayton BiH on the wall and no one consulted one before trying to sort out a pension, reporting a burglary, attempting to avoid a tax payment or applying for a building permit. At this stage, I thus plead for patience and ask the reader to take me on my word that the frustration of virtual wandering through an incomprehensible state-scape has its merits in terms of ethnographic evocation. People in Dobrinja know the feeling all too well.

Refraining from an initial organigram, let me instead offer an initial approach to the question of *how* people in Dobrinja lived on aggregate. This overview – not based on ethnography, but not quite a view from nowhere either – is assembled from 2007–08 figures sourced from local communes in Dobrinja, from Novi grad municipality and from Dayton BiH's dispersed offices for statistics.⁸ Again, due to the poor reliability of official statistics, large grains of salt are in order. Dobrinja belongs to Novi grad municipality, one of the most populous in BiH with some one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants (ca. 10 per cent down from 1991), including ca. twenty thousand displaced persons. The only Sarajevo municipality, and one of a few in BiH with a positive natality/mortality balance, it inherited one of the largest numbers (36,500) of socially owned flats in the country, about 90 per cent of which had been privatised by 2007. Most had been 'bought' for certificates by the tenancy rights holders (and many had then sold them on). Although Novi grad was ranked as one of the relatively more prosperous municipalities in BiH, only around 16 per cent of its inhabitants were officially employed. Their registered average monthly net wage was 807 convertible marks (KM; €412) versus just over 925 KM (€472) across the Canton of Sarajevo and 740 KM (€378) across the Federation of BiH.⁹ Many employees also received a (federal) average of 262 KM (€134) for meals and transport. Fourteen per cent of the population of Novi grad was registered as unemployed, but only a fraction received any benefits on this basis (ca. 300 KM [€153] for a period of three months to a maximum of two years). More than 6,500 people lived in households of war-disabled

persons or fallen soldiers. Many of them received some (non means-tested) war-related allowances, especially for war disability (at 100 per cent disability, 805 KM [€411]) or as families of fallen soldiers. While much lower allowances existed for the category of civilian victims of war (at 100 per cent disability, 300 KM [€153]), these were only paid out to some with the highest percentages of disability and were very hard to obtain. These and other war-related payments were also widely perceived as a major tool of clientelism by political party structures: many people received nothing, some received only small amounts and the lion's share was paid out to a small, well-off category. Finally, Novi grad housed around twenty thousand pensioners (ca. 16 per cent of the population). In 2007, the average monthly pension across the Federation was 340 KM (€173) and half of all pensioners received the minimal pension: 282 KM (€144). Other (means-tested) welfare payments were extremely difficult to obtain and varied from a few dozen KM, for most beneficiaries, to maximum a few hundred KM for a select few.

There are different ways to form an idea of the relative value of these figures. First, we can juxtapose them with the last official amount (2007) for a four-member household 'basket' for nutrition and hygiene: 528 KM (€270). While it would be tough to fulfil monthly needs of only food, drink and toiletries with this sum, note that this official basket does not cover even the most modest standards of 'normal lives': housing, utilities, clothing, health care, education, transport, and so on. Figures for an alternative, so-called 'syndical' household basket that circulated in those days hovered around 1,500 KM (€767). By any measure, then, BiH counted one of the largest proportions of people living under or around the poverty line in Europe, as was regularly pointed out in the media. This brings us to the second way to assess the above income figures in relative terms. On a global scale, clearly, people in BiH were on aggregate not amongst the poorest. Despite a widespread rhetoric of 'struggle for survival', relatively few were hungry. Yet, as in other post-Yugoslav states, the main points of reference were Western European standards and recollections of lives in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). In that respect, as we shall see throughout this book, almost all my interlocutors assessed their current lives in terms of a dramatic downturn. Under the authority of the League of Communists, Yugoslav workers' self-management had revolved around a 'mixed' system of planning and market mechanisms, embodied in the specific decentralised form of 'social ownership' (for a critical analysis, see Woodward 1995). Regardless of many discrepancies

between the rhetoric and the practice of Yugoslav socialism, which they rarely dwelled on, Dobrinjci with longstanding residence in the apartment complex retained a notion of previous ‘normal lives’ in positive contrast with their current predicaments. As we shall see with regard to a variety of issues throughout the book, they recalled lives that had been relatively predictable: their flow had been securely gridded in the institutions of Yugoslav socialist self-management, which bore all the hallmarks of a twentieth-century developmentalist project. All but two of my interlocutors had originally moved into their flats through workplace-centred housing allocation policies and become owners after the war. In the late Yugoslav period, marked by considerable unemployment rates and inflation (again, almost never mentioned), at least one member of each of those households – and often more than one – had been permanently employed in a firm or institution that had provided them not only with a modern flat, but also, in almost all cases, with higher wages (even in absolute terms) than they could earn today, when prices were much higher. Add to this a wider and more inclusive range of free services in social protection, health care, education and leisure, and it is clear that the exasperation with current lives must be understood in relation to recollections of previous ones.¹⁰ As we shall see, this is true not only for living standards, broadly understood, but also for the core topic of this book: the relationship between yearnings for ‘normal lives’ and the spatiotemporal ordering processes of statecraft.

It was with these emic conceptions of ‘normal lives’ in mind that I embarked on an ethnographic study of statecraft in BiH. Initially, inspired by a flourishing ethnography of people’s everyday encounters with state agencies – their ‘sightings of the state’ (Corbridge et al. 2005: 9) – I planned to trace interactions in specific interfaces of public provision: education, pensions and health care. My focus was to be on neighbourliness and inequality. In that way, I wanted to reconstruct people’s hopes and fears with regard to statecraft in this apartment complex, from its inception in late socialist Yugoslav BiH, over its fate during war, to the situation in Dayton BiH. I did work in local schools but I soon reconfigured my project. For one thing, public city transport unexpectedly emerged as a productive interface for observational ethnographic study, allowing me to work through ‘episodes’ of heightened engagement with statecraft (Wedeen 1999a). Moreover, I realised that a focus on ‘sightings’ failed to grasp a crucial dimension of the social life of the state in Dobrinja. With regard to statecraft, namely, a much more striking pattern emerged: the state featured as a central category in my interlocutors’ attempts to reason through

their predicament in Dayton BiH, but rather than to actual sightings, they insistently drew my attention to their *desire* for sightings. They wished to see the state and be seen by it. A projected 'normal state' was at the heart of their yearnings for 'normal lives'.

To deepen insights into this dimension of lives in Dayton BiH, I expanded on my participant observation by including forty in-depth interviews on everyday practices, concerns and expectations with regard to life trajectories and statecraft in Dobrinja from its initial construction in Yugoslav BiH to the present.¹¹ Apart from a willingness to participate, interviewees therefore shared one characteristic: they had all moved to this settlement in the 1970s or 1980s. Almost all of them had resided there during the war years too, although a few had spent short periods elsewhere. While forty interviewees cannot support any claims to statistical representativeness, I purposively included people of different profiles along lines of gender, age, occupation, wealth, (ethno)nationality, religious practice and party membership. I chose such a broad sweep of interlocutors in order to investigate concerns that were shared by different categories of people in Dobrinja. Let me now discuss this against the background of widely circulating portraits of Sarajevo.

Beyond 'Trivision'

A mosque! A Serbian orthodox church! A catholic cathedral! A synagogue! And all that in close proximity right in the centre of one European capital city! I can see all four buildings through the laundry that hangs out to dry on the sixth-floor communal front terrace of the building where I am writing this. Exhilaration at this architectural embodiment of cultural-religious diversity is a favourite way of introducing guests to Sarajevo in tourist publications, media and literary descriptions. In BiH, where religious heritage is the main marker of nationality categories, each of these iconic Ottoman or Habsburg era places of Abrahamic worship is associated with a different national grouping of the city's population: Bosniaks (until 1993 known as Bosnian Muslims), Serbs, Croats and Jews. Due to Sarajevo's widely broadcast fate in the 1990s war, it is often a concern with such national diversity that channels the outside gaze onto the city. Whether phrased as a measure of multiculturalism, tolerance, coexistence, hybridity or cosmopolitanism, some commentators lament the relative demise of that diversity, while others marvel at its relative persistence and at the way in which Sarajevans negotiate it.

During my research, a ‘groupist’ notion of nationality (Brubaker 2002) was crucial to political debates in and around BiH as a categorical logic and as an institutionalised vector of representation. Such considerations have historically always played an important role in the government of the BiH polity as part of larger formations (Bougarel 1996b). Yet, in Dayton BiH, with largely nationally homogenised populations in its various subpolities, national groupism had been intensified and to a large extent territorialised. A joke that did the rounds in Dayton BiH illustrated this. A journalist asks a Bosnian to comment on the political situation in his country. He scratches his head and replies: ‘Mmmm ... I don’t know what to say, I am in three minds about this [*Troumim se*]’. Like in English, the more common phrase refers to being in *two* minds [*dvoumity se*] and the joke hinges on mocking a structural feature of Dayton BiH: the organisation of everything ‘by three’. This threeway mode of vision and division (‘trivision’?) is the driving logic of the Dayton ‘ethnopolis’ (Mujkić 2007), governed through a constitutionally cemented, foreign-enforced consociation of three nationally defined ‘constituent peoples’: Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs.

In Dayton BiH political institutions and in the mediascape – itself largely divided in three – cleronationalist entrepreneurs eagerly reached for the constitutional trump card of ‘vital national interests’. On aggregate, nationalist rhetoric could mobilise many people for electoral purposes and, more importantly in my view, demobilise alternative politics (see Gagnon 2004). BiH’s capital city was not free of any of this. Yet while war-related inward and outward migrations had drastically reduced face-to-face national–identitarian diversity in everyday lives, I found that many longstanding Dobrinjci routinely refused to inscribe themselves in this matrix. Politically, they often articulated this through affiliation with inclusive BiH citizenship. It was thus partly in reaction to the institutionalised ‘national order of things’ (Malkki 1994) that many Sarajevans had become skilled celebrators of their city’s multiculturalism. While there was often considerable ambiguity in this discursive formation centred on Bosnianness rather than on any of the three ‘constituent peoples’, it is still worth pointing out a contrast. In Banja Luka, the main city in Republika Srpska, which saw no military conflict but was taken right away by Serbian nationalist forces in 1992, many catholic churches and all sixteen mosques were destroyed (Galijaš 2011: 245–54). In besieged Sarajevo the four places of worship mentioned above – and all other ones in the city – remained standing.

Having said that, I contend that a focus on identitarian questions, important as they are, fails to account for very important dimensions of life in Sarajevo or, for that matter, BiH. Ultimately, a lament of the demise of Sarajevo multiculturalism and an insistence on its persistence are two sides of the same coin. Likewise, an 'orthodox' focus on differences between people affiliated with nationality groupings and a 'heterodox' one on fluid, hybrid positionings that bridge those differences both remain within the identitarian *doxa* of Dayton BiH (Bourdieu 1982: 133). In both approaches, a unidimensional emphasis on questions of (ethno)national 'culture' makes its inhabitants appear predominantly, or even exclusively, in the identitarian register institutionalised in the Dayton configuration and consolidated in much foreign media reporting. This is so regardless of whether they feature, in realist–essentialist terms, as representatives of one of BiH's three 'peoples' (Hayden 2007), or, in hybrid terms, as individuals who position themselves 'subversively' across or outside of such categories (Markowitz 2010). In both cases, identity categories are privileged as the relevant matrix of understanding life in BiH and Dayton 'trivision' is reproduced.

In contrast, this book aims to contribute to the collective efforts of ethnographers who have studied social practices as they unfold in postwar, postsocialist Dayton BiH without a priori privileging the identitarian matrix.¹² We all found that many people in BiH did worry, one way or another, about nationality questions, but that this did not always and everywhere predominate in their dealings with opportunities and difficulties, in their hopes and fears for the future. My investigation of people's concerns as they emerge from everyday routines and from their own attempts to reason their way through their predicament in Dobrinja does therefore not presume any primacy of the identitarian register. The main reason for this is empirical: identitarian groupism simply did not emerge as particularly prominent from my encounters. I did not construct my questions in terms of its categories and my Dobrinja interlocutors themselves did not foreground them in their reasonings about 'normal lives' and the role of statecraft therein. More generally, my study simply does not foreground questions of what people are (or, rather, what they say they are, because ethnographic arguments on what *is* necessarily ground their truth claims at least partly in a performative–communicative moment that is frequently glossed over in culturalist and ontologist literature).

Rather than highlighting any identitarian concerns they might well have had, my interlocutors guided my interest towards their social

locations (Green 2005). Following their lead, my argument revolves around where and when their lives unfolded, how they understood this and how they felt this conditioned what they were able to do or not. In their reasonings about such questions, my Dobrinja interlocutors attributed a central place to the state. How then, given the institutionalised ubiquity of Dayton trivision, could those reasonings develop relatively obliviously to issues of national identification? To understand this, I suggest an analytical distinction between the *statehood of BiH* and *statecraft in BiH*. Questions of the *statehood of BiH* revolve around what the state is, claims to be, and should be. In Dayton BiH, contestations here mainly concerned the legitimacy of the very existence of a BiH polity and its administrative–territorial anatomy. These disputes often focused on questions of sovereignty and representation in identitarian terms (whether (ethno)national or ‘civic’-supranational). This book shifts the analytical lens to other questions. My interlocutors, namely, systematically foregrounded reasonings about *statecraft in BiH*. With this latter term I refer to questions of what the state does, claims to do, and should do. Here, I will show, key concerns revolved around the provision of material conditions and temporal structures for the unfolding of ‘normal lives’.

Clearly this is an analytical distinction. Epistemologically, questions of what the state is are intimately related to those of what it does and the distinction does not necessarily emerge empirically as an either/or choice. One and the same person can of course be deeply concerned with issues of both what I call *statehood* and what I call *statecraft*, and he or she may not differentiate between the registers that I analytically separate here. In my earlier work with minority returnees in northeast BiH (e.g., Jansen 2008a) they often emerged as part of one and the same issue in everyday reasonings. For example, many problems that Bosniak returnees in Republika Srpska encountered in terms of health care and educational provision were directly implicated in disputes on the legitimacy of the national–territorial anatomy of BiH. Here, questions of what state institutions were doing, claimed to be doing and should be doing could not really be detached from questions of what they were, claimed to be and should be. Concerns with *statecraft in BiH* (e.g., should there be a school or a medical centre in this or that village? Which repairs were required for it to be functional? How many people should be employed to secure health and education provisions? etc.) tended to be informed by and sucked into conflicts on the legitimacy of *statehood of BiH* (e.g., should BiH exist? Should Republika Srpska exist? How much autonomy should the entities have? Which government organs

should control education and health policy?). In the process, identitarian categories invariably moved to a central position.

While less sharply so, this tendency will emerge as relevant in the course of my study of Dobrinja too. Like in Belgium, where I grew up, a crucial strategy of political manoeuvring by competing politicians consisted of invoking the (il)legitimacy of configurations of statehood in order to deflect responsibilities with regard to statecraft. Let me explain how this worked in Dayton BiH in a simplified manner. Surveys, media reports, ethnographic studies and even the most cursory, random conversations with Bosnians across the country showed that most people wanted jobs, proper health care, a stop to crooked privatisation and other corruption, a fairer distribution of resources, quality education, a functioning administration, an effective judicial apparatus, and so on. They were exasperated with a state that was not doing what they felt it should be doing. These concerns they shared. Many, of course, were also keen to express their dissatisfaction with what the state was and should be, in terms of national representation, territorial organisation and the legitimacy of BiH as a polity itself. Here, starkly different positions existed, often along lines of national identification. Popular preoccupations thus foregrounded complaints about inadequate statecraft, many of which were shared, and anxieties about statehood, many of which were opposed to each other. Yet the former were rarely successfully politically articulated: in the strategies of domestic and foreign functionaries, disputes on the statehood of BiH overshadowed shared concerns regarding what the state was doing and should be doing. As we shall see, the overall structure of such manoeuvring was that 'all roads led to Dayton', that is, to entrenched divisions on the legitimacy of BiH as a polity. In that way, again not unlike the situation in Belgium, the ruling caste could put concerns with statecraft on standby. This, I suggest, was not a neutral, innocent phenomenon, but a political intervention in itself.

And so is my response, embodied in the analytical approach in this book. Key to my study of Dobrinja yearnings for 'normal lives' and the state is that there was no necessary correlation between one particular take on the statehood of BiH and one particular position on statecraft in BiH. A concern with legibility, functionality, discipline, predictability, provision, and so on (i.e., with what the state was doing or should be doing) could be combined with any one position on what the state of BiH was or should be. Different people across the country could, and did, foreground the need for proper public health care, city transport and efficient administration and combine this with any particular view on the (il)legitimacy of BiH as a polity.

Were my Dobrinja interlocutors preoccupied with questions of legitimacy of Dayton BiH's national-territorial anatomy? Certainly. Did their concerns about what the state was doing and should be doing often shift to worries about what it was and should be? Yes, and this book shows how this occurred. Yet a key political intervention of my study is that it works against the tendency to *automatically* slip from discussions of statecraft straight into discussions of statehood. Analytically distinguishing between them I purposely slow down the interpretative process and pause to investigate, first and foremost, what we could call the 'first degree' of the concerns with the state that I encountered in Dobrinja: reasonings about statecraft in BiH. In this book I attempt to treat concerns with statecraft primarily as concerns in themselves, only then tracing how they were implicated in questions of BiH statehood. Significantly, this allows us to discern a degree of sameness in the preoccupations of people across post-Yugoslav former frontlines. Research in Republika Srpska (Brković 2012a) and in Serbia (Greenberg 2010, 2011; Simić 2009; Spasić 2013) during the same decade has uncovered reasonings about statecraft that are remarkably similar to the ones described in this book. Many of the concerns I foreground were thus shared across entity and state borders. Yet, at the time of writing, within BiH, the Dayton institutional framework – with its privileging of questions of statehood in the identitarian register – rendered it unlikely for such concerns to be self-consciously articulated as 'shared'. For now, they appeared as parallel at best.

What then did people in Dobrinja do during my research period? Well, usually they were not voting in elections, waving flags, attending religious services or singing anthems – all of which would in many cases likely be charged by identitarian divisions in Dayton BiH. Most of the time, they worked or they sought work, they attended classes at school or university, they slept, they talked on the phone or communicated over the internet, they cooked, they ate, they played, they shopped, they shovelled snow, they watched football, they queued at post offices, they chatted over coffee. In Dobrinja, many also spent much time waiting for buses. If this all sounds pretty 'normal', a key pattern that emerged from my observations and conversations was a worry that 'normal lives' were unattainable in Dayton BiH. Part one of this book, entitled 'Figuring "normal lives"', ethnographically pries open this shared concern, proposing ways to capture the workings of the emic term 'normal lives' in anthropological terms. Chapter 1 situates my analysis of 'normal lives' through critical engagement with writings on normality, hope and temporal reasoning. Starting from



FIGURE 0.3. A central street of Dobrinja, a key site for shops, services and the *korzo* [evening stroll] (photo by Vanja Čelebičić, 2010)



FIGURE 0.4. The small stream *Dobrinja*, which runs through the middle of the settlement, another favourite for a stroll (photo by Vanja Čelebičić, 2014)

worries that life was anything but ‘normal’, it explains my decision to follow my interlocutors in approaching questions of normality in terms of lives, and my choice of the notion of ‘yearning’ over that of ‘hope’. Deploying ethnographic material on prewar, wartime and postwar engagements with city transport, chapter 2 explains how Dobrinjci reasoned that any approximation of ‘normal lives’ would require an ordering framework. To analytically grasp this I introduce the concept of ‘gridding’, allowing me to embed the long periods spent waiting for buses in a form of meta-waiting for the movement statecraft was supposed to entail. In critical dialogue with a libertarian paradigm in the anthropology of the state, chapter 3 develops this further through an analysis of Dobrinja wartime schooling and other forms of self-organised upward and outward griddings as collective attempts to recalibrate the abnormality of lives under siege, with a focus on its temporal dimensions.

Gdje To Ima?

Since yearning and its temporality emerged as a core theme in my research, I ended up with a less developed focus on practices within and around state agencies than initially intended. Having defended a privileging of ‘what people do’ in the previous section, I concede this regretfully, but I also wish to offer a justification. What if people continually impress on an ethnographer that most things they do are removed from what they consider ‘normal lives’? What if they systematically relate this to their particular spatiotemporal location in Dayton BiH, which, they insist, renders any ‘doing’ extremely difficult and condemns them to ‘waiting’ instead? And what if this ‘waiting’ is so all-encompassing and unspecified as to be closer to ‘yearning’? These specificities, combined with a purposively broad sweep in my selection of interlocutors, made the shared concern with ‘normal lives’ accessible to me less through action and more through (non-)verbal communication. It was in rants and laments, in sighs and silences, that ‘normal lives’, and, therefore, as we shall see, statecraft took centre stage.

Like many others in the post-Yugoslav states, people in Dobrinja complained a lot and most felt they had a lot to complain about. Around kitchen tables and at bus stops, in cafés and on markets, in workplaces and in schools, people expressed worries about food prices, utility bills, health care, pensions, clientelism, unemployment, schooling, safety, city transport, and so on. Many such shared

concerns could not be identified as specific to BiH but Dobrinjci themselves nevertheless frequently insisted on their uniqueness.¹³ 'Our' achievements and our problems were then presented as off the scale of any comparison. Our mountains and our rivers were more beautiful, our diaspora children beat all others at maths in the U.S., our coffee was tastier, our fruit juicier, our humour more humorous, and our socialising more social. A naïve foreigner may wonder 'more beautiful, smarter, tastier, juicer, funnier and more social than *what* exactly?', but I never had the courage to ask this heretic question. Above all, I read in these statements a desire to regain a dignified place on the world map, threatened and deformed by experiences of the last two decades. Importantly, by the same exceptionalist token, whatever was wrong with our country was also declared to be much more wrong than it could possibly be anywhere else. In Dayton BiH, to crown such exasperated declarations that something in the country was incomparably wonderful or hopeless, speakers often leant back, raised their voice, hands and possibly eyebrows, and theatrically exclaimed: *Pa gdje to ima!?* This rhetorical question literally means 'Well where does that exist?', and the implicit answer was that, surely, 'that' could not possibly exist anywhere else but here and now.

A phrase containing this answer also circulated widely as a tool of exceptionalist self-description: *To nigdje nema!* [That doesn't exist anywhere (else)!]. Yet clearly, the exclamation *Pa gdje to ima!?* elicited no substantive replies. Indeed, it did not allow them, as I learned when I jokingly started responding to friends with: 'Well ... for example in Belgium ...' Still, the question of location in *Pa gdje to ima!?* did reflect a pattern in people's trawling for answers to the question of what hindered their pursuit of 'normal lives'. My Dobrinja interlocutors overwhelmingly did this through evocation of Dayton BiH as an 'abnormal' spatiotemporal constellation. Generally, this exceptionalist mode did not imply that they considered people in BiH to be inherently unique. In fact, their insistence that they simply desired to live 'normal lives' positioned them as not very exceptional at all—again indicating a desire to regain a dignified place in a wider world. What they identified as exceptional was that their spatiotemporal location constituted a predicament in itself (see Čelebičić 2013). So it was their living-in-Dayton-BiH, they argued, that prevented them from living 'normal lives'. Note that this does not simply evoke topography ('BiH') but also a historical conjuncture ('Dayton'). In terms of the 'where', they impressed on me that Dayton BiH's position in the European Union's (EU) semiperiphery was yet another permutation of

centuries of Bosnian in-betweenness. As for the 'when', most felt that Dayton BiH defied any solid qualification as 'postwar', which itself complicated the formulation of reasonings about any 'pre-' dimension. Lives in Dayton BiH were thus considered lives in the 'meantime'. This Meantime, a term I will capitalise from now on, forms the foil against which the yearnings for 'normal lives' I explore in this book must be understood. *Pa gdje to ima!?* then, is an all-encompassing reference to a spatiotemporal location that afflicts one's life and that of one's co-citizens. I call this affliction 'Daytonitis'.

I did not coin the term Daytonitis to draw attention to people's use of medical metaphors or to their coping or resistance strategies relying on such metaphors or on medical treatment.¹⁴ Nor will I pose as a doctor offering a medical report of Dayton BiH through the structural-functional image of society as body. Instead, I mobilise some terms from biomedical pathology to make sense of how my interlocutors themselves made sense of their predicament. Dobrinjci routinely launched what we could call political pathologies. If the Ancient Greek *παθος* [*pathos*] means 'pain', 'suffering', but also 'experience', and *λογία* [*logia*] denotes the 'study of', but also 'an account of', these pathologies amounted to studies of suffering that were at once accounts of experience. Clearly, people in Dobrinja did not live by reason alone. They mobilised many different knowledge practices to make sense of their predicament, including, for example, religion, magic, art and, indeed, medicine. Yet in this book I am particularly interested in how they diagnosed it, in political terms. Derived from *δια* [*dia*: through] and *γινωσκειν* [*gignoskein*: to learn], '*διαγινωσκειν*' [*diagignoskein*] means 'to discern, to know thoroughly'. I focus on the way my interlocutors tried to 'take apart' their predicament through political reasoning. This is partly a consequence of my chosen approach but it also reflects the way such reasoning predominated in their interactions with me and with each other in my presence. Everyday life in Sarajevo was characterised by the hyperproduction of talk about politics, focused mainly on the discussion of 'symptoms'. Derived from *συμπτωμα* [*sympptoma*: accident, misfortune, that which befalls], in medicine a symptom is a departure from normal function or feeling as noticed by a patient. It is subjectively felt and can therefore only be captured indirectly. Part two of this book, entitled 'Diagnosing Daytonitis' presents emic Dobrinja diagnoses of the affliction I call Daytonitis around two 'constitutional symptoms' – systemic effects of an affliction that affect the entire body rather than a specific part or organ – that were seen to make 'normal lives' impossible.

Chapter 4 focuses on a symptom that was – in initial diagnoses at least – considered largely internal to Dayton BiH: the lack of a system. This involved a peculiar interplay of structural and moral dimensions. Structurally, the problem was identified as a marked absence of the state in some ways that coexisted with its exaggerated presence in other ways. This resulted in difficulties with locating its gridding capacity and a pervasive sense of abandonment. In the moral dimension, laments on values having been ‘messed up’ by the war and its aftermath existed in tension with lingering suspicions that there might be more longstanding problems with people in BiH themselves. Yet in the accounts of my interlocutors, the ways in which Daytonitis beset their pursuit for ‘normal lives’ did not emerge merely as a matter internal to BiH. Therefore, chapter 5 zooms in on the related constitutional symptom of spatiotemporal entrapment. This concerns spatial entrapment in the EU’s ‘immediate outside’, and exposure to a monitoring outside gaze in a semiprotectorate where everything was experienced as being in suspension. In the Dayton Meantime, the exclamation went, ‘we are pattering in place’. Reasoning on statecraft was thus often temporal reasoning and this chapter foregrounds this temporal dimension of entrapment, investigating the normative value of forward movement in people’s yearnings for ‘normal lives’ on BiH’s projected ‘Road into Europe’.

Part three of this book, entitled ‘Living with Daytonitis’ traces how people in Dobrinja politically engaged with the spatiotemporal affliction of Daytonitis that beset them. It highlights the difficulty in the Dayton Meantime of engaging in any politics beyond party realpolitik due to the fraught interplay between concerns with statecraft in BiH and the statehood of BiH. Taking a considerable step back from the ethnographic material and working with notions of hegemony, fantasy and conviviality, chapter 6 discusses the role of complicity in the persistence of domination by a ruling caste despite massive dissatisfaction. The book ends with an epilogue that revisits its main arguments in the light of two events in Sarajevo during its writing: a sudden winter emergency in 2012 and an equally sudden protest in early summer 2013.

Pathology and Coevality

I am aware that my use of the register of affliction and biomedicine carries a risk. Is this a case of yet another Balkanist othering by a westerner through the language of pathology? Is this an ethnocentric

proposal to measure BiH politics by Weberian ideal-typical standards of stateness, for example, or to assess the normality of 'normal lives'? No, it is not. It is not *my* analysis that introduces the register of pathology into how Dobrinjci reason through their predicament. Instead, this occurs on their initiative. As Ssorin-Chaikov (2003: 9) has argued in his study of the state in Siberia, 'discourses of failure [of the state] highlight ... a social life of its functionality by dispersing "the state" as a subject of conversation in the minute texture of everyday routine'. Dobrinja perceptions of the failure of statecraft, then, are legitimate objects of analysis: a qualification of Dayton BiH as 'abnormal' is probably the lowest common denominator of all domestic assessments from any possible position in the political landscape. Due to their Eurocentric and linear tendencies, such normative diagnoses are generally treated with suspicion in anthropology. I take them seriously precisely in order to avoid ethnocentrism and patronising. Notably, my interlocutors did not consider westerners to be innocent bystanders in the creation and maintenance of their predicament. My position as someone born, raised and employed in Western Europe often came into play precisely because people in Dobrinja themselves devised accounts that related the symptoms of their unsatisfactory situation to their living-in-Dayton-BiH. This is why I call the affliction they thus discerned 'Daytonitis'.

This is also why I place a strong emphasis on coequality. I employ the term 'shared concerns' to highlight preoccupations that were widespread amongst my interlocutors. Yet, in addition, it indexes an awareness about my own positioning. Even long after I tried to draw the proverbial line under my 'research period' in Dobrinja, my life in Sarajevo – now in the city centre – led me to reflect particularly intensively on coequality and on my commitment to an anthropology that explicitly takes it into account. I continually wish to flag how my Dobrinja interlocutors and I shared a particular historical conjuncture. And this brings me back to the fact that this book does not focus on identitarian questions. In Dobrinja, I did not feel labelled most strongly because, as someone from Western Europe, I was 'culturally different' (although sometimes, in some ways, also that). More often and more strongly, my specific positioning shaped up around the ways in which people associate me with a 'Centre' in a geopolitical constellation that their concerns with 'normal lives' and the state evoked. In Dayton BiH, most reasoning about the state occurred under the looming presence of what was summarised in the notion of *stranci* [foreigners], the collective label for the in-country foreign

intervention agencies, their personnel and their superiors in (mostly) western capitals. Although I was never employed by or affiliated to any of those agencies, my presence always carried the sign of the *stranac*. In my coeval approach, I want to systematically acknowledge this: we shared this historical conjuncture.

In this situation, I could have tried to revalorise the cultural, perhaps even ontological differences between my interlocutors and the western me. Instead, my research confronted me time and again with people impressing on me that they were not quite that different from me. Diagnosing Daytonitis, many insisted that – much more than in cultural difference – the roots of their problems could be found in categorical subordination (Ferguson 2006) as it was articulated in the historical conjuncture we shared. Interested in the importance of both the ‘where’ and the ‘when’ in their reasoning about the state, this has led me to place a greater emphasis on the workings of time. In this way I hope to unearth the significance of temporality from under the identitarian noise that tends to foreground more spatially conceived patterns of cultural difference (Fabian 1983; Buck-Morss 2000). As we saw in the discussion of the exclamation *Pa gdje to ima!?*, I follow my interlocutors to conceive of the specificity of their predicament less as an expression of a transmitted system of meanings and more as one provoked by spatiotemporal location. The key to my analysis of the yearnings for ‘normal lives’ in this book, then, is less that they are Bosnian yearnings and more that they are Dayton BiH yearnings.

I thus foreground the experience of lives in the Dayton Meantime against which such yearnings can be understood. To a degree, I aim to detect what could be called the rules of the game; yet here ‘the game’ is not focused on the reproduction of an existing social configuration but rather on the evocation of a not-yet existing one and, to a certain extent, of one that does not exist anymore. More importantly, however, I want to convey the ‘feel for the game’ and people’s engagement with and investment in the value of the game itself, which Bourdieu calls *illusio* (2003: 147). I aim to show what mattered to my interlocutors’ practice and how it mattered: in what ways shared concerns were indeed shared and of concern. I thus try to make sense of the ways in which people tried to make (political) sense of their situation. The emphasis here is on trying, both for Dobrinjci and for me. Like Ferguson in his study of decline in Zambia, I found that, often, ‘greater ethnographic knowledge revealed only that, in the end, matters were as unclear to “the locals” as they were to me’ (1999: 208). This did not stop Ferguson from

pursuing insights and nor did it prevent me from trying to reason my way through the reasonings of people in Dobrinja in the period from 2008 to 2010.

A NARRATIVE GLOSSARY OF THE WAR OVER SARAJEVO

[This narrative glossary has been quarantined in a box so that readers familiar with BiH might skip it and so that others may easily consult it again while progressing through the book.]

Even for the purposes of this book, this necessarily elliptic attempt to introduce some key terms of the 1992–95 war and the Dayton Peace Agreement in narrative form is only one amongst many possible ones. Yet I do not wish to hide behind an awareness of the selective, constructed nature of historiography to shelter from criticism; until proven wrong by counterargument, I am prepared to stand by what I recount here as a credible narrative of what actually happened. Other important things happened too and other patterns could be highlighted. The question is not whether to be selective – that cannot be avoided – but on which grounds to be so. My guiding principle is practical: what do readers have to know to follow the book’s argument? I therefore focus on Sarajevo – without claiming that its siege is representative of the entire war in BiH. Yet, it would be naïve to think I could start from a blank slate. Readings of the war that employ a straightforward national matrix already dominate amongst English-speaking audiences. To contextualise the relatively low intensity presence of nationality questions in this book, I therefore pay a disproportionate amount of attention to them in this box. This is a paradox I cannot escape.

1990s elections in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) were organised separately in its six republics. In BiH they yielded 36 per cent of the votes for the Bosnian Muslim nationalist Stranka demokratske akcije [Party of Democratic Action, SDA], 30 per cent for the Serbian nationalist Srpska demokratska stranka [Serbian Democratic Party, SDS] and 18 per cent for the Croatian nationalist Hrvatska demokratska zajednica [Croatian Democratic Community, HDZ], with the remaining votes going mainly to nationally undifferentiated reformed communist parties. As a consequence, SDA, SDS and HDZ carried out a threeway division of government positions (see e.g., Anđelić 2003; Bougarel

1996a; Burg and Shoup 1999; Ćurak 2004; Mujkić 2007; Pejanović 2002; Vlaisavljević 2006). Operating with parallel rhetorics of religious revival, free market economics and increased national self-determination as the route to full democracy, and keen to get rid of 'the communists', they thus entered into a *marriage de raison* in which they started the threeway division of people, territory, institutions, arms, capital and most everything else. Yet the very existence of a BiH polity and its status within a Yugoslav (con) federation – its statehood – was disputed within BiH, in Croatia and Serbia, and amongst important players in the so-called international community. In late 1991 and early 1992, in close coordination with the governments of what they considered to be their mother states, SDS and HDZ proclaimed their separate national polities within BiH. SDA favoured a unitary, independent Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Even during their initial cohabitation, focusing on the elimination of non-nationalist alternatives, those parties introduced a military dimension into the struggle between their statemaking projects. With war already raging in Croatia, well before the major clashes in BiH itself, SDS, HDZ and SDA set up parallel structures and formed militias through their local branches and through religious institutional networks. Taking advantage of the decentralised SFRY security setup, each of them soon gained control over police and Territorial Defence infrastructure in areas they dominated. The overwhelming logistical dominance of SDS in the prewar period and in the early phases of the war followed from its position vis-à-vis the now Serbian-dominated Jugoslovenska narodna armija [Yugoslav People's Army, JNA] and from the work of agents sent by the Serbian government. It was also through local SDS chapters that JNA distributed weapons amongst Bosnian Serbs in the lead up to war, while many other people bought them through informal channels. Public mobilisation calling for a non-military, non-nationalist resolution in several BiH towns was ultimately ineffective.

In the spring of 1992, with militia-manned barricades appearing and disappearing, a referendum was held on whether to declare BiH a sovereign state within the borders of the Yugoslav Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina established in the Second World War. With SDA and HDZ, each for reasons of their own, arguing in favour, this proposal received the support

of 62.68 per cent of the total electorate. This equalled almost the entire turnout. In line with SDS calls, a majority of Bosnian Serbs did not take part in the poll but many in the territories it controlled had voted earlier, in November 1991, in a separate plebiscite, to remain within what was left of Yugoslavia, now dominated by the Milošević government of Serbia. On the basis of the referendum outcome, the Sarajevo-based BiH government (now formally abandoned by SDS and later gradually so by HDZ) proclaimed independence. The Republic of BiH (RBiH) was soon widely recognised internationally (most EU states and the U.S. did so on 6 April 1992) but it could not establish a minimally effective presence over its entire territory. Most of northern and eastern BiH, including parts of Sarajevo, were swiftly proclaimed 'Serbian' in coordinated operations by paramilitary units and the army that was soon to be Vojska Republike Srpske [Army of Republika Srpska, VRS], the formation that, in coordination between SDS and the government of Serbia (then officially: Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), 'inherited' most JNA equipment in BiH. It was in this preemptive strike that most lives were lost and that ethnic cleansing was at its most intensive. Meanwhile, the HDZ-dominated Hrvatsko vijeće odbrane [Croatian Defence Council, HVO], in close cross-border collaboration with Hrvatska vojska [Croatian Army, HV] and paramilitary units, established its own 'Croatian' territories. This left only a small proportion of BiH under control of the Territorial Defence units, small self-organised formations, (special) police forces and SDA militias that would soon merge into Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine [Army of the Republic of Bosnia–Herzegovina, ARBiH]. Most of Sarajevo, and of Dobrinja, fell into this category. Surrounding territory was taken by VRS, thus closing the siege. The airport to the south was relinquished to UN forces, whose paradoxically nonintervening intervention became a central factor in the war over BiH. All armies later turned to mobilisation of able-bodied men of military age.

Over time, each of these three armies came to stand, both in the eyes of many of the people it was supposed to defend and in the eyes of many others, for a national grouping. Yet this process was never unambiguous. VRS and HVO had non-Serbs and non-Croats in their ranks, but in small numbers and operating under Serbian and Croatian flags and towards specifically

nationally defined war aims. The national dimension was thus a programmatic dimension of their self-representation. In contrast, in places such as Sarajevo and Tuzla ARBiH did retain a degree of inclusivism in terms of personnel and war aims, true to its programmatic commitment to a united BiH. Yet while emphasising its devotion to a multinational Sarajevo, SDA also propagated the national-religious renaissance of Bosnian Muslims, whom they called Bosniaks from 1993 onwards. SDA introduced nationalist policies, encouraging people to identify as Bosniaks, to display Islamic piety and to claim entitlements on that basis. In besieged Sarajevo it became harder not to identify along national lines, and, for those who could display loyalty to the Bosniak nation (i.e., those whose names indicated Muslim heritage), it became more attractive to do so. A related but not totally overlapping factor consisted of demographic shifts: displaced Bosniaks arrived and many people moved out. The majority of Dobrinja Serbs and Croats were amongst the latter – with many leaving before the military violence broke out. Many Serbs moved into nearby parts of Sarajevo controlled by VRS. In the central parts of Sarajevo, besieged by VRS and subject to relentless shelling and sniper fire, shifts in the nationality structure of the population (in terms of variety and in terms of intensity of identification), increasing moves towards Islamisation and the reliance on paramilitary units and (other) gangs who singled out remaining Serbs for particularly harsh mistreatment caused SDA-controlled ARBiH to increasingly resemble the image that its opponents attributed to it: a Bosniak nationalist force.

Yet if the population of besieged Sarajevo housed a rapidly increasing majority of people who identified as Bosniaks, alongside this identification, over and above it, or instead of it, many expressed loyalty to a civic BiH polity. This was (and is) often dismissed by HDZ and SDS as a perfidious smokescreen hiding aggressive Bosniak nationalist attempts to install an Islamic state through what is called ‘majorisation’ – since the census category of ‘Bosniaks’ (then ‘Muslims’) comprised a relative majority in the last census in 1991. While this may be correct for some in wartime Sarajevo, it is important to understand that for many others this loyalty to BiH lay less in national identification as Bosniaks and more in a war-produced shared fate of living in besieged territory held by ARBiH, for a long period the weakest of the three main

military formations. This, of course, should also be understood in a context where VRS forces based in what they called 'Serbian' Sarajevo aimed shells and sniper fire at the city precisely because they considered it to be 'Muslim' Sarajevo.

War-related displacement along the continuum from violent expulsion to pre or postwar self-evacuation nationally unmixed the BiH population to a large degree. Operations of ethnic cleansing – the expulsion of people of undesired nationality from certain territories with physical force or under threat of it – became an integral part of the war. The claim of having suffered such expulsion also became a political tool: nationalist discourses in BiH refer to all war-related displacement of 'their' people as 'ethnic cleansing'. In this view, for example, all Serbs who left Dobrinja have been 'ethnically cleansed' too. Violence was used against SDS sympathisers and the fight against 'fifth columnists' involved targeted discrimination, including physical mistreatment, of some Serbs who remained in Dobrinja. Yet it is also true that many of those who left did so in evacuations coordinated secretly by SDS before it closed its siege – a siege, let us reiterate, that was organised explicitly under the sign of the Serbian nationalist cause. Others stayed: an estimated ten thousand persons with Serbian national backgrounds shared the bomb shelters, the hunger and the cold of besieged Sarajevo (ICG 1998: 3), and some occupied positions of responsibility in the wartime government structures and in ARBiH.

Through various forms of war-related displacement, with varying degrees of decision making, over two million Bosnians, about half the population, fled their prewar place of residence during the 1990s. The Istraživačko-dokumentacioni centar (IDC) – taking in people of all national backgrounds and relying on testimonies as well as identification records of human remains and statistical analysis – identified just under one hundred thousand dead or missing and did not expect this number to rise much further (2013). Around forty per cent of those war dead were reported to be civilians. IDC death toll calculations are disproportionately high for people identified (presumably by name) as Bosniaks, particularly amongst civilian victims, over 80 per cent of whom have been identified as such. Figures also display peaks in certain areas and in certain periods where VRS military dominance was overwhelming. We can thus deduce that, in national

terms, 'Bosniaks' were most likely to be murdered (regardless of their self-identification) and 'Serbs' were most likely to murder them (under Serbian flags and in an explicit mission to establish a Serbian state). In the Sarajevo region – including the VRS-held areas – IDC figures peak in the first months of the war and present a total of about 5,600 killed or missing civilians and about 8,000 soldiers (of whom over 70 per cent were from ARBiH ranks). In both cases a very large majority of those people were identified as Bosniaks. Across BiH, civilian dead make up about one-fifth of all victims identified as Serbs and about two-fifths amongst Croats, while amongst Bosniaks they outnumber the total of military victims.

The U.S.-brokered 1995 Dayton Agreement that brought an end to the military violence consolidated the division of BiH into two Entities: the Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine ('The Federation', initially often called the Muslimansko–Hrvatska Federacija [Muslim–Croatian Federation]) and Republika Srpska. It also installed a small district around Brčko in northern BiH and stipulated a mandate for in-country foreign supervision and troops. The Federation was itself decentralised into Cantons with largely nationally homogenised populations, dominated by either ARBiH-SDA or by HVO-HDZ. Unmixing was further cemented by the postwar evacuation (largely organised by SDS) of Serbs from VRS-held Sarajevo territories now transferred to the Federation. Many of them were allocated houses in eastern BiH from which Bosniaks had been expelled. Others stayed closer to Sarajevo. HDZ engaged in similar endeavours in western BiH. With some exceptions, unmixed, nationalised polities had thus become fact. The 1991 census saw 50 per cent of Sarajevans declaring their nationality as 'Muslim'. Due to disproportionate outmigration by Serbs and Croats and immigration by Bosniaks, the postwar proportion of Sarajevans with 'Muslim' socioreligious heritage is thought to have risen to 80–90 per cent (note that, at the time of writing, no census data for Dayton BiH exist and that territorial boundaries have changed). With their reductionist focus on questions of (ethnonational) 'being' and their self-interested adherence to Dayton trivision, Bosniak, Croatian and Serbian nationalist entrepreneurs take this to mean that up to 90 per cent of Sarajevans *are* Bosniaks/Muslims. Yet like the Dayton constitution – an annex to the Peace Agreement – such interpretations ignore

non-ethnonational self-identification and, most importantly, questions of degrees of loyalty and affiliation (Jansen 2005b).

In Dayton, Dobrinja was almost entirely allocated to Canton Sarajevo, in the Federation, but a small area remained disputed. A foreign arbitration process in 2001 fixed the boundary just inside the settlement, leaving only the easternmost edge in Republika Srpska (Jansen 2013a).

Notes

1. 'Daleko od normalnog života', *Oslobođenje*, 28 July 2009, 8. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Bosnian—Serbian—Croatian, German and French are mine.
2. I use the acronym 'BiH' (for Bosna i Hercegovina), widely used locally, sometimes pronounced /bix/, and sometimes /be i xa/. As an adjective referring to this country, including all its inhabitants, I employ 'BiH' or 'Bosnian' (short for Bosnian and Herzegovinian). 'Bosniak', on the other hand, refers to the nationality category known previously as 'Bosnian Muslims'.
3. The BiH constitution was an annex to this Agreement, signed on a U.S. airforce base in Dayton, Ohio. 'Dayton' (sometimes 'Dejton') was used as a noun and in adjectival form [*daytonsko*, sometimes *dejtonsko*].
4. Following dominant, if not unanimous, tendencies in local use, I employ the term 'national' where referring to 'ethnonational' or 'ethnic' issues.
5. After the war Dobrinja thus remained effectively divided, like the state of BiH it was part of (Jansen 2013a). Yet for clarity's sake this book will use the label 'Dobrinja' exclusively for the territory allocated to the Federation of BiH. The eastern edge of the settlement that now belonged to Republika Srpska will be referred to as *Istočno Sarajevo* [East Sarajevo]. Likewise, I employ the label *Dobrinjci* solely for inhabitants of the 'Federal' part of Dobrinja. Note also that, while some inhabitants did also express belonging to Dobrinja, I simply use this term to make the text readable. This book is not a community study of Dobrinja, but an ethnography of yearnings for 'normal lives'. It is *with* Dobrinjci – i.e., *from* Dobrinja – that I reach out into (desired) encompassments of 'normal lives'.
6. Since July 2010, I have continued to spend well over half of my time in Sarajevo, now living in the city centre.
7. To keep the text readable, I will use the term state hereinafter without inverted commas.
8. www.novigradsarajevo.ba; *Mjesečni statistički pregled Federacije BiH August 2008; Statistički Bilten za Mjesec Juli 2008*.
9. All wages and allowances mentioned in this book are expressed in net monthly amounts.
10. My engagement with Yugoslav socialist self-management and with its dynamics of statecraft will be channelled mainly through the recollections of my interlocutors themselves: a wilfully 'presentist' methodology for an ethnographic contribution.
11. Thirty of these were recorded, with permission. Half of all semi-structured interviews were conducted by Melina Sadiković. With regard to the core themes of 'normal lives' and the state, there were few noticeable systematic differences between the interviews conducted by this female Dobrinja resident on the one hand and by my male Western

European self on the other. In both cases, most interviewees tended to occupy a pedagogical position, seeking to educate an imagined audience that was presumed to be relatively ignorant of their fate.

12. I refer to such work in the course of my arguments. An example is the only edited collection of ethnographic texts on postwar BiH in English (Bougarel, Duijzings and Helms 2007).
13. Central to the legitimacy claims of socialist Yugoslavia in ideological terms, such self-proclaimed exceptionalism was common in popular parlance across its successor states. In the postwar period, no doubt, it was further conditioned by the sense of humiliating entrapment and abjection (Jansen 2009), which, in Sarajevo, took on particular significance due to the experience of siege.
14. For an investigation of postwar, postsocialist BiH through the ethnographic prism of healing, see Jašarević 2012.