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# **TAKING A STAND IN TIMES OF VIOLENT SOCIETAL CHANGES**

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on the (post-)Yugoslav wars and each other  
(1991–2000)**



**Ana Miškovska Kajevska**



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Ana Miškowska Kajevska

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ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor  
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam  
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus  
prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom  
ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties  
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in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel  
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**Ana Miškowska Kajevska**

geboren te Skopje, Macedonië

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In loving memory of  
Dr. Saskia Poldervaart (1945–2011)  
who was an extraordinary teacher and person.

She inspired me profoundly,  
encouraged me to do a PhD research,  
and showed me that cancer and death  
do not have to be taboo subjects.



When we tell a story we exercise control,  
but in such a way as to leave a gap, an opening.  
It is a version, but never the final one.  
And perhaps we hope that the silences will be heard by someone else,  
and the story can continue, can be retold.

Jeanette Winterson, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?*



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Skopje, January 2014



# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### Prologue

Throughout 2005 I was on a quest for a topic of my master's thesis which would also serve as a sort of introduction to my then already anticipated doctorate research. The theme needed to be not only of scholarly relevance but also a burning societal issue. In addition to this, it had to be intriguing enough to keep me passionate for several years, as well as closely match my strong commitment to feminism. Suddenly, a forgotten piece of memory returned.

I recalled that the main reason behind my choice to study Sociology had been the need to understand why and how the (post-)Yugoslav wars in the 1990s could have taken place and turn into an arena for such large-scale (sexual) atrocities, havoc and suffering. I also remembered the May 2003 conference 'Women Recollecting Memories'<sup>1</sup> which had been held to mark the tenth anniversary of the Zagreb feminist group<sup>2</sup> Center for Women War Victims. The memory evoked the image of me sitting in the audience and deciding to respond to the recurring call to collect and analyse information on the women's and feminist groups in the Yugoslav successor states.

---

1 For all names of events, groups, governmental bodies etc which are featured in this thesis, I have tried to find an official translation in English. When that search did not bear fruit, I translated the name into English myself. Appendix A contains the original names of the Belgrade and Zagreb groups, listed in the alphabetical order of the English language translations. As far as quotations are concerned, all translations from other languages into English are mine. Even when I also had access to an English translation of a text, unless I found that translation sufficiently accurate, I chose to personally translate the original fragments. I use British English; the text fragments – quotations and names of entities, such as groups – which are in American English were not translated by me, but were either originally written or officially translated into American English. Some quotations from texts in English (organisational documents or published articles and essays) contain typing and language mistakes in the original. I have left them intact, except for occasional insertions of '[sic]'. Finally, I have not translated the titles of documents when referring to them. This means that the documents with an English title in the reference (eg '*Protest against the text published in "Globus"*, 12.12.1992') have been written in English, whereas those with a non-English title (eg '*Klic k razumu*, November 1987') have been written in another language.

2 The frequent usage in Croatia and Serbia of the term 'groups' when referring to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is the reason why I employ this term throughout the dissertation.

Soon after this miraculously forgotten resolution had resurfaced, I conceived the topics of my master's and doctorate research. I would start with an analysis of the development of gender policies, women's organisational efforts and interethnic policies and relations in Yugoslavia (1941–1991), including the establishment of feminist groups in the late 1980s, and proceed with the war-related positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the 1990s. The product of the latter project is this dissertation.

### **A first sketch of the research topic**

In this thesis, I present the findings of my socio-historical comparative analysis of the positionings – ie discourses and activities – of feminists in Belgrade (Serbia) and Zagreb (Croatia) with regard to the (post-)Yugoslav wars<sup>3</sup> and each other between 1991 and 2000. More precisely, I use the overarching term 'positioning' to indicate the stand on the (post-)Yugoslav wars and one another which in the 1990s the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists took in oral and written form, as well as through the practical work which they conducted.<sup>4</sup> My choice of the term 'positioning' instead of the more common 'position' serves to accentuate that those discourses and activities were not a result of a singular decision or event, but a process in which they were gradually coming into being. Hence the word 'positioning' which contains as it were the present participle '-ing'.

---

3 There are two reasons why I avoid the construction 'the former Yugoslavia' which after 1991 became the standard designation of the region previously known as the 'Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia'. First, the constant use of the adjective 'former' chains, so to speak, the whole region to the irreversible past, unlike the prefix 'post' which indicates an open future. Second, there is not a present-day Yugoslavia to distinguish the socialist Yugoslavia from. The need for such a distinction was in place only between 1992 and 2003, when the official name of the federation of Serbia and Montenegro was 'Federal Republic of Yugoslavia'. I write 'Yugoslavia' to refer to the federation which existed between 1945 and 1991, whereas for the period from the last couple of months of 1991 onward, I speak of 'the Yugoslav successor states' or 'the post-Yugoslav region'. In addition, I use the adjective '(post-)Yugoslav' for phenomena which came into existence in times of Yugoslavia and continued to exist after its disintegration, such as (post-)Yugoslav feminism. I do not, however, employ 'post-Yugoslav' as an identity marker of individuals. Such usage is present in eg Klaić (1998) and Lukić (2011). Finally, my use of '(post-)Yugoslav' and 'post-Yugoslav' should not be understood as suggesting the existence of a country or another political entity which is called 'post-Yugoslavia'.

4 I thus do not use 'positioning' – as eg Yuval-Davis (1997, 1999) does – to refer to one's epistemological location.

While paying close attention to the (violent) context in which these positionings were embedded, I analyse the maintenance of old and the creation of new positionings, the construction and destruction of bonds of cooperation between and among the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, as well as how these feminists asserted themselves as political actors and struggled to obtain legitimacy for their work. I examine their biographies to understand their personal backgrounds and life trajectories and see how they relate to these activists' political choices, and I look at the meanings and designations which the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists gave – in the 1990s and in 2009 or 2010 (at the time of interviewing) – to their own war-related activism<sup>5</sup> and that of the other feminists. Finally, I explain the differences and similarities between the war-induced reorganisations of the feminist fields in Belgrade and Zagreb by taking the relevant societal and individual parameters into account. Hence the title of my thesis: 'Taking a stand in times of violent societal changes: Belgrade and Zagreb feminists' positionings on the (post-)Yugoslav wars and each other (1991–2000)'.

## Research questions and propositions to be investigated

The core question of this research is: *What are the differences and similarities among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists with regard to the development and contents of their positionings towards the (post-)Yugoslav wars and each other (1991–2000), and how can these differences and similarities be explained?* I answer the core question by addressing the following sub-questions:

1. What are the differences and similarities between the feminists' war-related positionings in the 1990s? How have the political contexts of Croatia and Serbia in the 1990s influenced these positionings?
2. How did the feminists in each city position themselves in the 1990s towards the feminists in the same and the other city with whom they did (not) share similar views on the (post-)Yugoslav wars? How did they legitimate their positioning at the time? How have the political contexts of Croatia and Serbia in the 1990s influenced these positionings vis-à-vis one another?
3. Which relations can be observed between the feminists' biographies and their war-related positionings? What are the differences and similarities between the feminists with regard to those relations?

---

<sup>5</sup> In this research, 'activism' refers to one's work in a feminist group, regardless of whether that work was/is conducted on a fully voluntary basis or for a (small) remuneration.

4. How did the feminists speak about their war-related positionings of the 1990s in 2009 or 2010? Which similarities and differences can be discerned there? How have the political contexts of Croatia and Serbia in 2009 and 2010 influenced these positionings?

The research questions are linked to the following propositions made (often implicitly) in the scholarship on war-related (post-)Yugoslav feminism in the 1990s:

1a. There is an analogy between Belgrade and Zagreb regarding the development and the contents of the feminists' war-related positionings (Benderly, 1997a, 1997b; Korać, 1998, 2003; Jansen, 2005; Stojsavljević, 1995; *Forum*, 1995; for exceptions, see Batinić, 2001; Cockburn, 2007; Knežević, 1994; Žarkov, 2002, 2007).<sup>6</sup>

1b. Only the feminists from one cluster provided assistance to (raped) refugee women (on the self-declared antinationalist feminists: Jansen, 2005; Knežević, 1995, 2003; Korać, 1998, 2003; Borić and Mladineo Desnica, 1996; Stojsavljević, 1995; *VNVA-krant*, May 1994; on the so-called nationalist feminists: Allen, 1996; Nenadic, 1996, 2010; MacKinnon, 2006; Milić, 2002; for more balanced elaborations, see Batinić, 2001; Benderly, 1997a; Borić, 1997; *Forum*, 1995; Helms, 2003a; Lindsey, 2002; Obradović-Dragišić, 2004; *Vrouw & Gezondheidszorg*, March/April 1993; Žarkov, 2002, 2007).

1c. The self-declared antinationalist feminists were the only ones crossing (ethnic) boundaries, while the so-called nationalist feminists were the only ones raising them (Batinić, 2001; *On the Issues*, Summer 1993; Jansen, 2005; Korać, 1998, 2003; Mostov, 1995; Ramet S., 2002; *VNVA-krant*, May 1994; Zajović, 1995).

2. The designations 'antinationalist' ('non-nationalist') and 'nationalist' ('patriotic') objectively and impartially describe the two clusters of Belgrade and Zagreb feminists (Benderly, 1997a; Irvine, 2007; Knežević, 1995, 2003; Korać, 1998, 2003; Obradović-Dragišić, 2004; Stojsavljević, 1995; Žarkov, 2007; for an exception, see Žarkov, 2002).

3. The different war-related positionings in the 1990s caused the first tensions and divisions between the feminists (Batinić, 2001; Korać, 1998, 2003; Stojsavljević, 1995; for exceptions, see *On the Issues*, Summer 1993; Benderly 1997b; Žarkov, 2002, 2007).

---

6 The number of exceptions which I present for each proposition might give the impression that these propositions do not reflect a strong majority view in the academic field. However, the listed exceptional contributions usually do not contain more than a couple of sentences – and often even less than that – in favour of the more balanced view. Therefore they remain exceptions, while sources supporting the propositions remain the rule.

The data which I have obtained through this research show that the above propositions need to be partially rejected. Consequently, in this dissertation the following findings will be elaborated:

1. Next to the similarities, there are significant differences between Belgrade and Zagreb regarding the development and the contents of the feminists' war-related positionings. Nonetheless, in both cities there were self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists, and activists from both clusters crossed and raised boundaries as well as provided assistance to (raped) refugee women.

2. The designations 'nationalist' and 'patriotic' were ascribed to some feminists by the self-declared antinationalist or non-nationalist feminists and their supporters. While partially based in factual positionings, these designations were at the same time a significant component of the ongoing struggle for legitimacy in which the feminists were involved.

3. The different war-related positionings were not necessarily the first and the only factor dividing the feminists in the 1990s. In some cases, those differences built upon previously experienced antagonisms, such as those regarding the activists' dissimilar societal status or the struggles over the right form of feminist engagement.

## **Terminological choices**

### **Belgrade and Zagreb instead of Serbia and Croatia**

I do not speak of 'feminists/groups from Croatia and Serbia', nor of 'Croatian and Serbian feminists/groups', but of 'Zagreb and Belgrade feminists/groups'. Due to my pre-fieldwork knowledge on the geography of (post-)Yugoslav feminism, I was aware that for the study of the influence of the (post-)Yugoslav wars on the feminists who had been already organised in Croatia and Serbia in the late 1980s or at the turn of the decade, it would suffice to interview those who had been active in each republic's capital.

However, my treatment of Belgrade and Zagreb feminism as synonymous with Serbian and Croatian feminism was objected to by some Zagreb feminists with whom I spoke during the first phase of the fieldwork. According to them, since I was also interested in Croatian and Serbian feminism of the second half of the 1990s, I could not limit my inquiry to the capitals and thereby ignore the feminists who had become active later in that decade. In light of this new insight, and in order to be clearer about my concrete research interest in quite a specific group of feminists, I decided to speak of 'Belgrade and Zagreb feminist activists/groups'. By this explicit

articulation of the narrow scope of my research, I follow Donna Haraway (1988:589) who has argued ‘for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims’.

Another reason why I do not refer to those feminists as ‘Croatian’ and ‘Serbian’ is because saying that one is ‘Croatian’ or ‘Serbian’ would be understood in the Yugoslav successor states as indicating one’s ethnicity, not one’s geographical position. Although there is some degree of correspondence between being a Belgrade feminist and being of Serb ethnicity, as well as between being a Zagreb feminist and of Croat ethnicity, an explicit assignment of ethnic origin is not something all of my respondents appreciate. This is due to the laden character of the ethnic identifications (including the non-ethnic one ‘Yugoslav’), the (markedly) mixed ethnic origin of some respondents, and/or some feminists’ decision to avoid the identification with an ethnic collective as much as possible. I address this in more detail in Chapter 5.

### **Wars instead of ethnic wars**

I refrain from referring to the war violence in the (post-)Yugoslav region as ‘ethnic’. Although the term ‘ethnic war(s)’ is commonly used in this context both in and outside academia, I avoid it due to its association with the primordial and essentialising understanding of those wars which has been advocated by eg Kaplan (1993) and Owen (1995). According to their conceptualisation, the (post-)Yugoslav wars have been fought because of *longue durée* ethnic differences and grievances which were both ‘endemic’ (Kaldor, 2006) to the region and inherently accompanied by interethnic hatreds. Shortly suppressed by Yugoslavia’s top-down state-building communist ideology, those hatreds exploded once again when this ideology lost its monopoly.<sup>7</sup>

By opposing this perception of the (post-)Yugoslav wars, I do not by any means intend to imply that people were not raped or killed during these wars because of being seen as belonging to an ethnic group which was considered to be the enemy.

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7 This view of the (post-)Yugoslav wars cannot accommodate the numerous instances of solidarity when people from one ethnic group, despite the demise of socialism, helped people of another ethnic group, sometimes risking their own lives and the lives of their families (see Broz, 2005; *I bi svjetlost*, 2007; Tokača, 2010). As Dević (1997a) points out, such conceptualisations do not offer space either for the antiwar initiatives which mobilised people across ethnic boundaries. This also goes for the feminist groups which are addressed in this research. Lastly, the idea of unceasing interethnic hatreds ignores the fact that the programme of creating Yugoslavia has existed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that the pre-World War II predecessor state of socialist Yugoslavia (see Chapter 3) was created in 1918 at the joint initiative of the Serb, Croat and Slovene political elites (Đokić, 2010).

The dreadful examples of war crimes in the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo,<sup>8</sup> committed by all warring sides, albeit to a different extent, do not allow one to ignore the ethnic component of these wars.<sup>9</sup> I do argue, however – together with Gagnon (2004), Iveković I. (2000), Kaldor (2006) and Žarkov (2007) – that the discourse of ethnic differences and grievances was revived and manipulated by some politicians, military leaders, intellectuals and the media in their struggle for obtaining and maintaining power. In a similar manner, ethnicity often served as a *carte blanche* to kill, rape, torture, steal and destroy, ie legitimated the satisfaction of one's (sadistic) needs for power which would have been much more difficult to realise in a non-war setting. In other words, as Žarkov (2007) argues, ethnicity was not the reason for the wars, but it was definitely their product. The media wars, which were fought simultaneously with the wars on the battlefield, vehemently contributed to the construction of ethnic groups, allies and enemies, and showed that 'both the act of violence and the act of representation were engaged in producing meanings, and the struggle to control these meanings was as fierce as the struggle to control territories' (Žarkov, 2007:7).<sup>10</sup>

Naming the wars 'ethnic' also obscures the fact that there were trade and military deals and changing alliances between politicians and (para)militaries within and across the ethnic groups (Andreas, 2008; *E-novine*, 18.11.2010; Gagnon, 2004; *Globus*, 09.06.2010; Mueller, 2000; *Novi list*, 03.10.2009, 26.05.2010; *Pad Krajine*, 2007; Ten Kate, 2007). Such a classification suggests further that multiethnic societies like the Yugoslav one are per se impossible to sustain due to their (presumed) ethnicity-based conflict-inducing differences, and neglects the impact of contingencies, internal

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8 In Albanian, this present-day country-in-formation is called 'Kosovë (Kosova)'; whereas 'Kosovo' is its name in the Slavic languages (including Serbian) which are spoken in the post-Yugoslav region. In order to avoid choosing one designation over another and presumably be regarded as taking sides, some authors use the two names interchangeably and others write the name as 'Kosov@'. I use 'Kosovo' because that is at present the official name of the country in English.

9 Ratko Mladić, the military leader of the Bosnian Serb forces who is now on trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), explicitly used the discourse of centuries-long interethnic grievances when he announced the genocide in Srebrenica. In an infamous television appearance on 11 July 1995 he said that the time had come to take revenge on the Turks (a derogatory term for the Bosniaks, ie Bosnian Muslims). The event the Serbs were to take revenge for was the killing of prominent Serbs by the Ottomans at the beginning of the 19th century (the video is available on the internet: <http://youtu.be/edFQTZpf8yM> [16/09/2013]). See more on this phenomenon of 'time fusion and confusion' (Papić, 2002) in Chapter 3.

10 See Kurspahić (2003) and Thompson M. (1999) on the propaganda and the media wars which facilitated the outbreak and continuation of the war violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

economic disparities as well as external economic and political factors, such as the role of the international financial institutions or the Fall of the Berlin Wall (I will return to this in Chapter 3). Finally, when referring to the wars in the 1990s I do not use the terms 'civil', 'defensive' or 'aggression' either. As I will show in Chapter 4, these designations mark clear positionings and were thus among the points of contestation between and among the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists.

### **Antinationalist and nationalist**

Given that the starting point in this research was the information – obtained from the scholarship on (post-)Yugoslav feminism – that the feminist activists had split into antinationalist (or, less often, non-nationalist) and nationalist (or, less often, patriotic) clusters, these designations<sup>11</sup> need to be explained as well. However, since this whole research revolves around these terms' diverse usages, meanings and implications, they will receive attention throughout the whole dissertation. At this point I will, therefore, only focus on the way in which I approached these concepts before and during the fieldwork, as well as on the way in which I use them in this thesis.

One of my first (pre-fieldwork) findings was the realisation that my interest in the feminists who were considered nationalists was repeatedly understood by Western fellow scholars as an inquiry into fascist, religious fundamentalist or right-wing women. That I referred to these activists as 'feminists' was usually bypassed, even though I explained that the women in question had been active feminists before they had allegedly become nationalists.<sup>12</sup> While this experience confirmed Yuval-Davis' claim (1997) that Western feminists usually understood feminism as incompatible with nationalism,<sup>13</sup> the recurring association with the three above ideological designations

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11 For the sake of linguistic diversity, I use the nouns 'names', 'designations' and 'terms' interchangeably, as well as 'naming', 'designating' and 'classifying' when referring to the process of defining the positioning of oneself and the other. I do not use 'labels' and 'labelling' as I want to distance myself from labelling theory (Becker, 1963; Ericson, 1975) due to its focus on social deviance – a term I find too negatively biased to use even for describing a positioning which differed, ie deviated, from the positioning of the speaker. See my discussion of the concepts 'naming' and 'orthodox and heretical' later in this chapter.

12 The eye-opening situation which made me realise this bias was the conversation in which I was asked whether I expected any problems in the interaction with my nationalist respondents due to my shaved head.

13 The interaction between feminism and nationalism and their perceived (in)compatibility have produced a lively scholarly debate (Aguilar, 1998; Cockburn, 1998, 2000a, 2007; Delap et al., 2006; Giles et al., 2003; Hall C., 1993; Iveković R., 1993; Jayawardena, 1986; Krasniqi, 2011; Sarkar and Butalia, 1995; Sharoni, 2001; Stasiulis, 1999; Sunseri, 2000; Ueno, 2004;

left me perplexed, because it did not correspond to the knowledge on the nationalist feminists which I had assembled from scholarship up to then (Batinić, 2001; Benderly, 1997a; Duhaček, 1998; Helms, 1998, 2003a; Kašić, 1994a; Knežević, 1997; Korać, 2003; Mladenović and Litričin, 1993; Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000; Obradović-Dragišić, 2004; Stojšavljević, 1995; Žarkov, 1999, 2002, 2007).

Based on this scholarship, I conceptualised the seemingly nationalist Belgrade and Zagreb feminists as activists who, compared to the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists who called themselves antinationalists, had a stronger attachment to the respectively Serb and Croat ethnic collective and/or the state in which they lived: Serbia and Croatia, respectively. There were no Zagreb feminists who were seen as Serb nationalists, just as no Belgrade feminists were considered Croat nationalists. The scholarship further made it clear that the two groupings of feminists differed in their interpretations of the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia,<sup>14</sup> and the (sexual) perpetrators and victims in them. Still, none of the above authors had ever mentioned any statement or activity by a nationalist feminist (eg antiabortion advocacy or glorification of motherhood as the primary duty of women) which would point to allegiance to a fascist, religious fundamentalist, right-wing or other conservative ideology.<sup>15</sup> Finally, unlike the feminists whose self-designation was ‘antinationalist’ (‘non-nationalist’), the supposedly nationalist (or patriotic) feminists did not publicly declare themselves as such, but were called so by the other feminists – an issue I will return to in Chapters 2, 4 and 6.

In view of these initial findings, I decided not to predefine the terms ‘antinationalist’, ‘non-nationalist’, ‘nationalist’ and ‘patriotic’ before the fieldwork. Instead, I chose to keep them as open concepts whose meaning I would extract later from the data collected from the interviews and the archival search. In practice, this meant that in approaching the potential respondents I would use those designations in

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Ward, 1983; West, 1997; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Žarkov, 2006). I find it, nevertheless, crucial not to debate the general (in)compatibility of feminism and nationalism or aim at creating a metatheory on feminism and nationalism since the two ideologies can be conceptualised and practiced differently. Hereby I subscribe to Cockburn’s sharp observation: ‘So are nationalism and feminism compatible? It depends of course on what *kind* of nationalism and what *kind* of feminism you are talking about – for both of them are plural movements’ (1998:41, emphasis in the original).

14 I did not have at that time any information on the positionings on the war in Kosovo and the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999.

15 My post-fieldwork analysis of the organisational documents of the feminist groups and the information in the media, as well as the interview narratives on one’s religious affiliation and motivation for feminism, have unquestionably confirmed the absence of such linkages (see Chapters 3, 4 and 5).

a manner that was as neutral and open as possible, and apply the same strategy during both the formulation of the interview questions and the interview itself.

As the analysis of the feminists' positionings in Chapters 4 and 6 shows, my research partially confirms the insight on the designations which I had gained from the study of previous scholarship. The use of 'antinationalist' ('non-nationalist') and 'nationalist' ('patriotic') proved to be partially justified. These terms did indicate – although not capture fully – the larger or smaller distances between the feminists' positionings and those present in the official politics of Croatia and Serbia. In light of this research finding and the prevalence of the terms 'antinationalist' and 'nationalist' in the literature (see Chapter 2), I decided to also employ these two names.

Nevertheless, in order to attend to the thus far unreported (power) differences in naming between the antinationalist and nationalist feminists (ie the ascription of designations to the latter by the former) and the equally absent scholarly attention to this process (see Chapter 2), I chose to use these terms preceded by the adjectives 'self-declared' and 'so-called', respectively. Therefore, starting from the next section and throughout the rest of this dissertation I speak of 'self-declared antinationalist feminists' and 'so-called nationalist feminists'. This addition also creates some free semantic space for adding the necessary nuances to the designations 'antinationalist' and 'nationalist' which they, being already too impregnated with meaning, do not leave otherwise.

### **Feminism**

The final term in need of immediate explanation is 'feminism', due to its ambiguous use in the scholarship on (post-)Yugoslav women's activism. The designation 'feminist' is sometimes applied to the activists and groups which explicitly declare themselves so (Helms, 1998, 2003a; Mladenović and Litričin, 1993; Stojšavljević, 1995; Žarkov, 2002, 2007), while at other times the designations 'women's' and 'feminist' are used interchangeably as if they were synonyms (Batinić, 2001; Blagojević, 1998a; Jansen, 2005; Korać, 1998, 2003; Milić, 2002; Pavlović, 1999). There are also texts in which the generic 'women's' broadly denotes everybody, including the activists and groups which do describe themselves as feminist (Borić, 1997; Helms, 2003b; Irvine, 2007; Mostov, 1995; Kesić, 2002a). Lastly, 'women's' can also be employed to distinguish the activists or groups which do not declare themselves feminist (Helms, 2003a; Knežević, 1994, 2004).

In my view, this diversity of usages has primarily to do with the negative connotations which are often attached to feminism in the post-Yugoslav societies,

sometimes also by the women's activists themselves. These connotations suggest that feminists are: aggressive, disciplining, extreme/radical, lesbian, men-unfriendly or gender separatist (Barilar, 2000; Cockburn, 2001; Drakulić Sla., 1993; Helms, 2003a, 2003b; Milić, 2002, 2004; Papić, 1992; Renne, 1997a; Snitow, 1994). In consequence of these possible connotations, insecurity exists as to whether the addressed groups or activists should be referred to as 'feminist'. On the other hand, 'women's' (groups or activists), besides correctly denoting the gender of (the majority of) the activists, is a broad enough and, thus, safer description. This issue does not pose a problem in my research, though. As the succeeding chapters will make it clear, the activists whose work I analyse have usually – if not always – publicly used the designation 'feminist' to refer to themselves and/or their groups. In line with this, in the rest of the thesis I use the term 'feminist', with the exception of the instances when I single out somebody's use of the term 'women's' due to its significance for the argument in question.

There is, however, one more use of the term 'feminist' which differs from those stated above. It concerns the cases when the application of this term and the line of reasoning in which it is used convey an implicit classification of 'feminists' and 'non-feminists', whereby the self-asserted feminist affiliation of the latter is denied. For example, after speaking about the Belgrade and Zagreb feminist groups in general, Borić and Mladineo Desnica (1996) only described the positioning of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. In a similar manner, MacKinnon (1993:83) illustrated her statement on the 'feminists in Zagreb' by mentioning only so-called nationalist feminist groups. In both examples the feminists with a different positioning, by being silently omitted from the illustrations, become implicitly classified as 'non-feminist'. Such use of the term 'feminist' only for activists or positionings the author endorses is also to be found in eg Jansen (2005), Kesić (2002a), Mostov (1995), *off our backs* (November 1991) and Slapšak (2008), and – as I explained in the preceding paragraph – differs from the usage employed in this dissertation.

## Elaboration of the research topic

My analysis is particularly concerned with exploring the split between self-declared antinationalist (or non-nationalist) and so-called nationalist (or patriotic) feminists which took place after the outbreak of war violence<sup>16</sup> and was significantly more

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16 The watershed moment in the history of feminism in Belgrade and Zagreb was the outburst of war violence in the early 1990s, not the outburst of nationalism in the late 1980s. That is why I speak of 'war-related' instead of 'nationalism-related' conflicts, positionings,

pronounced in Zagreb than in Belgrade. This schism, which manifested, inter alia, in different definitions of the wartime (sexual) perpetrators and victims, can be discerned from both academic and non-academic texts, some of which address only the situation in one of the cities (Batinić, 2001; Benderly, 1997a, 1997b; Bilić, 2011a; Borić, 1997; *die tageszeitung*, 05.11.1992; *Forum*, 1995; Hughes, Mršević and Mladenović, 1995; Irvine, 2007; Jansen, 2005; Kašić, 1994a, 2006; Knežević, 1994, 1995, 2004; Korać, 1998, 2003; Mladenović and Litričin, 1993; Obradović-Dragišić, 2004; Pavlović, 1999; *Village Voice*, 13.07.1993; Zaharijević, 2007; Žarkov, 1999, 2002, 2007).

Instead of subscribing to the often presented simplified dichotomous portrayal, I show that none of the two feminist clusters should be perceived as completely different from the other cluster in the same city or as fully resembling the corresponding cluster in the other city. My questioning of the black and white portrayal of the opposition between the so-called nationalist and the self-declared antinationalist feminists has created space for discovering several necessary nuances. Such are eg the tensions between the Belgrade and Zagreb antinationalist feminists which persisted despite these feminists' sincere commitment towards maintaining the pre-war cooperation and gender- instead of ethnicity-based solidarity.

Although I speak of four feminist clusters – two self-declared antinationalist and two so-called nationalist – the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist cluster differs from the other three. This specificity calls for a note of caution. Despite the existence of shared war-related positionings among the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists and the academic cooperation between some of them on eg book projects, they have never formed one joint group and/or come out in public with a common 'we' positioning. Consequently, during the interviews each of them expressed her positioning using the 'I' form. In this sense, to speak of the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists as a cluster means to impose a degree of affiliation which is greater than that which has actually existed. One could even see this cluster as a 'so-called cluster'. Nevertheless, such a semi-artificial aggregation was necessary for analytical purposes.

Another note of caution concerns the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. As I will show in Chapter 4, the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 led to a differentiation among them with regard to the issue of Serb responsibility for and victimisation by the war violence. Some remained underlining the Serb responsibility for the victimisation of non-Serbs, while others accentuated the Serb victimisation which resulted from the actions of NATO and the military forces

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dynamics etc. Nevertheless, given that nationalism was an intrinsic part of the (post-) Yugoslav wars, the construction 'war-related' should be understood as including the assignment 'nationalism-related'.

of the Kosovar Albanians. The latter feminists' positioning overlapped with that of the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists. For the sake of not complicating the analysis further, I decided to maintain the division among the Belgrade feminists which had come into existence during the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, and speak of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists as a single cluster. Had my research been concerned only with the war violence in 1999, I would not have made such a simplifying choice.

In this dissertation I move beyond the sometimes, though often implicitly, present normative classification of good vs bad feminists (Borić, 1997; Fischer E., 1993; Knežević, 1994; MacKinnon, 2006; Milić, 2002; Nenadic, 1996, 2010; Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000; Zajović, 1995) – a classification which becomes additionally laden in a war context. Without ignoring the differences in positionings and their corresponding consequences (such as the degree of risk taken by the activists), I demonstrate that the feminists whose war-related positionings stood closer to those of the Croatian or the Serbian authorities have also conducted important work on improving the position of (refugee) women. This is particularly significant since the work and the voices of the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists are largely absent from the relevant scholarship. By giving space to these feminists, I express my agreement with Saba Mahmood (2001:225) who has argued that

in order for us to be able to judge, in a morally and politically informed way, even those practices we consider objectionable, it is important to take into consideration the desires, motivations, commitments, and aspirations of the people to whom these practices are important.<sup>17</sup>

However, the space which I create for the voices of the so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists is not free from interventions, as is often the case in publications which present the oral histories of particular groups of people.<sup>18</sup>

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17 Dubravka Žarkov (2000:177) has criticised in a similar manner the Yugoslav feminists' absence of analyses of the protests of the Kosovar Serb and Kosovar Montenegrin women in the autumn of 1987, which followed a statement of the Kosovar Albanian politician Fadil Hoxha (see Chapter 3): 'As if it is absolutely insignificant for feminist political and theoretical struggles to learn what moves thousands of women who were otherwise far from any political activism into political actions, what meanings these actions have for them, and what these actions tell us about these women's ideas of the reality in which they live. We may well conclude that these actions are nationalist, or racist, or right wing. But does that mean that they are not worth analysing?'

18 For example, Dobrović and Bosanac (2007) on the gay and lesbian people in Croatia, Leydesdorff (2008) on the female survivors of the Srebrenica genocide, and Spariousu and Savić Sv. (2011) on the Romanian minority women in Vojvodina (Serbia).

In my research, the feminists' voices are juxtaposed, contextualised, crosschecked with written sources, interpreted and theorised. By these means I seek to situate and bring to a higher level of abstraction the things said and done, thereby moving away from the level of *ad hominem* criticisms and arbitrary classifications where the discussion is often situated in the narratives of my respondents.<sup>19</sup>

Inspired by Mills (1978), I strive to link the biographical and the structural/historical, ie – to borrow from the famous Second Wave feminist slogan – the personal and the political.<sup>20</sup> By unpacking and linking contextual layers and individuals' backgrounds and utterances, I want to create a more complex portrayal of the interconnectedness of the personal and the structural in the lives of the feminist activists. Despite these feminists' otherwise good comprehension of the above analogy between the personal and the political, an understanding of this interconnectedness is not always present in their narratives.<sup>21</sup>

I do not suggest, however, that my respondents are incapable of arriving at such an understanding by themselves, as Mills (1978:10) has somewhat pretentiously suggested about 'ordinary men [sic]': 'They do not possess the quality of mind essential to grasp the interplay of man [sic] and society, of biography and history, of self and world'. Nevertheless, when it comes to executing a research project as this one and putting these activists' practice into theory (Mol et al., 2010), I am aware that my

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19 It occurred frequently during the interviews that the respondent would criticise a feminist as if she were a free agent, fully unencumbered by contextual constraints and possibilities. An example of this is the objection that somebody had abandoned her activist work and become a professional feminist, meaning that she had exchanged her (largely) voluntary engagement for a steadier employment in eg a state body on gender equality. In this attempt to delegitimise the other feminist – and legitimise oneself as a true, ie disinterested feminist – the accent is put on the other feminist's apparent lack of integrity due to the pursuit of a personal instead of the collective gain. No attention is given to the possible situational factors, such as the inability of the feminist in question to continue being an unpaid activist (which had been hitherto possible due to her employment elsewhere or living with her parents) and the unavailability of other employment opportunities for working on gender equality. This criticism neither allows for the possibility that the other feminist might consider the work in a state institution a more efficient way to bring about the desired societal change. Building upon Pierre Bourdieu, I see those accusations of a hidden agenda or a betrayal of feminism as examples of misrecognition which point to the largely unconscious struggle for symbolic capital among the feminists. I will return to this later in this chapter, in my presentation of the analytical framework.

20 The use of 'political' in this slogan should be understood 'in the broad sense of the word as having to do with power relationships, not the narrow sense of electoral politics' (Hanisch, 2006: no pagination).

21 Blagojević (1998b:35) has observed the same in her analysis of the Belgrade women's groups in the 1990s: 'It is interesting that the activists themselves perceive the conflicts foremostly as "personal disagreements"'.

(academic) location has been more strongly privileged than those of my respondents (Haraway, 1988; Rich, 1985). The employment at the University of Amsterdam has provided me with resources – information, money and time – and a physical distance from the post-Yugoslav region which markedly benefitted the production of such complex knowledge.

This scholarly endeavour will, hopefully, enable me to offer something in return to the women who participated in it by giving me an interview and otherwise, given that I advance my career based on carrying out an analysis of the work which they have conducted and the insights which they have developed. By this intended reciprocity – which will, *inter alia*, physically manifest in the fact that the respondents will receive a copy of this dissertation – I also aim to contribute towards the discontinuation of the unidirectional knowledge transfer whereby local activists and scholars do not get any feedback from the researchers at Western universities whose research subjects they have been.<sup>22</sup>

I will be glad if my contribution to the historiography of (post-)Yugoslav feminism will be understood as following the direction which Gérard Noiriel (2007:691) has proposed for the French historians, ie that it will ‘enrich the collective memory [and] make it more critical by integrating in it the knowledge which has not been produced for rehabilitating or denouncing, but rather for explaining and understanding’. Furthermore, it is my ambition that this study will also prove beneficial to the younger generations of Belgrade and Zagreb feminist activists, as well as students and scholars of women’s/gender studies,<sup>23</sup> in the sense that it will offer them a deeper insight into the trajectories of their local feminist foremothers and the enormous knowledge which these preceding generations have created. Finally, this research might turn to be inspiring also for scholars whose work is concerned with feminists in other parts of the world where nationalism and/or war violence hold sway. More specifically, I hope that the nationalism- and war-related positionings and experiences of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, including the instances of cooperation and confrontation, will be useful for understanding better the complexity of feminist activism in other divided and fragile societies.

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22 Pertinent criticism of this practice was articulated by many respondents. Cf. the related comment by the Belgrade feminist Staša Zajović: ‘We are fed up...with being the research objects. We do not gain anything in that way. We neither restore [our] energy nor does [it] help us reflect upon different ways of work and solidarity, but [it] only exhausts us’ (*Arkzin*, 20.12.1996).

23 The partial overlap between the categories ‘students’ and ‘scholars’ and the category ‘activists’ notwithstanding.

The above elaboration of my research goals and concerns reveals the strong ethical commitment behind my research. This commitment will be, hopefully, visible throughout this thesis, but in particular in the Methodology section later in this chapter and in Chapter 2, wherein I will attend to the biases, inconsistencies and silent places in the relevant scholarship. The 'feminist research ethic' I subscribe to has been aptly outlined by Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True (2008:695):

[It] is a commitment to inquiry about how we inquire. The research ethic involves being attentive to (1) the power of knowledge, and more profoundly, of epistemology...(2) boundaries, marginalization, and silences, (3) relationships and their power differentials, and (4) our own situatedness as researchers. We need to be aware of how our own basket of privileges and experiences conditions our knowledge and research. However, the feminist-informed researcher's commitment to self-reflection is not merely a commitment to reflecting on his [sic] identity as a researcher but rather, to noticing and thinking through silences in epistemology, boundaries, and power dynamics (of the research process itself) from a range of theoretical perspectives.

My decision to compare the war-related feminist activism in Belgrade and Zagreb was informed by empirical, not theoretical considerations, which clearly indicates the inductive nature of this research. To begin with, I was interested in the war-related positionings of the feminists who, besides being active in the 1990s, had already known and cooperated with each other before Yugoslavia's disintegration. That left me with the choice of Belgrade, Ljubljana and/or Zagreb – the only three Yugoslav cities which had witnessed a developed (and to a certain extent similar) feminist activism already in the 1980s. Nevertheless, in light of the great contextual differences between Slovenia, on the one hand, and Croatia and Serbia, on the other, as well as between the work of the Ljubljana feminists and that of the Belgrade and Zagreb ones, I left out Ljubljana from this research.<sup>24</sup>

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24 After Slovenia's early disentanglement from Yugoslavia in late June 1991, followed by a ten-day war on its territory, the newly independent state took a separate course and did not get involved with the war violence in the remaining parts of Yugoslavia (with the exception of selling arms to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia; see Šurc and Zgaga, 2012). Moreover, as my data collection has shown, after Slovenia gained sovereignty, the interaction between the Ljubljana feminists and the Belgrade and Zagreb ones had decreased significantly. Due to Slovenia's separate course and absence of war violence, the agenda of the Ljubljana feminists increasingly started to differ from those of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists. In addition to this, Slovenia's dissimilar context led to exclusion of the Ljubljana feminists from the international (feminist) conferences and meetings on the (post-)Yugoslav wars: since Slovenia did not fall under the specific funding guidelines, there were often no grants

Unlike the situation in Zagreb, where in 1992 the feminists clearly split on the definition of the perpetrators and victims of the (sexual) war violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia,<sup>25</sup> such a prominent and tangible cleavage has never taken shape in Belgrade, not even in 1999 when Serbia was targeted by the NATO bombardment and a ground war was waged in Kosovo. This difference between the two cities in terms of the dynamics among the feminists lends itself perfectly to a scholarly analysis, especially since – as I will explain in Chapter 2 – it is so far often not taken into account by scholars on (post-)Yugoslav feminism.

Croatia and Serbia – as the broader contexts of the feminist activism addressed here – display some similarities, as well as significant differences. Some of the commonalities between the two countries are their key roles in the construction, development and disintegration of Yugoslavia (the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular), the revival of ethnic nationalism since the late 1980s, the economic hardship, refugee flows and military mobilisation in the 1990s, as well as the (sexual) war crimes committed by each country's (para)militaries. As Đurić-Kuzmanović et al. (2008:275) have noted, these intense processes led in both countries to exhaustion of the activists and played a role in the conflicts between them:

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for the Ljubljana feminists to cover their travel and accommodation costs. This reduced further their interaction with the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists (Dobnikar, 2000; Jalušič, 2002a; interviews with Ljubljana2EXT, Ljubljana1EXT and Zagreb7AN).

- 25 My review of the scholarship, media contributions and organisational documents has revealed that there is no unanimity concerning the geographical indication used for contextualising the war rapes which have happened between 1991 and 1995. Some speak of war rapes in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia and others of war rapes in the former Yugoslavia (while actually referring only to those in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia). Yet others address only Bosnia and Herzegovina, given the much larger prevalence of the war rapes there and/or the greater political and media attention which these rapes have received compared to those in Croatia. I have been unable to detect a difference between the positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists on the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and on the war rapes in Croatia. I speak therefore of the positioning on the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Although in the period which I analyse two more wars took place – in Slovenia (summer 1991) and in Kosovo (1998–1999) – I do not write about war rapes in connection to these two wars. No war rapes were reported during the ten-day Slovenian war. In Kosovo war rapes were reported, but I have not come across even a hint of debate or tension between the post-Yugoslav feminists concerning the character of the war rapes in that war (Farnsworth, 2008; *Priopćenje za javnost*, 02.04.1999; *Statment* [sic] *Regarding Mass Rapes*, 29.04.1999; Zajović, 1999a; *Zarez*, 09.07.1999). It is also important to keep in mind that the feminist debates have focused on the war rapes of women committed by men and not on the war rapes of men by men. Such rapes have also taken place, although in far fewer numbers than the rapes of women (on the rapes of men see *Bassiouni report*, May 1994; Jones, 1994; Vranić, 1996; Žarkov, 1997, 2007).

[T]he workload assumed by these...groups in aiding war victims, in the absence of state assistance, or directly against the state interventions (as the states were busy waging war and justifying violence committed by their own forces) and the complex conditions in which they worked – war, insecurity, economic deprivation, political isolation, or over-exposure –...contributed to tensions within the groups.

These parallels notwithstanding, the war violence taking place on the territory of Croatia (1991–1995) preceded the war violence in Serbia (1998–1999), and whereas Serbia had a major responsibility for the attacks and atrocities on the territory of Croatia, the opposite was not the case.<sup>26</sup> The war in Serbia consisted of two segments, none of which involved Croatia. The first segment was the NATO bombardment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the war between the NATO air forces and the air defence of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the second segment (the ground war in Kosovo), the police, army and paramilitary forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ethnically cleansed the Kosovar Albanian civilian population and clashed with its military formations.

The dissimilarities between the war violence in Croatia and Serbia have, on the one hand, been conducive to unexpected similarities between some of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists' positionings on the war in Croatia (and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Roughly speaking, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist and the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists regarded the Serbs as the only perpetrators, and the Croats (and Bosniaks, ie Bosnian Muslims<sup>27</sup>) as the only victims. An analogous resemblance existed between the Belgrade so-called nationalist and the Zagreb self-

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26 I thank Dubravka Žarkov for alerting me early in the research process to this difference between Croatia and Serbia and its consequences for the divergent development of the feminists' positionings in each country.

27 'Bosniak(s)' is the present-day official English translation of 'Bošnjak' (singular) and 'Bošnjaci' (plural) – the official Bosnian and Herzegovinian designations for the Bosnian Muslims since 1993. Before that, and throughout the existence of Yugoslavia, the Bosnian Muslim population was differently categorised in the censuses: 'Undeclared Muslims (of Yugoslav origin)', 'Muslims (as ethnic, not religious group)' and 'Muslims (as a nation)'. The last term, created in 1971, was a very significant one since it signalled the first time that the Muslims were recognised as the third constitutive nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, next to the Croats and the Serbs who already held that status (Mrđen, 2002; see also Helms, 2003a). In the present-day everyday language and unofficial settings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the names 'Muslim' and 'Bosniak' are often used interchangeably, also by people who self-identify with this ethnic group. There are also those who could be classified as 'Bosniaks' by virtue of their ethnic background, but refuse this designation as too intertwined with Bosniak nationalism. In this dissertation I use the official designation 'Bosniak(s)'.

declared antinationalist feminists. Both clusters evoked the shared responsibility of all involved parties for the war violence. On the other hand, Croatia's non-involvement in the later war in Serbia led to a certain distancing between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists and their positionings. First, there were less extensive interactions during that period between the feminists from the two cities. Second, the positionings of the Belgrade feminists regarding that war did not at all concern Croatia and the Zagreb feminists, while the Zagreb feminists did not produce many public statements regarding Serbia and the Belgrade feminists.

Croatia and Serbia additionally differed in the degree to which they were subjected to international sanctions. Starting from 31 May 1992 and throughout the 1990s, Serbia was hit by numerous cultural, economic and political sanctions levied by the European Union, the United Nations and the United States of America,<sup>28</sup> while Croatia 'only' underwent the United Nations embargo on delivery of arms and military equipment to all (post-)Yugoslav republics/countries. Finally, the peaceful reintegration in January 1998 of the last Croatian territory that had been held by Serbs during the war meant a closure of the issue of contested territories between Croatia and Serbia. In Serbia, however, a definite closure is yet to be negotiated. Albeit in practice Kosovo has not been under Serbia's jurisdiction since June 1999 (with the exception of the Serb regions in Northern Kosovo), Serbia still contests Kosovo's separate status. In this sense, the designation 'post-war society' applies better to Croatia than to Serbia, which is also visible in the discourses one can find in each country's political arena.

To get a better idea about the contexts in which the analysed feminists' positionings and dynamics have come about, it is further necessary to recall the constitutive power of violence, ie the power of violence to construct (constitute) new contexts and meanings by altering previous ones. According to Gail Mason (2006:174), violence

is a spectacle. Not because it is simply something that we observe but, more fundamentally, because it is a mechanism through which we observe and define other things. Violence has the capacity to shape the ways that we see, and thereby come to know, these things. In other words, violence is more than a practice that acts upon the bodies of individual subjects to inflict harm and injury. It is, metaphorically speaking, also a way of looking at these subjects.

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28 The last sanctions against Serbia, ie the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, were lifted on 19 January 2001 (Garfield, 2001).

On a physical level, this constitutive power was manifested in the killed and harmed living beings, destroyed buildings and transportation and communication infrastructure, as well as in the creation of no-go areas covered with land mines and new borders whose crossing was difficult and dangerous. In addition to these physical manifestations, as Mattijs van de Port (2008) asserts, the whole hitherto self-evident symbolic order in the society was turned upside down. The destabilisation or even break-up of all stable structures brought the unsettling understanding that what one has believed to be true is nothing but a malleable human-made construction.<sup>29</sup> Carolyn Nordstrom (1992:261) has warned that this destruction of social order and meaning can sometimes exert an even greater impact on individuals and societies than the annihilation of people and material property:

Maimed bodies and ruined villages are obvious casualties of dirty wars. Maimed culture – including crucial frameworks of knowledge – and ruined social institutions are not as visible, but they are equally powerful realities and their destruction may have a much more enduring and serious impact than the more obvious gruesome casualties of war.

In my view, the transformations which the war violence constituted at the symbolic level can be organised in a quadripartite classification. The first category contains changes in the availability or the appropriateness of the possible positionings. Certain positionings (eg one's ethnicity-based victimisation by the war violence) were granted a wider space in the political arena and the media, whereas the space for other positionings (such as one's ethnicity-based responsibility for the violence) was narrowed down. Moreover, there was a domination of polarised either/or positionings, while middle path and/or neither/nor positionings were, if not eliminated, then heavily marginalised. The second category entails changes in the meaning of topographic objects. Pre-war hotels, inns, schools, farms and factories were stripped of their peace-time function and turned into (rape) prison camps, military quarters and refugee settlements, whereas parks and fields became graveyards.

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29 Cf Papić (2002:129): 'The external destruction of a social/cultural identity system in war is the most brutal form of deconstruction, but life under the processes of malign internal mutations is, perhaps, equally disastrous because it systematically diminishes and humiliates the basic human values of decency, honesty, tolerance and individual morality; it even violates more basic assumptions, such as the concept of time (past, present and future), personal identity, or the simple Ten Commandments (love thy neighbour, thou shalt not kill, etc.).'

Linguistic alterations form the third category. Some words (eg Yugoslav, citizenship, people's army, socialism, allies and enemies, loyal and disloyal, danger, rights and grievances) were given new meaning. In Croatia, the Cyrillic alphabet was declared as belonging uniquely to the inimical ethnic group (the Serbs) and subsequently banned. The words which were proclaimed as originally Serb came to be replaced with Croat archaisms or newly created words. In Serbia, such changes were less radical and rapid since the country was not subjected to the same accelerated process of differentiation as was the case with the newly independent, ie newly establishing, Croatia. The Latin alphabet remained in use, but priority was increasingly given to the use of the Cyrillic one. The last, fourth, category of changes are the processes of political mobilisation of some people and demobilisation of others, as well as creation and destruction of personal relationships and political alliances.

In the decade (1991–2000) addressed in this research, fast evolving social changes took place in Croatia and Serbia. They were a consequence of nationalism, the war violence, the disintegration of the federative Yugoslav state into smaller polities, and the transition from a single-party socialist into a multi-party capitalist system. Although the fieldwork for this study was conducted in 2008, 2009 and 2010, I chose to take 2000 as the final year of my exploration for three reasons. First, I wanted to focus only on the decade which in Croatia and Serbia is rightly regarded as a decade of war violence and economic and political hardship. The term 'devedesete' (the 1990s) is repeatedly found in the Croatian and Serbian media not only in connection to concrete events from that historical period, but also as a metaphor for a dark period which hangs above these two countries as the sword of Damocles.<sup>30</sup> Second, both Croatia and Serbia experienced great political changes in 2000. The political parties of Franjo Tuđman (the president of Croatia) and Slobodan Milošević (the president of Serbia), which were in power throughout the 1990s, lost the parliamentary elections in, respectively, January and December of that year. These internal political changes, as well as the preceding end of the war violence, were followed by changes in the policies of the foreign funding agencies – both the (supra)national and the more independent ones. The largely informal emergency donations to the feminist groups which had been characteristic for the militarised 1990s gave way to official bureaucratic grant

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30 For example, 'Povratak devedesetih' ('The Return of the Nineties') in the Croatian biweekly *Zarez* (14.07.2006), 'Ustašluci na stadionima – odjek devedesetih' ('Ustasha-like behaviour at the stadiums – an echo of the Nineties') in the Croatian daily *Novi list* (20.10.2008), 'Jelašić: Neće se ponoviti 90-e' ('Jelašić: The '90s will not recur') on the website of the Serbian radio and TV station *B92* (22.11.2008) and 'Čanak: Srbija počinje da liči na Srbiju iz devedesetih' ('Čanak: Serbia starts to resemble the Serbia from the Nineties') on the website of the Serbian news agency *Beta* (24.01.2012). See also Jansen (2005).

procedures. This led to organisational changes in these groups, such as the creation of more formal hierarchical structures and less fluid membership. In the 2000s the feminist fields in Croatia and Serbia additionally changed with the establishment of different gender equality bodies at state and municipality level which subsequently employed some of the feminist activists (Bagić, 2004; Bilić, 2011b; Kesić, 2007; Potkonjak et al., 2008).

Finally, the choice for a shorter time span and a more detailed exploration – as opposed to obtaining less detailed data to compare two quite different decades (the 1990s and the 2000s) – was also prompted by the many silent and laden places regarding the war-related feminist activism in Belgrade and Zagreb. Their existence required extensive interviews and a repetitive thorough search for clues in organisational documents, (non-)academic texts and video recordings. This type of data collection would have been impossible to conduct in a satisfactory manner in the earmarked fieldwork time, had the analysed period extended over two decades.

### **Analytical framework**

My analysis of the differences and similarities among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists with regard to the development and contents of their positionings towards the (post-)Yugoslav wars and each other (1991–2000) is primarily based on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, ie his concepts of agents, capital, field, habitus, misrecognition, naming, and orthodoxy and heterodoxy (heresy). This analytical framework is supplemented by the concepts of memory and myth.

Bourdieu (1986, 1990, 1991, 1993; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Grenfell, 2008; Swartz, 1996, 1997) defines a field as a network or a social arena whose occupants constantly compete with one another for the scarce and unevenly distributed resources which are recognised as legitimate sources of power within that particular field. Put differently, the agents struggle for legitimacy, ie ‘for the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence’ (Bourdieu, 1991:239). Each agent wants her/his definition of the situation (eg positioning, rules or worldview) to be the one which will be widely recognised and accepted in the concrete field as the only legitimate one. The resources and the actions of an agent in the field can be properly understood only when compared with (or in relation to) the resources and the actions of the other inhabitants. In other words, everybody’s status within the field is determined by both her/his own position and the position of the other occupants in the diverse hierarchical systems which are operational in that field.

Differentiated societies consist of many fields which can – but do not necessarily – exist quite independently (autonomously) from each other: economic field, intellectual field, political field, feminist field, media field, religious field, artistic field, etc. Consequently, one's status in one field can be quite unlike one's status in another. This is due to the separate conceptualisations of the sources of power, ie the dissimilar understandings of what represents a valid source of power, which usually hold sway in different fields.

Bourdieu refers to the aforementioned scarce sources of power as 'capital'. In addition to the three basic types of capital – cultural, economic and social – there can be many other types of capital, all of which can be operationalised to be empirically measured. Each field is characterised by one type of capital which possesses the greatest value in that specific field. That value can only be determined in relation to the concrete field in question because in another field the same capital can have much less to no value at all. One's appreciation of the value of the particular capital and the awareness of the importance of securing it do not occur on a fully conscious level. They are a part of the habitus or the set of dispositions which the agent internalises during the process of socialisation within the specific field and subsequently applies rather unconsciously to her or his daily practices.

Cultural capital includes the possession of proper educational qualifications and the right criteria for detecting the appropriate cultural artefacts, manners, vocabulary, accent, food, clothes, hobbies etc, as well as factual ownership of such precious items. Economic capital simply consists of one's financial assets, whereas social capital points to one's network: one's connection to people who are seen as holders of valuable capital and who can, if asked, give access to some of their capital (ie power) to the one who asks. Each type of capital is instrumental in creating power hierarchies, ie it serves to mark differences and similarities between the occupants of the field. The different types of capital can not only be acquired, inherited, transferred, exchanged, increased and decreased, but also partially converted into one another. Bourdieu (1986:243, italics in the original) has explained the latter process as follows:

[E]conomic capital...is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights;... cultural capital...is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications; and...social capital, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility.

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Bourdieu defined symbolic capital as well. That is cultural, economic, social or another type of capital which has been unconsciously given legitimacy, ie has been recognised as a valuable or appropriate source of power in that field. Symbolic capital can be used to secure more of another type of capital, which can consequently further increase one's legitimacy within the field.<sup>31</sup> The mobilisation of symbolic capital plays a significant role in the already mentioned struggles between the field occupants over the legitimate definition of the situation:

Objective power relations tend to reproduce themselves in symbolic power relations. In the symbolic struggle for the production of common sense or, more precisely, for a monopoly over legitimate naming, agents put into action the symbolic capital that they have acquired in previous struggles and which can be juridically guaranteed. In this way, titles of nobility, like educational qualifications, represent real titles of symbolic property which give one a right to the profits of recognition (Bourdieu, 1990:135).

The names which the agents employ to describe their own positioning and that of their opponents serve to situate a positioning in the field, as well as legitimise or delegitimise it. There are no impartial or neutral designations, not only because 'nothing classifies somebody more than the way he or she classifies' (Bourdieu, 1990:132), but also because

[t]he categories of perception, the systems of classification, that is, essentially, the words, the names which construct social reality as much as they express it, are the crucial stakes of political struggle, which is a struggle to impose the legitimate principle of vision and division (Bourdieu, 1990:134; see also Haraway, 1988).

On another level and applied to this research, considering the profound and violent societal changes which characterised their context, the designations which the occupants of the feminist field used for themselves and for the feminists with opposing views also served as a coping mechanism (Janoff-Bulman and Hanson Frieze, 1983). In other words, the names created some order in the physical, psychological and

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31 The conversion of symbolic into economic capital (and vice versa) is an important issue to consider for understanding the dynamics between the feminists, given that their activities and at least some of their income in the 1990s depended almost exclusively on financial support from abroad. Nevertheless, this issue lies outside the scope of this research. Not only is the money flow in the Belgrade and Zagreb feminist groups a topic large enough to qualify for a separate dissertation research project, but it is also a delicate one given the amount of informal donations. Being aware of the already great sensitivity of my primary research interest, I discarded from the start the idea of including this topic as well.

discursive insecurity caused by the proximity of war violence and the disintegration of Yugoslavia, as well as by the hard to grasp sudden differences in positioning between some of the hitherto fellow feminists and friends. Wherever shared affiliation was being disbanded, the classifying and naming made it easier to cope with one's dissident choices and strengthened the ties between the feminists with a same or very similar positioning.

According to Bourdieu, the struggle for legitimacy within a field can be described as a contest

between the newcomer who tries to break through the entry barrier and the dominant agent who will try to defend the monopoly and keep out competition...Those who in a determinate state of the power relations, more or less completely monopolize the specific capital, the basis of the specific power or authority characteristic of a field, are inclined to conservation strategies – those which...tend to defend *orthodoxy* – whereas those least endowed with capital (who are often also the newcomers, and therefore generally the youngest) are inclined towards subversion strategies, the strategies of *heresy* (1993:72,73, italics in the original).

Hipscher (2007) has conceptualised this struggle quite similarly to Bourdieu, although without referring to him. The two groups which she analysed showed an uncommon combination of positionings: the first united Catholicism and a pro-choice positioning, and the second articulated a feminist pro-life positioning. She called these groups 'heretical social movement organisations' and explained why such an organisation was heretical:

[It] identifies with an identity community yet articulates issue positions and pursues goals contrary to the community's presumed core issue positions. I say 'presumed,' as I recognize that identity community members may have multiple, contradictory interests, and goals. Nevertheless, the identity community as a whole is associated with particular issue positions because dominant organizations and leaders from the community espouse and enforce them (Hipscher, 2007:242).

Based on my empirical findings and building upon these two authors, I consider the initial positioning on violence of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, wherein gender had primacy over ethnicity (ie wherein men, regardless of ethnicity, were seen as perpetrators, while women, regardless of ethnicity, were perceived as victims), as the established or orthodox positioning within the feminist field in each city. This indication of the field in question is very important. The concrete contestation

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and the involved orthodox and heretical agents are specific to one field and should be – according to Bourdieu (1993; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) – observed in relation to that field and the power hierarchies within it. And indeed, if instead of the feminist field, the political field in each city and the there occurring struggle for definitions would be analysed, not only the participating agents would be different, but also the orthodox and heretical positioning on perpetrators and victims.

The heretical positioning in any field can be seen as a newcomer, due to its later appearance than the established one. However, as I will show in Chapter 5, in the Belgrade and Zagreb feminist fields alike, the heretical positioning was not a newcomers' positioning in the sense of being developed by those who have arrived later in the feminist field. Further common to the Belgrade and Zagreb feminist fields was that the same orthodox positioning on war rape – male sexual war violence against women is a universal phenomenon – was contested by adding ethnicity to the definition. Finally, in both feminist fields the positionings on war rape of the two self-declared antinationalist clusters underwent changes once more reliable factual information on this war crime emerged. The discovery of these modifications, which will receive extended attention in Chapter 4, is one of the significant novel findings of this research. It brings an important readjustment to the existing scholarship, which has thus far portrayed these positionings as immutable (Žarkov, 2002, 2007 on Belgrade is an important exception).

Bourdieu conceptualises the occupants of a field as agents whose thoughts, actions and feelings are conditioned by their position within that field and their socialisation – ie their habitus – but who, nevertheless, retain a certain level of freedom in choosing from the options which they see as being available to them. In doing so, they partially shape their future possibilities and decisions, and affect the course of their lives (Maton, 2008). This perception of all individuals as being simultaneously enabled and restrained stands in contrast with the denial of (feminist) agency of one's opponents which has been and still is articulated by a number of Belgrade and Zagreb feminists regardless of cluster. As I will show in Chapters 4 and 6, this delegitimation strategy usually manifested in negation of autonomy or accusation of not pursuing authentic women's interests.

The presence of the negation of autonomy means that one prominent contradiction can be observed in the oral and written utterances of some Belgrade and Zagreb feminists. While being outspokenly committed to the emancipation of women and their establishment as agents, these feminists simultaneously denied the emancipation of other feminists, ie their ability to form opinions and position themselves on (war-related) issues. That denial of the autonomy of the not like-minded

feminists also served to portray the speaker/writer and the like-minded feminists as particularly autonomous because of being capable of both establishing themselves as independent agents and disclosing the deceptive actions of others. Such a double function was performed also by the other form of delegitimation: the accusation of other feminists of pursuing personal instead of the interests of women in general. Thereby, the speaker/writer (implicitly) described herself as a disinterested party who purely advocated the highest good for women and did not aim at obtaining any personal gains – a strategy which Bourdieu calls ‘misrecognition’:

[A]kin to the idea of ‘false consciousness’ in the Marxist tradition, misrecognition denotes ‘denial’ of the economic and political interests present in a set of practices...Misrecognition is tied to Bourdieu’s strong claim that all actions are interested. The logic of self-interest underlying all practices...is misrecognized as a logic of ‘disinterest.’ Symbolic practices deflect attention from the interested character of practices and thereby contribute to their enactment as disinterested pursuits. This misperception legitimizes these practices and thereby contributes to the reproduction of the social order in which they are embedded (Swartz, 1997:89–90).

Contrary thus to the above portrayals of one’s agency, I do not perceive the struggle for legitimacy among the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists as taking place between manipulated and critical feminists or between those with and those without a false consciousness.<sup>32</sup> Following Bourdieu, I view all involved agents as concurrently enlightened and autonomous, as well as manipulated and constrained. While I do not claim that there were no individual differences among the feminists as regards their levels of autonomy and critical perception, I argue against any a priori classifications which are only based on one’s war-related positioning.

My conceptualisation of all feminists as agents has been additionally inspired by Saba Mahmood (2001, 2005) and Lois McNay (2000), who upheld that agency is not only formed in resistance to domination, subversion and resignification, but also in acceptance, accommodation and adaptation to norms and normative behaviour. Nonetheless, even if one would see agency only as a capacity to resist, subvert or resignify a positioning, one could still see the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists as agents because they resisted, subverted and resignified the up to then dominant (post-)Yugoslav feminist positioning which entailed that feminists were by definition

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32 Sandra Harding (2004:8) describes this dichotomy as one between a ‘homogenous, oppressed, heroic, ideal knower and agent of history versus a homogenized, ideology-producing, economically and politically powerful ignoramus’.

antinationalist and that the (sexual) war crimes had a gender, but not an ethnicity. In a similar manner, the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists resisted the positioning, developed by the other Belgrade cluster, which added an ethnic dimension to the (sexual) war crimes. Thus, both feminist clusters in both cities resisted and subverted some norms, while accepting and accommodating others. There was, however, a disagreement between the clusters as to which norms were to be resisted and which were to be embraced – a struggle for the legitimate definition of the situation.

Memory is another important concept in this research, given that I primarily analyse events which took place in the 1990s. This does not, however, take away the fact that many of those events – as Andrea Zlatar (2005:14) has observed on a more general note – do not exclusively belong to the past, but extend to the present as well: ‘The warring 1990s have not become past neither in Croatia, nor in Bosnia-Herzegovina, nor in Serbia. Many unanswered questions have remained, much has been hushed up, many [questions] are suppressed, many [questions] nobody wants to hear about.’<sup>33</sup>

The struggle for the definition of the wars and the (sexual) war crimes among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the 1990s – which to a much smaller extent also takes place at present – overlaps with the comparable contest still vigorously going on in the historiographic and political fields in the two countries. Therefore, on this concrete issue, there is a partial overlap between the feminist, historiographic and political fields; they are not fully autonomous from each other. In the historiographic and political fields, the question how to define the (post-)Yugoslav wars is often linked to the struggle over defining World War II on the territory of Yugoslavia, ie the segment of World War II which concerns the role of the partisans and the local collaborators of the Axis powers. Thereby the same question is raised once more: who was the perpetrator and who was the victim, or who was waging a just war and who was not (*B92*, 10.07.2009; Bosto et al., 2008; Bosto and Cipek, 2009; Cipek, 2011; *E-novine*, 24.03.2012; Goldstein and Goldstein, 2011; Kamberović, 2006; *Nezavisne novine*, 10.02.2010; *Novi list*, 03.05.2009, 30.01.2011, 03.04.2012; *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, 25.03.2012; Stojanović D., 2010).<sup>34</sup>

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33 This quotation is also quite germane to the handling of the contested past events among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists. This has, on the one hand, made my research very sensitive and labourious due to the great number of silences and (previously) unarticulated emotions. On the other hand, though, it was beneficial to the data collection: my (interview) inquiries were predominantly enthusiastically welcomed by the potential respondents given their need to speak about those years and events. I will return to this issue in the next – methodological – section of this chapter.

34 Different definitions of same events exist within one country and between countries. An analysis which was undertaken by 60 historians from the Balkans, gathered in the Thessaloniki-based ‘Joint History Project’, showed radical discrepancies between the ways

The stakes in this struggle are very high, not only because the legitimacy which a certain positioning receives brings legitimacy (symbolic capital) to its proponent, but also because of the scarce capacity for remembering – both on the collective and on an individual level. Writing on the collective memories of the Dutch colonial past, Frances Gouda (2007:12) has stressed that

[t]he process of remembering and forgetting is forever in flux. Memory concerning the historical record, as a constitutive force in the cognitive and imaginative fashioning of any nation-state, can be envisioned as a museum in which space is acutely limited. At certain moments in time, when a particular historical narrative has lost its luster or strategic usefulness, it must be removed from the museum of public recollections.

The struggle for the limited memory space has been conjured up well by Orli Fridman through the example of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist group Women in Black. Fridman (2006a:294) addressed the group's silent vigils on the Belgrade main square whereby the activists demanded of the Serbian state to assume its responsibility for the Srebrenica genocide and officially commemorate it:

The difficulty that the demonstrators had in finding the space to stand and convey their message on the square that evening serves as a metaphor for the similar effort to raise those same issues in the public sphere, and include them in Serbia's public discourse. The struggle to make the memory of Srebrenica present in the streets of Belgrade is a metaphor for the struggle over the memory of the wars, the atrocities, and the war crimes. This is a struggle over the creation of collective memory, as it addresses the question of how Serbian society will deal with and remember the events that took place during the wars in Croatia, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and later in Kosovo.

Like any other struggle in a field, the struggle for memory is also marked by the presence of orthodox and heretical positionings: '[m]emories supportive of the maintenance of existing power structures are usually assured wider social space

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in which the 20th century had been portrayed in the history school textbooks of each Balkan country. According to Dubravka Stojanović, one of the involved historians from Serbia, the differences have been so great that it would be difficult at times to apprehend that all dissimilar versions addressed the same historical episode. A lack of unanimity has existed even on the dates when some major events – such as the First Balkan War in 1912 – had started, since an earlier or later date portrayed the country in question in a more or less favourable light (B92, 24.04.2009; see also *Joint History Project* website; Stojanović D., 2010).

and easier transmission' (Leydesdorff et al., 1996:8). As I will show in Chapter 6, the unequal power status of the memories or positionings is also visible in the way in which the self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists referred in 2009 or 2010 to the divisions in the 1990s. The already addressed importance of distinguishing between the fields should once again not be overlooked because the same one positioning can be heretical in the feminist field, while being dominant in the political field. Nevertheless, the latter would not mean much to a feminist who seeks legitimacy within the feminist field.

The last concept which I address here is myth. According to Dvora Yanow (2000:80), '[w]e create myths as an act of mediating contradictions, such as those that arise when we are faced with accommodating in daily life the mandates of two (or more) irreconcilable values. Myths direct our attention away from such incommensurables'. In the 1990s, just like naming, myths were employed by the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists from both clusters for the purpose of establishing themselves as legitimate agents with an unambiguous and consistent positioning. Nonetheless, unlike naming, which came into existence only after the beginning of the war violence, the use of one particular myth was commonly present already in times of Yugoslavia.

The Belgrade and Zagreb feminists tried to mobilise themselves and others by using the idea of sisterhood – ie commonality, cooperation and solidarity – among women in general due to their shared underprivileged gender-based position in the society. However, even in peacetime Yugoslavia there were disagreements among the feminists, such as that about the right type of feminist engagement (see eg in Chapter 3 my portrayal of the establishment of the Women's Group Trešnjevka in Zagreb). Obviously, the mobilising idea of sisterhood could not always be carried out in practice even among feminists since not all of them shared the same ambitions and world views. It is for this reason that I consider sisterhood a myth: it had to superficially reconcile the simultaneous existence of commonalities and differences among women. On a different note, to employ a metaphoric portrayal (all women as sisters) for communicating a myth (sisterhood) was not coincidental. Murray Edelman (1971:70) has observed that 'metaphors highlight the benefits that flow from a course of action and erase its unfortunate concomitants, helping speaker and listeners [or: writer and readers] to conceal disturbing implications from themselves'. The use of a metaphor served, thus, to strengthen the myth which was to be communicated.

Another example of this phenomenon is the metaphor of transgression of boundaries (or crossing the lines). It was used by the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists after the beginning of Yugoslavia's violent disintegration. This new metaphor resulted from and reaffirmed the idea of sisterhood and, as such,

did not essentially differ from the metaphor of women as sisters. Nevertheless, it was adapted to the changed reality. By using this metaphor, the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists accentuated their brave continuation of the cooperation between them across the newly established ethnic and state demarcation lines, and despite the war violence and the state politics. At the same time, though, that image obscured the parallel creation of a boundary by the same feminists: one which separated them from the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists who did not want to continue the exchange with those from the other city. The metaphor of crossing the lines concealed the fact that only some feminists from each city participated in this cooperation and that misunderstandings and conflicts occurred even between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists.<sup>35</sup>

## Methodology

### Positionality of the researcher

The assertion that all knowledge production is situated (Haraway, 1988) refers not only to the context in which the particular knowledge is generated. It also conceptualises the location of the knowledge producer as ontologically and epistemologically relevant. The scientist's life experience influences the formulation of research topics, the choice of and the access to research subjects, the data collection and analysis, and the findings and conclusions. Therefore, 'being reflexive about one's own positionality is [not] to self-indulge but to reflect on how one is inserted in grids of power relations and

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35 A good illustration of the often covert emphasis on the cooperation with some feminists and the hushing up of the split with others is the poem 'Crossing the Line'. It was written by the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist Biljana Kašić and appeared in 1994 on the first page of a Belgrade feminist publication (Kašić, 1994b). The author drew an explicit contrast between 'us' (women) who crossed boundaries and 'them' (men) who created them. No ethnic or geographic indications were provided. At the bottom of the page, the Belgrade editors added a note which clearly expressed the at the time markedly politically daring alliance between Belgrade and Zagreb civilians: 'Biljana thought of us when she wrote the poem. By publishing it, we think of Biljana and our female comrades from Zagreb' (Četković et al., 1994:1). Still, the story which the poem narrated – the gender-based collaboration across and despite the ethnic boundaries and state borders, the mutual understanding and the shared dreams and goals – did not actually concern all Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, let alone all women. Since the so-called nationalist feminists from each city did not cooperate with the feminists from the other city, the real (but only alluded to) actors of the poem and the accompanying note were the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists.

how that influences methods, interpretations, and knowledge production' (Sultana, 2007:376).

I was a multiple insider-outsider in this research. Being born and raised in Macedonia (one of the former Yugoslav republics) and being of Macedonian ethnicity proved to be beneficial for doing this research, since the Macedonians are not usually perceived as an involved party in the (post-)Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. I had spent two-thirds of my life in the (post-)Yugoslav region, including the period when Yugoslavia started becoming 'former'. After finishing in 2000 the one-year programmes in Women's Studies and Peace Studies at the Zagreb-based Centre for Women's Studies and Centre for Peace Studies, respectively, I moved to the Netherlands to study Sociology and Gender Studies. During my life in the Netherlands I maintained my familiarity with the work of the feminist groups and the general situation in Croatia and Serbia (and Bosnia and Herzegovina) through personal communication, frequent travels, and printed and electronic media.

My active participation in diverse groups in Macedonia during the 1990s had sensitised me to the not war-related organisational issues my respondents referred to, such as conflicts regarding preferred leadership style, task division or participation at conferences abroad. Due to my interest in women's rights and feminism, I had met most of my potential self-declared antinationalist respondents already before this research.<sup>36</sup> Many of them were my first teachers of feminism, although we have never cooperated closely. I was, however, much more of an outsider to the so-called nationalist feminists. This was especially the case regarding the Zagreb ones. Prior to my engagement with this topic, I was quite unfamiliar with their names and work. In consequence, the level of trust between me and the self-declared antinationalist respondents (from both cities) was usually higher than that between me and the feminists from the two so-called nationalist clusters.

Finally, this research has strongly benefited from my full fluency in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and native familiarity with the Cyrillic alphabet – the second official script in Yugoslavia next to the Latin one – which was used in a significant amount of relevant documents and texts. These linguistic skills have allowed me to obtain rich and extensive empirical material by conducting interviews in the respondents'

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36 My proximity to their work has produced several unexpected joyful moments of 'stumbling upon myself' during the fieldwork. For example, in one organisational archive in Zagreb I came across a letter of mine which I had written in 1998 in support of several Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. Another such encounter took place in a conversation with a Belgrade self-declared antinationalist respondent. I learned that in 1991 she had co-authored the (unsigned) antiwar leaflet which I had translated into Macedonian exactly ten years later, during the war in Macedonia.

native language,<sup>37</sup> examining original documents and using the scholarship which was only available in local languages. Moreover, my ability to read texts in Dutch, English, French, German and Slovenian has further contributed to the (innovative) quality of my research findings.

### **Data selection, sampling and access**

The purpose of the data collection in this research was to gather information which would enable me to:

- contextualise and compare the (development of the) war-related positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists between 1991 and 2000,
- explore the relations between the feminists' biographical data (eg age, education, ethnicity, parents' profession and involvement with feminism) and their war-related positionings, and
- analyse how the divisions between the feminists in the 1990s were remembered and interpreted by them at the time of interviewing (2009 or 2010).

Due to the inductive nature of this research, the data collection was not theoretically but empirically informed, ie guided by the previously obtained data. The data were primarily obtained from written sources which were found in personal, organisational or state archives and libraries,<sup>38</sup> and from qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews with Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, as well as several external respondents, as I explain below. In addition to this, and to a much smaller extent, I gathered data from relevant documentary films and internet presentations. The written sources included documents produced by the feminists themselves or their groups – eg (academic) articles, books, conference reports, correspondence, leaflets, mission statements, newsletters, press-releases and statutes) – as well as newspaper and magazine items written by third parties. Despite the significant time investment, due to frequent incorrect referencing of media articles, I generally strove to obtain a copy of the original texts instead of relying on the authors who had mentioned them.

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37 With the exception of the Kosovar Albanian and Slovenian respondents.

38 In addition to the personal archives and libraries of my respondents and the organisational ones of the groups they were/had been active in, I gathered information from Atria – Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History in Amsterdam, International Women's Peace Archives Fasia Jansen in Oberhausen, Green Memory Archives in Berlin, Croatian State Archives, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, and National and University Library – all in Zagreb, and National Library of Serbia in Belgrade.

## CHAPTER ONE

The data were collected primarily during a fieldwork period of 12 months (September 2008 – August 2009 and September 2010), most of which was spent in Belgrade and Zagreb. I also travelled to Berlin and Oberhausen to do archival research, as well as to Ljubljana, Prishtina and Sarajevo to conduct interviews with the external respondents. In light of the sensitive character of my research, which was recurrently confirmed by the interactions with my (potential) respondents, I chose not to contact them after the fieldwork for additional information. The very few occasions when I nevertheless did that concerned issues which I deemed unproblematic. In other words, I refrained from reopening any sensitive issues after the closure of the fieldwork period and the direct face-to-face exchange with the respondents. Although this choice not to pursue the data collection further meant that I could not fill some of the gaps revealed by the post-fieldwork data analysis, I granted priority to the maintenance of ethically responsible relationships.

The selection of potential respondents was originally intended to take place by a two-stage sampling process: initial selection of key self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminist groups from Belgrade and Zagreb, followed by a selection of their key activists. This plan, however, was adjusted to the situation on the ground. Whereas in Zagreb one could speak of self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminist groups, it turned out that in Belgrade there has never been such a pronounced split among the feminists. No feminist group there was considered nationalist; this name was used only for individual feminists. Furthermore, not all Belgrade and Zagreb feminist groups have saved their archives, and the existing ones were more often than not incomplete and unsystematic.

This, as well as the fact that not all archives were accessible, meant that it was a risky step to assume that for each selected group I would find data which would be comparable to the data found on the other groups in the sample. Finally, in both cities one's affiliation to a particular feminist group was far from a fixed category: some feminists were active in several groups, some left one group and joined another, others left one group to establish a new one, and there were also feminists who had withdrawn from a group for some time only to return to it later. This fluidity of group membership was enabled by the fact that much of the activism in the 1990s was conducted on a voluntarily basis or for a small honorarium.

In light of these insights, I let my sample develop more organically, ie be guided by the incoming data. I conducted primarily purposive sampling which I supplemented with much more limited snowball sampling. Being aware of the scarcity of relevant empirical material in the scholarship and the difficulty of obtaining this material due to its sensitivity, I looked for the apparently most information-rich

respondents. The individual feminists whom I sampled were those who – based on the scholarship, organisational documents, media sources or information from other informants – had been directly and prominently involved in the war-related activism in Belgrade or Zagreb from the beginning of the 1990s. Since most of them had been active feminists already in the late 1980s, I could ask them about their first-hand experiences of the divisions and alliances among the feminists which were brought along by the (violent) disintegration of the country. Due to the even greater scarcity of information on the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, I made a point of interviewing all four prominent Belgrade feminists who were seen by some as nationalists and tracking down the key representatives of all Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist groups.

The discovery of silences and myths surrounding the war-related feminist activism inspired me to look for insider-outsider perspectives. I conducted a few less extensive interviews with Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, as well as with two feminists from two other towns in Croatia. These respondents had been less prominently involved on the war-related issues, but had worked closely with the prominently involved ones. In addition to this, I interviewed several external respondents who had had extensive ties with my main respondents. The external respondents were peace activists in Belgrade and Zagreb, feminists based in Ljubljana, Prishtina and Sarajevo, and one Zagreb-based American sociologist and feminist activist. She is, so to say, my most external respondent. I selected her because starting from the late 1980s she had been in touch with the (post-)Yugoslav feminists and written about them. In the mid-1990s she had moved to Zagreb to be the regional director of an American donor agency, which by the second half of the 1990s had become one of the main funders of women's groups in the post-Yugoslav countries (a position she no longer held at the time of interviewing).<sup>39</sup>

In total, I approached 55 women for interviewing, seven of whom turned out to be unavailable. This means that the interview invitations were met with a positive response rate of 87%. Four out of the seven non-respondents were Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists: one never responded to my inquiries, while three declined the invitation due to a grave illness, the emotional character of the research, and a lack of

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39 Between June 1996 and October 1997 I was employed in the Macedonian office of this donor agency. I met some of my future respondents then, but given that my work focused on Macedonia, I did not engage with them much. In hindsight, this limitation has been very fortunate. A more extensive previous involvement as an employee of a funding body might have greatly biased this research, especially since the agency in question explicitly supported only 'non-nationalistic women's organizations' (*Report on the Impact Assessment*, 20.11.2006).

## CHAPTER ONE

trust in my interpretation. The remaining three potential respondents wrote back that they could not participate because of a lack of time. Those women were one Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist, and one Belgrade and one Ljubljana external activist.

I conducted interviews with 48 women, 12 of whom were external respondents. The remaining 36 respondents are classified in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Main and additional interview respondents

	Main self-declared antinationalist respondents	Main so-called nationalist respondents	Additional self-declared antinationalist respondents	Additional so-called nationalist respondents
Belgrade	9	4	2	0
Zagreb	8	7	5 (including 2 active in other Croatian towns)	1

This brings me to the issue of the representativeness of my sample. The use of purposive and snowball sampling, whereby the accent was placed on respondents with presumably significant knowledge on the war-related coalitions and divisions between and among the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, limits my ability to draw general conclusions on the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists. Due to the absence of (stratified) random sampling in combination with a large sample size, I cannot extrapolate my findings on eg the relation between the educational level and the use of so-called nationalist positionings to all Belgrade or all Zagreb feminists. So, although I speak for the sake of simplicity about ‘Belgrade and Zagreb feminists’, my findings should be understood as only concerning the feminists who have prominently articulated their views on the war-related issues in the 1990s.

The good and quite unique access which I had to the field consisted not only of a great number of people willing to be (extensively) interviewed, but also of the readiness of many to allow me to freely go through their private home libraries and archives. The latter was more often the case with the self-declared antinationalist respondents. Nevertheless, I also experienced that one Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist went to the Croatian State Archives to give her permission for my full access to her group’s documents which were under a very restricted access for privacy and sensitivity reasons. There were also respondents who were very eager to personally search for a document or a book which they considered important for my research. Without my asking, some respondents voluntarily told me why they had given me

such access. One set of reasons had to do with my position and the other with their need to reflect (aloud) upon those contested and silenced issues for which there was not otherwise much time or safe space. According to Allan Nevins (1996:31), this type of need is often beneficial to the collection of oral testimonies:

[N]ot infrequently they [the respondents] had long felt a desire to furnish their own account of an important transaction or controversial period, but had lacked time and opportunity until suddenly seated before a tape recorder with a well-equipped interviewer before them.

Even though nobody has said it to me openly, I suspect that the abandonment of the communication between many feminists and the subsequent unexpressed positionings and emotions have positively affected the data collection for my thesis. I believe that the willingness which I encountered had also to do with the chance which I gave to the respondents to reach out to one another through me. In this way they were able to communicate to others that which had been left unsaid but was still very much alive. Finally, I see the good access as also resulting from the perception which some respondents had of me. They saw me as their personal biographer or a research assistant who would write their story or pursue their research interest. These reasons were explicitly communicated to me only by one respondent. She said that it was good that I was doing this since she did not have the time for it. At other times it was implied through suggestions about the direction my research should take and the topics which should enter the dissertation. This points to the reverse side of the good access: the great challenge to remain true to one's own research agenda and results while communicating this commitment and one's findings in a considerate manner.

### **Description of the interviews**

Most of the interviews lasted between two and a half and three hours. The shortest interview lasted one hour and the longest six hours. During the interviews with the main respondents, in addition to the questions about some significant war-related feminist and/or antiwar events, and the respondents' positionings and interpretations of the divisions among them in the 1990s, I dedicated considerable time to exploring their personal trajectories. I asked these feminists about eg their age, ethnicity, educational level, family background, profession, religious beliefs, affiliation with Yugoslavia, motivation for engaging in feminist activism, past and present-day involvement in organised feminism, and their personal situation during the wars. Such intensive inquiry into the background, subjectivities and lives of the feminist activists

was not only necessary for situating the agents within the feminist field. It proved to be a quite urgent research endeavour in light of the fragility of human life, ie the untimely passing away of several important feminists and peace activists, including five women whom I would have loved to interview and two whom I did interview.<sup>40</sup>

I did not work with a fully standardised set of interview questions. Each interview was at least 50% custom-made, and I also left space for posing questions on issues which would surface in the course of the interview. The standardised set addressed the life trajectories (this part was significantly shorter in the interviews with the additional and external respondents) and the war-related splits between the feminists. The custom-made questions referred to concrete statements made by the respondent in question and seemingly important events which she had attended and/or written about. I asked for more details on these events, as well as for clarifications on those statements which I had not quite understood when I had come across them in the written, video or internet sources, or had them recounted by other respondents.

The large amount of custom-made questions meant that prior to each interview I read as many writings or statements by the respondent in question as possible, so that I could use that material in the interview to ask for a very specific explanation or commentary. Albeit very exhausting and time-consuming, this strategy turned out to be very rewarding. It helped me to better and more quickly decipher the statements wherein the respondents would not give explicit answers or disclose concrete names of people and groups. The same was true for the allusions made outside the interview context, ie during the informal conversations or in the (scholarly) articles. Furthermore, considering the instability and malleability of human memory, it was thanks to these preparations that I was able to assist or correct my respondents regarding eg the dates of an event or the names of those who had attended it. Finally, this strategy improved the rapport between me and the respondents. I was able to converse more easily with them, while they appreciated my knowledge on the topic and familiarity with their work and/or statements.

The need for an extensive custom-made part of the interviews was raised primarily by the lack of historiography on the war-related feminist activism in Belgrade

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40 The early death of many people who have been active in feminist, peace and/or human rights groups in the (post-)Yugoslav region in the 1990s is commonly attributed to existential insecurity, poor nutrition, poverty, sleep deprivation, work overload, as well as the absence of proper medical care and the war-induced environmental pollution. I have heard people referring to this sad and worrisome pattern as: 'The 1990s have taken their toll again', 'the 1990s' tax' or in the words of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian writer Abdulah Sidran: 'There goes one more who thought he [sic] had survived the war' (*Dnevni avaz*, 07.03.2007).

and Zagreb. More precisely, in order to be able to interpret the positionings on the wars and each other, I first needed to find out the factual information, such as who, when and why had organised the event in question, who had (not) been invited and why, and who had (not) come and why. This quest for information was a very demanding task for me and my respondents alike, given that more often than not there were hardly any available original documents on a particular event. I was aware of the impossibility of fully reconstructing an event, and yet I also needed some anchors in the form of concrete scenes and utterances around which my respondents could construct their stories, and I mine. Also this labourious undertaking proved useful. The recollection of one episode usually helped the respondent remember more information on that or other events.

### **Use of interviews and respondents' reactions to the transcripts**

Since all but one interview were not conducted in English, a decision had to be made regarding the translation. I chose not to translate any transcript beforehand and perform the analysis on the original language of the interview. Towards the end of the writing I translated into English only those parts which I wanted to include as quotations or paraphrases in the text of the dissertation. This was done at such a late stage not only in order to save time, but also in order to reduce to the greatest possible extent the loss of meaning which is intrinsic to the translation process.

I treated the interviews – as well as the organisational documents and articles – as a resource and as a topic, ie a text to be subjected to a discourse analysis. In the first usage, the interview serves to 'discover things about events outside the interview situation' (Seale, 2000:215), such as the historical information I was after. In the second usage, 'the accomplishments of participants are investigated through a detailed examination of the language people deploy' (ibid), including the manner in which the respondents frame their statements and the places which have remained silent in their narratives. In my research, this concerned the collection of data on how the respondents portrayed themselves, their fellow feminists, and the events they had been (in)directly part of.

The use of interviews for obtaining valid historical knowledge is often practiced by oral historians, but not everybody within the historiographic field is convinced of the suitability of interviews (or oral histories) for this purpose. The critics perceive this method as far too context-dependent, malleable and subjective to be able to provide any objective factual data (Grele, 1998; Hobsbawm, 1997; Roberts, 2002). But, to say that oral history is subjective implies that the traditional historiography

is objective and therefore reliable,<sup>41</sup> even though ‘any writing about the past is a subsequent reconstruction, and...no history reaches us unmediated’ (Leydesdorff et al., 1996:12).

To discard oral sources in historiography would mean a rejection of all research topics for which there are no written or other material sources available, which would cause a great bias in historiography. Such a move would also leave unused the privilege of asking additional information from the direct actors present at events or from the authors of material sources – an opportunity which is often not available in historical research because of the time distance from the analysed event. It remains nevertheless important, just like in working with any data source, to use triangulation for validating the historical data obtained from interviews (Lummis, 1998). In line with this, with the exception of the biographical data, I have put great effort into crosschecking the information gathered from an interview against information which I collected elsewhere (eg press releases, newspaper articles, other interviews, already existing analyses etc).

Another way to evaluate the historical information obtained from the interviews – or any other source – is by checking for internal consistency or coherence. Seen on its own, an inconsistent or incoherent life story would be a problematic source of historical information, but on a different level this does not mean that that story would be devoid of value or meaning: “wrong” statements are still psychologically “true,” and...this truth may be equally as important as factually reliable accounts’ (Portelli, 1992:51). Actually, although contradictions in life stories are to be expected – since nobody has a coherent, unitary and unchanging self – they are at odds with the human need to have an ‘illusion of wholeness’ (Ewing, 1990). Consequently, ‘[i]n order to exist in the social world with a comfortable sense of being a good, socially proper, and stable person, an individual needs to have a coherent, acceptable, and constantly revised life story’ (Linde, 1993:3).

The demand to present oneself as a coherent agent turned out to be particularly important to some of the respondents. Several of them explicitly demanded to receive the interview transcript for authorisation, but in order to treat all the respondents

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41 To speak with Bourdieu, this kind of contestation is a good example of the struggle between an orthodox (dominant) discourse and a heretical challenger. Another example is the issue of quotas and positive discrimination. The opponents of the use of these policy measures with regard to eg women say that it would lead to employment of less qualified (worse) candidates since excellence would no longer be the selection criterion. The chance that some of the employed men have not received their jobs due to their superior qualities, but due to stereotypical ideas about their gender-induced abilities, is hereby conveniently disregarded.

equally, I sent the transcripts to everybody. The reactions were diverse. One part of the respondents did not make any significant alterations to the transcript, whereas others made substantial changes. These are the only respondents about whom I know for certain that the issue of coherence mattered dearly. They changed the order of sentences, provided (extensive) additional explanations and made many language and style changes. Four respondents even rewrote most of the transcript.

While these rewritten texts differ from the intact or slightly altered transcripts, that did not prevent me from using them as a source of historical information, as well as from examining how the respondents wanted to structure their arguments and speak about other feminists in front of me. In order to attend to the significant information which was contained in the substantial alterations, I clearly marked all those changes, including the erasures of (parts of) sentences in the original transcript. While considerably extending the duration of the analysis, this enabled me to have both versions of the transcript in a single file and use them both in the analysis. Nonetheless, for ethical reasons, none of the erased fragments has entered this dissertation either as a quotation or a paraphrase.

There is further a group of respondents whose concern with coherence I can only surmise. To begin with, this applies to the two self-declared antinationalist respondents (one from Belgrade and one from Zagreb) who informed me explicitly that they wished to withdraw their transcripts, the former because of a – further unexplained – feeling of bitterness the transcript had left her with, and the latter due to her lack of trust in my analysis. The seven respondents (three Zagreb so-called nationalist and one self-declared antinationalist, one additional from Zagreb, one external from Ljubljana and one Belgrade self-declared antinationalist), who tacitly terminated the communication after I had sent them the transcript for authorisation, belong to this group as well. Their silence entailed that they have never told me what they thought of the transcript and whether they would authorise it or not. Actually, one of them said that she would look at it in a few days and another respondent wrote that she did not want me to use the transcript before her authorisation, but neither of them got back to me afterwards. All these respondents received emails and mobile text messages from me telling them that if I had not heard from them by a given date, I would treat their transcripts as authorised. Consequently, this is how I used them in the analysis.

This brings me to the recurring theme in my research: its very sensitive and emotional character for my respondents. Albeit to a different extent, this played a role in all interviews and in some cases also before, when I was introducing myself and my research to the prospective respondent and trying to arrange an interview with

her. As it will become clear from the rest of the thesis, the word ‘implicit(ly)’ is one of the words which appear in it most frequently. This consequence of my respondents’ common use of covert statements required a lot of time for reading between the lines and thereby also recognising (unforeseen) silences and problematic places. Another manifestation of this avoidance to give unambiguous statements and references was the recurring phenomenon of having respondents say to me: ‘I will not mention any names, have the others tell you.’<sup>42</sup> Obviously, this led to an additional time-consuming search for clues on who the persons in question were – not only in the succeeding interviews, but also in all other texts and video material which I had at my disposal.

The charged nature of my research topic was further visible in the words and fragments which had disappeared, ie had been taken out, from the authorised interview transcripts. Most of these alterations concerned conflicts with and criticism of other feminists. Sometimes only the personal names or certain laden or slang words were erased, other times whole sentences, and at yet other times the whole description of the episode was removed. Occasionally, the parts which had been deleted were replaced with more neutral terms or formulations.

Before sending out the transcripts, only one respondent had asked to be quoted by a different name. This number did not increase significantly after the reception of the transcripts, probably because those with the greatest objections had either broken the communication with me, withdrawn the transcript or made huge alterations in it to make it, in their view, presentable to a broader public. After reading the transcripts two more respondents opted for anonymity, whereas two others chose to be quoted with their initials. For the sake of uniformity I decided eventually to use code names for all respondents<sup>43</sup> – a choice I informed them about per email. I resorted to employing code names not only because of the five respondents who had asked not to be quoted by their real name. I also had in mind the respondent who had passed away without having the chance to read her transcript and decide upon this issue, as well as the seven respondents who had stopped communicating with me.

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42 The most bizarre exchange in this sense happened when I was trying to find out the name of the feminist with whom the respondent had parted ways. This was the – here anonymised – dialogue:

Me: What was her positioning, ie your perception of her positioning?

Respondent: I would not like to... *It is better to ask her.* It would not be good to interpret her positioning.

Me: But *I do not know who the person in question is.*

Respondent: No, *I do not want to tell her name* (emphasis added).

43 The code names are explained in the list of conducted interviews which is featured in Appendix B.

Although I felt confident to treat their transcripts as authorised, I found it unethical to mention them by name without their explicit permission.

All these reactions to the interview transcripts become even more telling about the sensitivity of this research and some respondents' need for coherence if one takes into account the following three pieces of information which I provided upon sending the transcript for authorisation. First, I explained to my respondents that, since a presentation of oral histories was not my goal, I did not intend to publish the whole interview text, but only some sentences. Second, I pointed out that, since some respondents had referred to other feminists by name during the interview, while others had only said 'a colleague' or 'a woman', I would take out for the sake of homogeneity all personal names from the quoted fragments. Third, just like during the interview, I let each respondent choose once more (after having seen the transcript) how she wanted to be quoted.

Besides using code names to refer to the respondents' interview statements, I sometimes employed the same code names also in the literature references. I did this to conceal the particular respondent's identity in the situations when I juxtaposed an interview statement of that respondent with a scholarly text of hers. Nevertheless, I wish I could have kept the full names in the text – a choice which would have pleased some respondents, too. My initial ambition had after all been to write a thesis which would provide a larger contribution to the historiography of the (post-)Yugoslav feminism in the 1990s. I saw the urgency of inscribing the full names of the direct actors given the large gaps in the historiography, the already mentioned fragility of human life and the influence of time on the fading and loss of human memories and paper documents alike. Furthermore, by documenting these feminists' names I wanted to pay them a more explicit tribute for the immense amount of important work which they had conducted under very difficult conditions; work which has not received the recognition it deserves within Croatia and Serbia. It is my sincere hope, therefore, that future research efforts on this and related topics will not have to navigate a minefield and will manage to attend to the historiographic lacunae which have been partly reproduced by this thesis due to the absence of real names.

### **Challenges during the research process**

In addition to the already mentioned responsibility resulting from my good access to the field and the emotional character of the addressed topic for my respondents, I encountered several other challenges which I classify as technical, emotional and integrity ones. The first of the technical difficulties, which significantly slowed down

the processes of data collection and analysis, was the presence of undated and unsigned organisational documents. Another problem was posed by the archived photocopies of published newspaper or magazine articles which did not contain the date and/or the name of the medium. In those situations, unless I could obtain the correct information from a respondent, I had to manually look for the article in question because the Croatian and Serbian newspapers and magazines from the 1990s were not digitalised. Furthermore, it happened often that a respondent would mention an (academic) article she had written or a talk she had given, but could not give me a copy since she had not kept any. If the text seemed important to my research, I would put a lot of effort in trying to find it. This was especially true for the articles for which the respondents could only vaguely remember the medium in which they had been published.

The poor condition of many personal and organisational archives created an additional challenge. Since none of these archives has been kept under the proper storage conditions, the documents – especially those on thermal fax paper – were gradually becoming destroyed by warmth, light, moisture, dust and dirt. This situation is quite worrisome considering the malleability of memory and the different perceptions of same events. It also exposes the importance of preserving original documents in professionally run and publicly accessible archives so that they could be used for socio-historical analyses and a creation of a more shared view of the past.

The data collection was also burdened by foreign authors' insufficient attentiveness in registering the personal names of the (post-)Yugoslav activists. Due to this, the digitalised search for foreign articles by using these names as key words bore fruit only occasionally and typically after a labour- and time-intensive search. Many foreign authors had (at times quite seriously) misspelled or incorrectly transliterated the names of the people whom they quoted. For example, I came across 'Besic' instead of the factual 'Kašić', 'Zaidgiz' instead of 'Daidžić', and 'Durda Miklauvic' instead of 'Đurđa Miklaužić'.

The emotional challenges which I faced during the fieldwork were also diverse. I learned the hard way that going back in time meant to observe in a highly condensed manner the process of arrival and progression of the wars, the lies and the illusions which were communicated by the politicians and the military leaders, and the inability of the (feminist) activists to stop the wars and the war rapes. Often during the interviews and the informal conversations with my respondents, I felt as if I had opened Pandora's Box and exposed myself to an avalanche of hitherto silenced emotions, memories and positionings.

I also became aware that working on a topic which concerned a period of war violence meant a regular, albeit indirect, exposure to terrible war crimes and other

forms of destruction and inhumanity. Sometimes, the victims and the atrocities came very close to me and became quite real, almost tangible. This happened, for example, when I stumbled upon the hand-written testimonies of war victims or when I looked at personal items of murdered people, including their identification papers (issued in Yugoslavia, just like my own back then). It took me a while to learn to cope with such unsettling encounters; they not only brought me a much more profound realisation of the intensity and the consequences of the wars, but also confronted me once again with the vulnerability of human life, including my own.

Lastly, a set of integrity challenges was posed by the fact that this concrete analysis of silenced issues concerned a recent period of war violence and still living actors. This demanded a careful and thoughtful communication with the (potential) respondents, impossibility to subcontract the transcription and translation of the interviews, time to internally process the respondents' narratives of violence, intensive pain and anger, as well as an obligation to formulate criticism in a considerate manner, while simultaneously preserving my commitment towards science. Such a sensitive approach was also needed in view of my previous acquaintance with the majority of my respondents, the ongoing communication with many of them, as well as my ambition to continue contributing to the development of feminism, human rights and peace in the post-Yugoslav region.

### **Advocating Slow Science**

In closing, I would like to point out that my experience in doing this research – especially the use of extensive qualitative interviews and archival materials, the time required to double-check one's data, process and reflect upon the difficult issues raised by the research, as well as build ethically responsible relationships with the respondents – has made me an advocate of the Slow Science trend in conducting academic research. Albeit for the time being still marginal, this trend challenges the increasing demand to accelerate and shorten the research process and quickly come up with publishable academic products (Alleva, 2006; Candau, 2010; Fischer J., Ritchie and Hanspach, 2012; Salo and Heikkinen, 2011; Stengers, 2011).

### **Outline of the thesis**

The next, second, chapter of the thesis is dedicated to the previous scholarship on the Belgrade and/or Zagreb war-related feminist activism in the 1990s. In the first part

## CHAPTER ONE

of the chapter I address the biases and silent places which I have discovered in that scholarship and offer explanations for their presence. This concerns the domination of the designations used by the self-declared antinationalist feminists, the political component of the scholarly texts, the lack of analyses of the post-1995 developments, the limited to non-existent presence of certain conflicts in the literature, the insufficient attention for the feminists' biographies, and the geographical or homogenising bias in the scholarship.

In the second part of Chapter 2 I analyse the different ways in which the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists with divergent war-related positionings have been classified and named. I pay individual attention to the joint and separate portrayals of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, as well as to the separate depictions (no joint ones exist) of the two so-called nationalist clusters. I demonstrate that in addition to the most oft-used terms 'antinationalist', 'nationalist', 'non-nationalist' and 'patriotic', there are diverse other adjectival and adverbial designations, that the same terms can connote different things, and that the designations are good indications of the scholar's greater or lesser support of one positioning or another. As such, this chapter attends to proposition 2 and gives one part of the answer (the other parts are given in Chapters 4 and 6) to the question why these designations should not be seen as value-free and objective, even though they corresponded to a certain extent to actual positionings. It does so by showing that these terms and the process of naming were an important part of the struggle for legitimacy.

Chapter 3 consists of two parts as well. In the first part I give a short overview of the historical context of Yugoslavia between its founding after World War II and end in 1991, including the occurrences which contributed towards its violent disintegration. I also pay attention to the reappearance of feminism in the 1970s – first only as an intellectual endeavour and later also as a grassroots activist one. In addition to this, I address the 1990s, but only with regard to the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia (including Kosovo). By doing this, I set the stage for a better understanding of the war-related positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the 1990s and the dynamics which existed between and among the feminists from each city.

While these positionings and dynamics are analysed in the remaining chapters as well, they are already touched upon (announced as it were) in the second part of Chapter 3. I outline there the work of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminist groups which are relevant for this research, with a particular focus on their war-related activities. That presentation also contains one part of the answer – the other is given in Chapter 4 – to the question why proposition 1b on the differences between the clusters in their (lack of) support to (raped) refugee women should be rejected. In addition to this, it

also shows partially why proposition 3 cannot be fully accepted. I explain that while the differences in the war-related positionings have indeed caused great tensions among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, they were sometimes intertwined with non-war-related frictions – some taking place in the 1990s and others stemming from the pre-war period.

Chapter 4 contains analyses of nine historical episodes which illustrate the dynamics among the feminists upon which I seek to shed light. Eight episodes are specific occurrences in the 1990s and one is a Belgrade feminist group which is significant because of the events which have taken place within it. I start with the proposal for establishing a Yugoslav feminist umbrella group in the spring of 1990 and end with the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the intensification of the war in Kosovo in the spring of 1999. I explore the gradual development of similar and different positionings among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, and the varied contexts in which these positionings have been articulated throughout the 1990s. I attend to the influence of Western (funding) audiences on the struggles for legitimacy, as well as to the interactions among the feminists in the absence of third parties.

The selected episodes are not only temporarily and geographically diverse, but also differ with respect to which feminists were the key agents in the concrete struggle. For example, during the meeting in Venice in February 1992 the main actors were Belgrade self-declared antinationalist and the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. At the Medulin meeting in March 1995 the main interaction was between Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, and in the analysis of the Belgrade Women's Studies Center I elaborate upon the frictions between the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists. Due to its extensive and diverse empirical material and large scope, this chapter touches upon all propositions.

The biographical differences and similarities among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists are illuminated in Chapter 5. This chapter differs from the other empirical chapters because it only presents data on the key respondents of my research, ie the main producers of the self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminist positionings in each city. In order to explore the relations between the biographical characteristics and the war-related positionings, I lay out two comparisons: the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist with the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, and the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist with the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists. In addition, I also compare all Belgrade with all Zagreb respondents.

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This zooming in and out helps me demonstrate that although a number of important findings can be drawn even when the aggregated geographical categories (Belgrade and Zagreb respondents) are contrasted, more valid and pertinent results can be obtained only if both the context and the type of positioning are taken into account. Next to substantiating my criticism of the sometimes present homogenising approach in the scholarship which treats Belgrade and Zagreb as interchangeable locations, this chapter also partially addresses proposition 3. It shows that not all tensions among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the 1990s were grounded in the war reality from 1991 onward, but some originated instead from the pre-war biographical differences among them.

Chapter 6 is the last empirical chapter. It is based on data from all interviews, but primarily explores the ways in which the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists at the time of interviewing (2009 or 2010) referred to the war-related intra-feminist dynamics in each city in the 1990s. I analyse how the feminists from each city perceived from a time distance and a changed societal context the divide in that city, as well as the differences and similarities between the positionings of the cluster they were in and those of the feminists from the other cluster. I attend to the process of naming, the laden ascribed-to designations, the portrayals of individual feminists, as well as to the related discussions on the authenticity of one's feminism and one's (anti)nationalism. Finally, I give special attention to the respondents' explicit accounts of or allusions to the still largely ongoing silence between them regarding their war-related positionings and interactions of the 1990s.

This chapter addresses propositions 1b, 1c, 2 and 3. It shows that despite the divergent positionings on the (sexual) war violence, Belgrade and Zagreb feminists from different clusters have provided assistance to refugees, and simultaneously created and transgressed (ethnic) boundaries. In addition to this, the chapter demonstrates the political value and the certain level of arbitrariness of the self-ascribed and the ascribed-to designations alike, and points to some of the pre-war differences and tensions between the feminists which were built into the later war-related frictions.

In the closing Chapter 7, by answering the research questions I present the main findings and conclusions of this analysis and suggest some key remaining issues which could be explored in subsequent research efforts.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Review of relevant scholarship**

In the first part of this chapter I address the biases and silent places present in the scholarship on the war-related positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the 1990s: the domination of the designations used by the self-declared antinationalist feminists, the political components of the scholarly texts, the lack of analyses of the post-1995 developments, the limited to non-existent presence of certain conflicts in the literature, the insufficient attention for the feminists' biographies, and the geographical or homogenising bias in much of the scholarship.

In the second part I elaborate upon the diverse and sometimes contradictory ways in which these positionings and the feminist activists who held them are (implicitly) classified and named. After some general observations, I move to analysing the contributions in which the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists are jointly treated as one entity. However, I do not include an analogous section on the so-called nationalist feminists later. As I will explain prior to my analysis of the scholarship on these feminists, there are no works which factually – and not only at first glance – attend to them in such a way. I proceed by addressing the works on the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. The choice to begin with Zagreb – and thereby disrespect the alphabetical order – serves to increase the comprehensibility of my account given that the war-related tensions have been more pronounced in that city. After the subsequent exploration of the contributions on the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists, I move to the so-called nationalist feminists and analyse the writings about them in the same order.

### **Biases and silent places**

The scholarship on Yugoslavia's (violent) disintegration in the 1990s has predominantly concentrated on male politicians, military and religious leaders and intellectuals, or the mainstream media, while the discourses and activities of the (post-)Yugoslav feminists have received only minimal – if any – scholarly attention (Dragović-Soso, 2002; Đerić, 2008; Gagnon, 2004; Glenny, 1993; Hall B., 1995; Ingrao and Emmert, 2009; Iveković I., 2000; Jović, 2009; MacDonald, 2002; Malcolm, 1996, 1999; Popov, 1996; Ramet S., 2002, 2005; Thomas, 1999; Thompson M., 1999; Udovički and Torov, 2000; Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005).

Since this 'general' scholarship on Yugoslavia's disintegration generally and generously ignored the feminist activists – Jansen (2005) is a welcome exception – in order to find academic analyses of the work of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in this time period, I had to search for a 'specific' scholarship. Those contributions either focused specifically on the feminist or women's groups or, in the much more common case, mentioned them within a broader elaboration of the war rapes, the interaction between gender and ethnicity, or gender and nationalism on those temporal and spatial coordinates (Allen, 1996; Batinić, 2001; Barilar, 2000; Benderly, 1997a, 1997b; Bilić, 2011a; Blagojević, 1998a; Borić, 1997; Cockburn, 2007; Dević, 1997b; Duhaček, 1998; Đurić-Kuzmanović et al., 2008; Fischer E., 1993; Helms, 1998, 2003a; Kašić, 1994a, 2006; Kesić, 2002a; Knežević, 1994, 2004; Korać, 1998, 2003; Licht and Drakulić Slo., 1996; Lindsey, 2002; MacKinnon, 2006; Milić, 2002; Mladenović and Litričin, 1993; Mostov, 1995; Nenadic, 1996, 2010; Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000; Obradović-Dragišić, 2004; Ramet S., 1999; Slapšak, 2000a; Stojšavljević, 1995; Zaharijević, 2007; Žarkov, 2002, 2007).

Most of the scholarship which I analyse in this chapter – some of which is listed above – has been produced by local scholars from the post-Yugoslav region. This does not mean that I have bypassed the foreign (mostly Western and English-language) scholarship, but that I have chosen to go to the source and use the works which the foreign scholars have built their arguments upon. I have done this for two reasons. First, I wanted to avoid as much as possible the potential inaccuracies and losses of meaning which could occur when interpretations are interpreted. Second, I wanted to draw attention to the existence of local knowledge. Some of it has remained thus far underexposed because of being published only in the local languages and/or in publications which are not easily available. Due to my extensive literature search, I am confident that I have included the overwhelming majority of relevant works – both those which are regularly referred to (the usual suspects) and those which have remained largely unknown.

### **Domination of the designations used by the self-declared antinationalist feminists**

The designations used by the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists have not entered the Western academic publications like the ones used by the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists – some of whom often appear as authors of those contributions. Although a more extensive exploration of this discrepancy in prevalence of some terms (a phenomenon which is also worth exploring from the point of view of epistemology) is beyond the scope of this research, I find it, nevertheless,

important to briefly point to it and suggest four factors which are very likely to have contributed to it.

The first factor is the degree of correspondence between the names used by the self-declared antinationalist feminists and the factual positionings, which I mentioned in Chapter 1. This correspondence is greater than that concerning the designations 'abstract', 'communist', 'genocide revisionists', 'neutral' and '(pro-)Yugoslav' which were implied or explicitly employed by the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists and their supporters (*Danas*, 29.01.1993; *Ms.*, July/August 1993; *Northwest Ethnic News*, November 1994; *off our backs*, November 1991; *Reaction to the MADRE tour*, 18.03.1993; Vranić, 1996; *Ženska pomoć sada izvještaj za 1993*, n.d.; see Chapter 4). In the words of Bourdieu (1990:140, italics in the original),

symbolic effectiveness depends on the degree to which the vision proposed is based on reality. Evidently, the construction of groups cannot be a construction *ex nihilo*. It has all the more chance of succeeding the more it is founded in reality: that is, as I have said, in the objective affinities between people who have to be brought together.

The second factor is the clarity of these designations at face value. Although the terms 'antinationalist', 'non-nationalist', 'nationalist' and 'patriotic' can be conceptualised differently, they appear to be sufficiently intelligible in indicating one's (supposed) distance or proximity vis-à-vis a nation-building ideology, one's country and/or ethnic group. Such a presumed semantic universality which enhances a widespread usage is not inherent to the designations 'abstract' and 'neutral'. The latter do not make it directly clear what the abstractness or neutrality refers to. The terms '(pro-)Yugoslav' and 'communist' seem to be situated somewhere between the previous two sets of designations. At first glance, they do inform about one's (presumed) positioning – in this case, adherence to the Yugoslav state and communist ideology – but they are less lucid classification tools for an analysis of the war-related positionings.

The positioning of the Western (academic) feminists constitutes the third factor contributing to the dominance of the designations used by the self-declared antinationalist feminists. As has also been observed by Rose Lindsey (2002), there seem to have been more Western feminists whose positioning on the (post-)Yugoslav wars resembled that of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists than there were feminists who agreed with the so-called nationalist positioning. This phenomenon has also been already spotted by authors writing on political

mobilisation in other geographic areas (Edelman Ma., 2001; Heumann, 2010; Polletta, 2006; Seidman, 2001).

To better understand the impact of this preponderance of the self-declared antinationalist positioning, one should keep in mind the intertwinement of the local and foreign scholarship and scholars. Foreign (foremostly Western) and local (Belgrade and Zagreb) authors based their elaborations also on each other's published and oral analyses, and established personal relationships and direct cooperation: eg invited one another to speak at conferences and submit texts for publishing. The influence of this phenomenon on the production of knowledge is not only visible in the prevalence of the designations used by the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, but also in the virtual absence of more extensive research on the so-called nationalist feminists.<sup>44</sup> The latter also counts as one of the biases in scholarship and particularly concerns the Belgrade cluster.

The fourth and last factor are characteristics of the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists themselves, although different characteristics played a role in each city. Similarly to the previous factor, this one also partially explains both the scholarly domination of one part of the designations and the much more limited body of analyses on the so-called nationalist feminists. The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists have a very modest publishing record in general. It has been foremostly due to the work of the American scholars Catharine MacKinnon and Natalie Nenadic, who worked closely with them, that some details of their positionings have been presented – and in a more complimentary manner – in the Western scholarship.

The Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists, as I explained in Chapter 1, differ from the feminists from the other three clusters by not really being a cluster. They have never produced any joint statements, including any which would elaborate and name their positionings. In addition to this, the otherwise extensive textual production of the three scholars among them did not specifically address the war-related dynamics among the Belgrade feminists. This issue was only occasionally and sporadically touched upon in their works on other topics. After 2000 two of these feminists have referred to the positionings of the other Belgrade cluster as 'antinational radicalism'

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44 I have traced many works where the positionings of these feminists had been mentioned – sometimes only implicitly – or briefly analysed, but the limited and at times repeating information was sufficient only for showing me the directions my further exploration should head for (Batinić, 2001; Benderly, 1997a, 1997b; Duhaček, 1998; Fischer E., 1993; Helms, 1998, 2003a; Irvine, 2007; Kašić, 1994a; Knežević, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2004; Korać, 1998, 2003; MacKinnon, 2006; Mladenović and Litričin, 1993; Nenadic, 1996, 2010; Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000; Obradović-Dragišić, 2004; Pavlović, 1999; Stojavljević, 1995; Zaharijević, 2007; Žarkov, 1999, 2002, 2007).

(Belgrade2N, 2002) or ‘extreme antinationalism’ (Belgrade12N, 2008). Even though these designations could be rightly used for the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists, ie sufficiently correspond to their positionings, and are clear enough at face value, they have not been widely used in the later scholarship. I explain this, on the one hand, by the previously mentioned dominance of scholars supportive of the self-declared antinationalist feminists. On the other hand, these terms have appeared quite late – when the academic interest in this topic had significantly decreased – and, moreover, in non-English publications.

### Political components of the scholarly texts

In addition to their scholarly value, the contributions which also addressed the war-related Belgrade and/or Zagreb feminism in the 1990s were sometimes used in the efforts to stop the wars, halt the war rapes, put the perpetrators of (sexual) war crimes on trial, secure (financial) support for the raped women and other refugees, introduce international legislative changes regarding war rape, impose what one deemed the correct conceptualisation of the (sexual) war violence and its perpetrators and victims, and last but not least – obtain (financial) support for like-minded feminists to be able to do all that work. This is especially, but not exclusively, true for the texts written in the periods of war violence: 1991–1995 and 1998–1999.

To begin with, I consider this political component as a source of bias because it manifests in the use of laden terms and formulations. For example: ‘The Zagreb informants of the journalist Alexandra Stiglmayer are feminists who, during the Serbian war of aggression against Croatia in the summer of 1991, *mutated into* Croatian nationalists’ (Fischer E., 1997:14, emphasis added).<sup>45</sup> Or:

Many of these women [the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists] were seen bitterly as sell-outs to a party that was brutally and bloodily silencing women. Unfortunately, some of these women are still considered Yugoslavia’s representative feminists (*off our backs*, November 1991).

This political component is additionally visible in the manner in which authors have described the feminist field, such as the choice to mention only certain groups or activists in a favourable light (or others in an unfavourable one), as well as the usage of the designation ‘feminist’ only for the like-minded feminists or the

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45 The same biased term has been used by Papić (1999a) in the title of one of her essays: ‘Women in Serbia: Post-communism, War, and Nationalist Mutations’.

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endorsed positionings – an issue which I already mentioned in Chapter 1 (Borić, 1997; Jansen, 2005; Kesić, 2002a; MacKinnon, 1993; Mostov, 1995; *Ms.*, July/August 1993; Nenadic, 1996; Renne, 1997a; Slapšak, 2008).

Finally, my analysis of the scholarly classifications of the war-related positionings, which I present in the second part of this chapter, has also shown the existence of this political bias. The disagreements between the different scholars – some of whom are the directly involved Belgrade and Zagreb feminists – mirror the classification and naming conflicts which occurred in Belgrade and Zagreb in the 1990s. This correspondence also makes evident the abovementioned intertwining of the local and foreign scholarship and scholars. However, those ‘ideological influences’, as Lindsey (2002:68) has called them, have remained unreported and unaddressed, just like the meaning and the origin of the used designations. This absence of transparency on the political biases in activist writing and scholarship actually represents an important component of the same bias. It is a clear instance of misrecognition which has serious consequences on both theory and activist practice. Therefore, Lindsey’s (2002:68) critical observation about the debate on the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia deserves attention:

[T]he ideological influences behind the theorizing of the debate went largely unnoticed or, perhaps, largely unattributed, particularly by academic theorists. This lack of referencing seems inexplicable and dangerous. By not exploring the ideological roots of a theory, does an academic collude with the elisions that are taking place within the various theoretical camps? If this is the case, then, by default, is the academic colluding with the violence itself? (see also Bonfiglioli, forthcoming; Bos, 2006).

### **Lack of analyses of the post-1995 developments**

The scholarship is also biased due to the shortage of analyses of the war-related positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the aftermath of the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, ie from the second half of the 1990s onward. This is also true for research which would address these feminists’ *post factum* recapitulation of the events taking place in the 1991–1995 time period. I explain this time bias primarily through the overwhelming and mobilising effect which the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia have had on gender scholars (Allen, 1996; Benard, 1994; Bos, 2006; Copelon, 2000; Engle, 2005; Fischer E., 1993; Hansen, 2001; Helms, 1998; Kesić, 1994, 2005; Korać, 1994; MacKinnon, 2006; Mostov, 1995; Nenadic, 1996, 2010;

Niarchos, 1995; Olujić, 1998; *off our backs*, March 1993 [1992]; Salzman, 1998; Seifert, 1996; Snyder et al. 2006; Stiglmayer, 1994a; Vranić, 1996; Žarkov, 1997).

The end of the wars (and war rapes) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia by the end of 1995, as well as the progression of time and the occurrence of crises and wars in other regions further decreased the interest in and funding for doing and publishing research on the (post-)Yugoslav region in general and (post-)Yugoslav feminism in particular. Especially interesting is that the silent places on the Belgrade and Zagreb post-1995 war-related positionings can be also observed in texts written after 1999, ie after the intensive ground war in Kosovo and the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – events about which it is reasonable to presume that they have had an impact at least on the Belgrade feminists, if not on the Zagreb ones.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to the general factors mentioned above, I would suggest four additional ones for explaining this scholarly lacuna: the rather short duration of the intensive military violence (between 24 March 1999 and 10 June 1999), the absence of information on such large scale mass war rapes as in the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, saturation of this specific research interest for the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, and the great silence which surrounds the war-related divisions among the Belgrade feminists. As I elaborate more extensively in Chapters 4 and 6, this silence does not only apply to the fissures concerning the 1991–1995 war violence, but also – and even more so – to the disagreements related to the war violence between 1998 and 1999.

The diminishing attention for the (post-)Yugoslav feminism in the 1990s has also resulted in lack of research which would evaluate the veracity of the information and the claims which are (repeatedly) found in the existing scholarship. The article of Mladenović and Litričin (1993) – or one of its somewhat altered versions: Hughes and Mladenović (1995), Hughes, Mladenović and Mršević (1995), Mladenović and Hughes (2000) and Mladenović and Litričin (1998) – is a good example of the importance of such evaluations. It is regularly used for illustrating the dynamics among the Belgrade feminists after the beginning of the (post-)Yugoslav wars (Batinić, 2001; Benderly, 1997a, 1997b; Bilić, 2011a; Cockburn, 1998; Helms, 1998; Jansen, 2005; *On the Issues*, Summer 1993; Pettman, 1996; Zaharijević, 2007; Žarkov, 1999, 2002, 2007).

This prevalence is probably due first to the fact that the article in question had been the first to provide some – albeit incomplete and insufficiently precise – information on the war-related dilemmas and divisions among the Belgrade feminists.

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46 Some of the scarce exceptions which address the war-related positionings of the Belgrade feminists in this period are Cockburn (2007), Fridman (2006a, 2006b) and Mladenović (2001, 2003).

Second, it has remained one of the very scarce works which address this segment of the Belgrade feminist field. Finally, it was published in an English-language Western academic journal. The perpetual use of this article in the last 20 years does not mean, however, that its contents have been critically analysed. That such reassessments are needed is best visible from the claim of Mladenović and Litričin (1993:117) that the Women's Party could not continue with its work due to 'conflicts over nationalism'. Despite the extended attention which I have dedicated to checking this statement, I did not find a confirmation for it either in the written sources or in the interviews – including those with the two authors.<sup>47</sup>

### **Limited to non-existent presence of certain conflicts**

The war-related conflicts among the feminists which have received at least miniscule scholarly attention are conflicts between the clusters: between the two Zagreb clusters, between the two Belgrade clusters, between the two self-declared antinationalist clusters and between the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist and the Zagreb so-called nationalist cluster. There are no reports of frictions between the two so-called nationalist clusters, but this does not seem surprising. These feminists do not appear to have had any communication or exchange whatsoever during the 1990s. It is much more intriguing, however, that there are no reports of war-related tensions within each of the clusters (besides the very limited records on the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist one during the NATO bombing).

In view of the already mentioned myth of sisterhood and metaphor of transgression of boundaries, the limited attention for the conflicts between the two self-declared antinationalist clusters is particularly interesting. While that myth and metaphor have been recurrently recorded not only by the affected feminists themselves, but also by the outside authors who have written about their work (see the second part of this chapter), the conflicts and misunderstandings between these feminists have received very limited attention. Even the texts which address them often do so in an implicit and/or summarised manner (Bilić, 2011a; Četković, 2000; Knežević, 1994; Mladenović, 1997, 1998; Mladenović and Kesić, 1996; Mladenović and Miličević, 1996; Radović, 2002; Savić Sv., 1995; Žarkov, 1999, 2002). To my knowledge, next to these post-Yugoslav authors, Jill Benderly is the only foreign scholar who has mentioned these issues, albeit only by hinting at them: 'Non-nationalist politics have made it possible for a working relationship to be re-established – delicately – between Croatian and Serbian feminists' (*On the Issues*, Summer 1993).

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<sup>47</sup> See in Chapter 3 in the portrayal of the Women's Party.

I propose four explanations for this particular silent place, the first being the absence of these conflicts and differences in the published accounts of the direct actors – the self-declared antinationalist feminists (the scarce exceptions are Knežević, 1994; Mladenović, 1997, 1998; Mladenović and Kesić, 1996; Mladenović and Miličević, 1996; Radović, 2002 and Savić Sv., 1995). In my view, these feminists have refrained from addressing the anyway already painful conflicts among them because such a move would challenge their myth of sisterhood. In other words, it would question their legitimacy as agents who crossed boundaries and cooperated with each other, thereby potentially devaluing the risky efforts which they had put in crossing some of those boundaries. Second, for an outsider scholar, to learn about and access the silenced disagreements between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists extensive fieldwork and interview sessions are required. That is not always feasible in view of the time, money, language and access constraints these scholars often encounter.

Third, the published accounts of local feminists sometimes suffer from parochialism, ie contain much implied knowledge, even when these accounts are (re) published abroad. Their understanding often requires a lot of background information which might not be necessarily available to those who have not been the direct actors of the event in question, even if they come from the post-Yugoslav region. A good example is the contribution of Mladenović and Kesić (1996) on the meeting of Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists in Medulin (Croatia) in March 1995.<sup>48</sup> The information which I extracted from this text before the fieldwork was insufficient for me to realise the importance of the event for those who had attended it. I started seeing its great significance only after several interviews. The newly obtained knowledge enabled me to read the text in a different key and find information which had initially remained invisible to me. Additionally beneficial were the insights in the contributions of Mladenović and Miličević (1996) and Mladenović (1998) which I only discovered after the fieldwork.

Fourth and final, given the difficulties which the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists encountered in their respective countries, as well as the personal connections between them and the scholars of (post-)Yugoslav feminism, it is possible that the latter were hesitant about probing into sensitive topics and/or wanted to support the former by addressing only the sisterhood-building and boundary-transgressing aspects of their work. In my view, Benderly's exceptional hint should be seen in light of these issues. She has been aware of the tensions and silences because of her ability to converse in Croatian/Serbian and extensive communication

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48 This is one of the historical episodes I analyse in Chapter 4.

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with the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists. Nevertheless, she has not been able to extensively elaborate on this delicate issue either and has, therefore, chosen only to give a tiny indication of its existence.

### **Insufficient attention for the feminists' biographies**

The biographical characteristics of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists are hardly attended to in the scholarship. There is a lack of elaborated and systematic insight into the differences and similarities among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in eg age, ethnic origin, education and parents' profession, ie in their cultural, economic and social capital. In my view, this gap is to be explained by the foremost scholarly interest in the war rapes and the feminists' conceptualisations of them, as well as the concomitant (academic) struggles over their legitimate definition. Due to this focus, the backgrounds of the local feminist actors have remained unaddressed.

The few exceptions from which some first-hand biographical information can be extracted include the compilation of interviews with Zagreb (feminist) activists (Barilar, 2000), the collection of oral history accounts which features, inter alia, those of one Zagreb and two Belgrade feminists (Savić Sv. et al., 2008), as well as the autobiographical book of the Belgrade feminist Nadežda Radović (2002) and the biographies of the late Belgrade feminist Neda Božinović (Liversage and Shou, 2001; Stojaković, 2002). In addition to this, several authors indicate in passing some biographical markers. Bilić (2011a) and Fridman (2006b) state that a great number of Belgrade (feminist) activists had parents who were active and prominent members of the League of Communists, while Duhaček (1998) mentions that there were insufficiently recognised differences in educational level among the members of the Belgrade Women's Studies Center. Lastly, the loyalty and proximity of the prominent Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists to the communist elite and their subsequent privileged position in Yugoslavia have been also suggested (*Ms.*, July/August 1993; Nenadic, 2010; *Northwest Ethnic News*, November 1994; *off our backs*, November 1991).

### **Geographical (homogenising) bias**

Finally, there is also a geographical or homogenising bias in the literature. Some authors construct their argument as if it concerned the so-called nationalist feminists in the whole (post-)Yugoslav region, but only give examples from Zagreb (Benderly, 1997a, 1997b; *Forum*, 1995; Lindsey, 2002; Stojasvljević, 1995) or from Belgrade and

Zagreb (Batinić, 2001; Borić, 1997; Korać, 1998, 2003; Žarkov, 2002). Such a *pars pro toto* approach gives the false impression of the absence of significant differences between the post-Yugoslav countries in the development of feminism and in their respective economic, political and social contexts. It imposes, in other words, artificial homogeneity on a heterogeneous terrain.

This bias is particularly problematic for the period starting from mid-1991, when Yugoslavia as one federal state gradually started dissolving into several separate states, each with a different direct exposure to and participation in the war violence (in addition to the other dissimilarities, such as the economic and legislative ones). Some authors – and I speak now about the scholarship on the (post-)Yugoslav region in general – embark on even more sweeping homogenisation. They present their discussion on the (post-)Yugoslav wars as being valid for the whole of the Balkans (Albanese, 2001; Glenny, 1993; Kurspahić, 2003; MacDonald, 2002; Mostov, 1995; Nation, 2003; Woodward, 1995). This represents an even greater homogenisation fallacy. Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and the European part of Turkey are also part of the Balkan Peninsula, while the (post-)Yugoslav wars have only been waged on the territory of Yugoslavia.

I propose four reasons for resorting to such homogenisations. First, due to the output pressure in the academic world, the presentation of one's argument as being valid for a broader region than the one the author actually has data on potentially increases the geopolitical relevance of one's work and the chances of having it published and cited. Second, authors may face uncertainty about the prevalence of the issue in question and wish to bypass critical remarks about the exclusion of a certain region. It is safer to say eg that 'there were peace protests in the (post-)Yugoslav region' instead of 'there were peace protests in Croatia and Serbia', even if one only knows about the existence of such protests in these two republics/states. Such a broad formulation safeguards one from the criticism of ignoring the peace protests in eg Slovenia or Macedonia. Third, scholars may be unfamiliar with the region under study and, for example, perceive Yugoslavia as one uniform entity without major legislative, political, socio-economic and linguistic differences on its territory. Fourth and final, the use of 'Balkan(s)' in this context might be a manifestation of the wish to avoid the often politically and emotionally laden reference to Yugoslavia and the dilemma on whether something should be better referred to as 'Yugoslav' or 'post-Yugoslav' ('former Yugoslav').

## Classifying and naming the feminists and their war-related positionings

The scholarship contains a plurality of perceptions of the war-related restructuring in the feminist fields in Belgrade and Zagreb in the 1990s, even though the existence of a dichotomy – usually one between antinationalist and nationalist feminists – is often reported or hinted at. Whereas this plurality of perceptions is commonly inspired by the authors' greater affiliation with one of the clusters and is, thereby, also a part of the local struggle for legitimacy, it is sometimes (also) due to the authors' insufficient familiarity with the analysed groups. For example, Pavlović (1999:138) states the following:

Within Croatia, one large group of feminists adopted a patriotic, nationalistic stance and subordinated women's issues to the so-called national interest. The nationalist feminist groups Karetá and Bedem ljubavi...see the rapes of Croatian women in Bosnia exclusively in national terms...These groups are also very vocal in issues surrounding motherhood and demographics. They are involved with other conservative organizations and individuals...working in this direction.

Pavlović is correct that Bedem ljubavi (Rampart of Love) shared Karetá's view on the war rapes and that the two groups have cooperated on this issue and in attacking those with a different positioning (eg Nenadic, 1996; *Public Hearing*, 1993; *Reaction to the MADRE tour*, 18.03.1993; *Witness Protection Program leaflet*, 1994). However, unlike what she suggests, Rampart of Love has never declared itself feminist and none of my Zagreb respondents considered this group to be a feminist one. In addition to this, the so-called nationalist feminist groups did not cooperate with the conservative pro-life groups, state institutions and individuals which Pavlović lists.<sup>49</sup> Quite to the contrary, one of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists from Women's Help Now was a particularly fervent pro-choice advocate who often – also during the war years – debated with the pro-life supporters, including those mentioned by Pavlović (*Nedjeljna Dalmacija*, 03.03.1993; *Obzor*, 22.05.1995; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 29.03.1995; *Večernji list*, 16.01.1993; *Vjesnik*, 28.02.1990).

Another problem in the scholarship is that the meanings and the origins of the diverse names which are used to designate a positioning or a feminist group/activist are generally not discussed. Neither is the scholar's preference for one term

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49 Croatian Population Movement, Croatian Woman, Institute for the Protection of Motherhood, Family and Children, Marija Bajt, Don Anto Baković, Ružica Čavar and Petar Žilnik (Pavlović, 1999).

over another elaborated, with the exception of Batinić (2001), Benderly (1997a) and Žarkov (1999), who state their preference for ‘nationalist’ or ‘patriotic’. This lack of explanation can leave the reader wondering about terminological choices, like the use of ‘patriotic’ and ‘disloyal’ (Korać, 1998, 2003) instead of ‘loyal’ and ‘disloyal’, or ‘patriotic’ and ‘unpatriotic’. The usage of these names is, thus, commonly left untouched by the academic scrutiny which is necessary when classifying, especially when the designations in question are as laden as in this case. Furthermore, even the absence of scholarly attention for the process of naming has remained unattended. This silent place is quite worrisome, as the seemingly impartial use of presumably unbiased analytical terms masks a power disparity between the self-ascribed and ascribed-to designations.

One way of explicitly referring to the feminists is by using an adjective, such as ‘patriotic’ (Benderly, 1997a). Another explicit description is made by stating the feminists’ affiliation to the government or an ideology, eg ‘feminists with antiwar belonging’ (Kašić, 2006). The same two means of designation can be also used implicitly. For example, by explicitly creating a category of ‘neutral feminists’, Vranić (1996) implicitly names the opposing category ‘non-neutral’ or ‘partisan’. Or, by declaring that to choose patriotism means, among other things, to ‘renounce the right of self-determination and autonomy’ (Zajović, 1995:51), the author implies that the feminists who have chosen patriotism are not autonomous.

The use of an adverb or adverbial phrase instead of an adjective – eg ‘feminists with antiwar belonging’ instead of ‘antiwar feminists’ – enables the author to avoid a direct naming of the feminists in question and refocuses the reader’s attention from the people to their positioning or deeds. Becker (1998) calls this approach ‘turning people into activities’. By concentrating on the actually expressed positioning, it allows for the possibility that people or groups might not always act in the same manner. Consequently, although this tactic has as downsides an increased amount of words and a possible reduced readability of the text, it makes space for the creation of less essentialising categories. Therefore, and considering the anyway laden character of the war-related designations, it is possible that some authors have used this approach on purpose. Unfortunately, as none of them has elaborated upon their choices – which is also true for the authors who use both adjectives and adverbs – this issue cannot be further explored here.

Next to the classification into adjectival and adverbial designations, the explicitly stated designations which I have come across in the scholarship can be separated into those which contain the word ‘nation’ and those which do not. Besides the obvious and oft-used ‘antinationalist’, ‘nationalist’ and ‘non-nationalist’,

the first category further includes eg ‘antinational’, ‘[with] antinational radicalism’, ‘internationally oriented’, ‘[with] nationalist feelings’, ‘pro-nationalist’, ‘with international belonging’, ‘who adopt the official ethno-national line’ and ‘who try to resist the ruling nationalist politics.’ The other category incorporates eg ‘academic’, ‘autonomous’, ‘antiwar’, ‘[those] claiming rape as genocide’, ‘critical’, ‘disloyal’, ‘independent’, ‘indigenous’, ‘less concerned’, ‘loyal’, ‘neutral’, ‘opposition(al)’, ‘pacifist’, ‘patriotic’, ‘radical’, ‘[with] radical insensitivity’, ‘revisionists of rape and genocide’, ‘[with] the sexism approach [to war rapes]’<sup>50</sup> and ‘with a genocidal rape approach’<sup>51</sup> (Aarts and Mulders, 2005; Batinić, 2001; Benderly, 1997a, 1997b; Bilić, 2011a, 2011b; Borić, 1997; Bos, 2006; Duhaček, 1998; Fischer E., 1993; *Forum*, 1995; Helms, 1998, 2003a; Irvine, 2007; Jansen, 2005; Kašić, 2006; Knežević, 1994, 2004; Korać, 1998, 2003; Lindsey, 2002; MacKinnon, 2006; Milić, 2002; Mladenović, 2003; Mladenović and Litričin, 1993; Nenadic, 1996, 2010; *Northwest Ethnic News*, November 1994; Obradović-Dragišić, 2004; *On the issues*, Summer 1993; Pollmann et al., 1993; Vranić, 1996; *Vrouw & Gezondheidszorg*, March/April 1993; *War Report*, September 1995; Zaharijević, 2007; Zajović, 1995; Žarkov, 2002, 2007) .

### **Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists**

When the positioning of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists is jointly addressed, the positioning and/or the feminists are (sometimes interchangeably) named eg ‘antinationalist’ (Batinić, 2001; Benderly, 1997a; Fischer E., 1993; Helms, 1998, 2003a; Jansen, 2005; Žarkov, 2002, 2007), ‘autonomous’ (Korać, 2003), ‘disloyal’ (Korać, 1998, 2003), ‘independent’ (Borić, 1997), ‘internationally oriented’ (*Forum*, 1995), ‘neutral’ (Vranić, 2006), ‘non-nationalist’ (Batinić, 2001; *On the issues*, Summer 1993) and ‘oppositional’ (Jansen, 2005).

The contents of their positioning is described as criticism of the nationalist politics of their states and the use of (exaggerated) war rape figures for inciting hate, rejection of the analogy between the suffering of the raped women and the suffering of the whole ethnic group or state, and accentuation of their transgression of the post-

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50 The classification on feminists with ‘the sexism approach’ and those with ‘the genocide approach’ to war rapes has been made by Bos (2006). She speaks of ‘the international feminist response’ without providing a more precise geographical indication, which could mean that she also refers to the Belgrade and/or Zagreb feminists. Nonetheless, given this absence of an explicit reference to them, I have chosen not to analyse this classification further. I do state, however, her designation ‘[with] the sexism approach’ on the list of examples in order to show the great diversity of the terms which are used in the scholarship.

51 I have mentioned here only the explicitly stated designations.

Yugoslav ethnic and state boundaries both regarding the assistance to women and cooperation with feminists (Batinić, 2001; Borić, 1997; Borić and Mladineo Desnica, 1996; Dobnikar, 2000; *Forum*, 1995; Helms, 1998, 2003a; Jansen, 2005; Korać, 1998, 2003; Žarkov, 1999, 2002, 2007). The conceptualisation of the war rapes is stated to be one whereby rape is seen as being committed by all warring sides and a continuation of the peacetime male violence against women (Batinić, 2001; Borić, 1997; *Forum*, 1995; Jansen, 2005; Korać, 1998, 2003).

As the only one among the authors who jointly speak of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, Seada Vranić (1996) rebukes their 'neutral' or 'equidistant' gender-based positioning on the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In her view, the insistence of 'the feminist groups from Serbia and some activists from Zagreb' (1996:165) on the gender component of the war rapes is a political manipulation. By implying equal guilt and equal victimisation of all warring sides, this positioning denies the genocidal character of those rapes and thereby creates a distortion of the factual situation.<sup>52</sup>

Unlike the above authors who report a strict gender-based, or an ethnicity-free, positioning on the war rapes among the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, Borić and Mladineo Desnica (1996), Helms (1998, 2003a) and Žarkov (1999, 2002, 2007) note a nuanced gender-based positioning. Despite still being gender-based, this positioning entails the acknowledgement that the Serb militaries were the foremost perpetrators. As I will show in Chapter 4, both the authors who observe the strict and those who observe the nuanced gender-based positioning on war rape are partially right. The two positionings have indeed been assumed by the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, albeit at different moments in time: the strict gender-based positioning preceded the nuanced one.

### **Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists**

The contents of the positioning of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists and/or these feminists themselves are separately – and at times interchangeably – named eg 'antinationalist' (Obradović-Dragišić, 2004), 'critical' (Knežević, 1994), 'genocide revisionists' (Nenadic, 1996), 'neutral' (Irvine, 2007), 'non-nationalist' (Benderly, 1997b; Irvine, 2007; Knežević, 1995), 'pacifist' (Obradović-Dragišić, 2004) and 'with antinationalist belonging' (Kašić, 2006).

52 In an interview for the Croatian pro-state tabloid *Globus*, Vranić repeats the same criticism, but does not give any geographical indications about the feminists whose positioning she condemns (*Globus*, 15.11.1996).

Some authors present these feminists' positioning as almost identical to the joint one above: criticism towards the regime and its nationalist and women-unfriendly politics, a conceptualisation of war rape which is based on gender and disentangled from the discourse of national victimisation, solidarity with women regardless of ethnicity, and cooperation with the Belgrade feminists (Benderly, 1997a, 1997b; Bilić, 2011a; Fischer E., 1993; Irvine, 2007; Mikula, 2005; Pavlović, 1999; Knežević, 1994, 2004; *Vrouw & Gezondheidszorg*, March/April 1993; Zajović, 1995). Once more, there are authors who report the nuanced gender-based positioning on the war rapes (Obradović-Dragišić, 2004; Pollmann et al., 1993).

However, in some contributions the members of this Zagreb cluster are named and portrayed in a fundamentally different manner: as rape and genocide revisionists who deny or silence the genocidal character of the war rapes committed by Serbs. These portrayals do not limit themselves to the early 1990s. They go back to Yugoslavia's past and present these Zagreb feminists as privileged representatives of the regime and the extended hand of the League of Communists and the Yugoslav People's Army – a covert way to suggest their allegiance to Serbia, ie Serb politics.<sup>53</sup> The questioning of these feminists' legitimacy additionally, albeit indirectly, takes place by the (implicit) portrayal of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists and the women's groups they cooperated with as authentic and indigenous (MacKinnon, 2006; Nenadic, 1996, 2010; *Northwest Ethnic News*, November 1994; *off our backs*, November 1991).

Partially overlapping with this criticism is the already mentioned one of Vranić (1996). She rebukes the Zagreb (and Belgrade) feminists with a neutral positioning for denying the genocidal purpose of the Serb war rapes. This and similar<sup>54</sup> use of 'neutral' as a derogatory designation for the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists stands in direct contrast with Irvine's (2007) approving use of 'neutral' to refer to these feminists' positioning on the war guilt and war rapes.

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53 As I explain in Chapter 4, the portrayal of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists – and the other female public figures who used a gender-based positioning on the war rapes – as being privately and/or professionally linked to and privileged by the League of Communists and/or the Yugoslav People's Army, overlapped to a great extent with the one which the pro-state Croatian media used for denouncing these women.

54 In two documents of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist group Women's Help Now, the terms 'abstract' and 'neutral' were used to disapprovingly describe the positioning of the other Zagreb feminist cluster: '[W]e were particularly concerned to maintain and apply...the basic feminist principles such as identification of the aggressor (the perpetrator) and solidarity with the victim (the woman or the war victim). Those principles have determined the feminist approach which grew out of the experience of exactly this war and the differentiation between Women's Help Now and some other women's groups whose starting point is abstract internationalism and lack of understanding of the specific war circumstances of the imperialist or conquering war' (*Ženska pomoć sada izvještaj za 1993*, n.d.; see also *Pomoć ženama žrtvama ratnog nasilja*, 12.07.1993).

### **Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists**

The positioning of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist groups or activists is separately depicted as a protest against the use of war rape for war propaganda and an accusation of the politicians of all warring sides of fascism (Fischer E., 1993), or presented as having the form of a – not further elaborated – clear non-nationalist statement (Mladenović and Litričin, 1993). Zajović (*War Report*, September 1995) portrays their positioning as entailing autonomy both from the League of Communists and the Yugoslav People's Army, promotion of pacifism and self-determination, and a protest against the misuse of women for women-unfriendly nationalist and militarist aims. Zaharijević (2007) speaks of feminist pacifists who maintained the gender-based solidarity with women regardless of ethnicity and persisted in criticising the war violence of the Serb militaries (the latter is stated only implicitly).

Particularly significant is the direct link which is made between these feminists' positioning and the famous adage of the English writer Virginia Woolf (1938:109): '[A]s a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world'. Such a reference to Woolf, ie to the (self-chosen) absence of affiliation with one's country or ethnic group, is present only among the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists (Duhaček, 1998; Korać, 1996; Stojanović S. in: Mladenović and Hughes, 2000; Zaharijević, 2007; Zajović, 1993a [1991], 1997). These authors do not mention, however, that this distancing from Serbia and the Serbs was not clear-cut: it entailed the paradoxical situation of having first to acknowledge one's belonging to Serbia and the Serb ethnic collective – even if only by virtue of citizenship and/or ascribed-to ethnicity – before being able to renounce it.

Although the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were also critical towards the Croatian state and 'saw Croatia as a national state manipulative and dangerous to its women citizens' (Benderly, 1997a:71), I have never come across any statement in which they referred to Woolf. I would argue that the absence of such a self-designation as country-free or ethnicity-free women among these Zagreb feminists and its explicit presence among their Belgrade counterparts are due to the constitutive power of violence and the different roles of Croatia and Serbia. For the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists the distancing from the attacking country they lived in was a moral imperative and the only possible antinationalist positioning. Moreover, such an expression of opposition to the regime was welcomed, if not expected from them, at the international forums. That applied less to their Zagreb counterparts for whom it was more difficult to distance themselves from the attacked country they lived in (*Arkzin*, 20.12.1996; *Deklaracija žena iz Beograda*, 04.02.1993; Duhaček, 2010; Gjurgjan, 1992; Kašić, 2002; *The ACTivist*, May 1993; *Vreme*, 02.12.1991; Žarkov,

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2002). This difference between the two self-declared antinationalist clusters in their affiliation with Woolf's adage is comparable, thus, to the differences between white and non-white women which Gloria Wekker (1995:67–68) has observed in the context of the antiracist struggles in the United States:

Much as I would like vigorously to be able to underwrite Virginia Woolf's famous dictum...I cannot. Woolf's statement is attractive in implying a disloyalty to patriarchal civilisation, a disregard of narrow nationalist definitions and a sisterhood across national/ethnic boundaries. However,...being able to be aloof and detached from any country is the privilege of high caste and whiteness and can only be asserted when there is no challenge to belonging.

In relation to the NATO bombing of the Bosnian Serb positions in the late summer of 1995, Mladenović (2003:162) speaks of two positionings which existed among the Belgrade 'feminists with antinationalist sentiments'. The first was opposition to all use of arms, including the NATO intervention, while the second entailed support of the intervention because of the level of suffering which the Bosnian Serb militaries had inflicted on Bosniaks. In 1999 these feminists – suddenly and without any clarification Mladenović names them 'antifascist feminists' – were similarly divided on the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This time, even some otherwise pacifist feminists supported the bombing because they 'were disgusted with ten years of constant Serbian fascism and regarded the international military intervention as the only way to stop this' (Mladenović, 2003:163). They all agreed that Milošević was responsible both for the NATO intervention and the simultaneously happening ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians.

It is significant that concerning these two instances of military action, Mladenović (2003) names 'antinationalist' ('antifascist') even the feminists with a militarist or non-pacifist positioning. In other words, she does not consider approval of the use of arms in these cases as 'nationalist' or 'pro-nationalist', while she (implicitly) does so in describing the discussion among the Belgrade feminists on how justified it is to shoot in self-defence (Mladenović, 1995, 2003; Mladenović and Litričin, 1993).<sup>55</sup> Apparently, what makes a difference for her is that the NATO bombardments entailed a use of arms against Serbs, whereas the shooting in self-defence meant a use of arms by Serbs. In the latter situation Mladenović seems to see the disapproval of the use of arms as the only legitimate antinationalist positioning a Belgrade feminist could take.

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55 I look into this discussion in Chapter 4 in the analysis of the Belgrade Women's Studies Center.

However, when arms are used against Serbs Mladenović (2003) allows the possibility of having two different positionings which can be considered equally 'antinationalist'. She names a Belgrade feminist 'antinationalist' ('antifascist') if she foremostly speaks of Serbs as perpetrators and regardless of whether she is for or against the use of arms against them. Those who oppose the bombing and foremostly speak of Serbs as victims are classified as 'pro-nationalist'. This means that in order to name somebody's positioning on the NATO bombings one way or another, Mladenović looks at another positioning: the conceptualisation of the Serb role in the wars of the 1990s.

There are also authors who are critical of (some segments of) the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists' positioning. While Knežević (1994) acknowledges their avowed criticism of Serb nationalism and Milošević, she reproves them for three things. First, she considers their criticism of Serbia's politics on Bosnia and Herzegovina 'very vague and seldom precise' (1994:4)<sup>56</sup> and hardly existing regarding Serbia's politics on Kosovo. Second, she disapproves of these feminists' failure to accept that Yugoslavia as a single space does not exist anymore. Third, Knežević is displeased that these feminists do not realise that their attachment to and idealisation of the former country is the same as that which eg the Croat or Slovene nationalists show towards their respective new states. In other words, she suggests here that the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists are, in fact, Yugoslav nationalists.<sup>57</sup>

A different type of criticism of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists employs the designations 'radical' and 'extreme'. These feminists' positioning on (sexual) perpetrators and victims in the (post-)Yugoslav wars – the conceptualisation of Serbs as the only perpetrators and non-Serbs as the only victims – is described as 'antinational radicalism', 'extreme antinationalism', 'radical antinationalist' or as containing 'radical insensitivity'. The feminists with such a positioning are seen as insensitive to the suffering of Serbs, as failing to comprehend the complexity of Yugoslavia's disintegration, ie the perpetrator's roles shared by other warring sides, or as demonising the Serbs (Bilić, 2011a, 2011b; Milić, 2002; Nikolić-Ristanović, 2008;

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56 Knežević (1994:4) explains this as follows: '[I]t is not enough to say that Milošević's regime is fascist, undemocratic, that what is going on in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a shameful crime etc'. Thus, a less vague and more precise formulation would be one which would explicitly state Serbia's role in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. See also footnote 210.

57 Nevertheless, Knežević (1994) also recognises that it is easy to overlook the nationalist components of such an attitude towards the former country, given that Yugoslavia has fallen apart because of the nationalism of its constitutive units. See in Chapter 4 my elaboration of the irritation which the nostalgia for Yugoslavia – and in particular for the Adriatic Sea (the maritime nostalgia, as I call it) – of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists caused in their Zagreb counterparts.

Žarkov, 1999, 2002, 2007). A comparable criticism, but less harshly expressed, is the one in Nikolić-Ristanović (2000:31), where the author speaks of the women's groups which were 'less concerned about the problems of Serbian women, as opposed to those of non-Serbian women'.

Unlike the use of 'radical' by other authors, when Žarkov (1999, 2002, 2007) refers to the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists as 'radical' she does it for two reasons. The first is these feminists' positioning on ethnicity: 'In a radical agenda, ethnicity and anti-nationalist feminism came to be regarded as incompatible' (Žarkov, 2002:64). Therefore, the 'women who did not refuse to acknowledge their own ethnic identities were simply declared nationalists' (ibid). Hereby, she also attends, as the only author to do so, to one segment of the process of naming among the Belgrade feminists. The second reason is the self-declared antinationalist feminists' pre-war radical feminism wherein gender had the single utmost primacy for looking at societal problems. Žarkov seems to suggest a continuity in these feminists' adherence to radical positionings, despite the factual difference in contents. That could be inferred from her statement that although the radical feminists had initially refused to see any link between war rape and ethnicity, they added ethnicity to the definition later only to 'declare the Serb government, Serb people and especially Serb men, as the ultimate war villains' (Žarkov, 2002:64). Lastly, her choice for the word 'radical' appears also to be related to her claim that in Serbia, unlike in Croatia, there were 'only anti-nationalist feminists' (Žarkov, 2002:62, emphasis in the original). More precisely, given that she designates all Belgrade feminists as antinationalists, while being aware of their different war-related positionings, she uses 'radical' to distinguish between the two groupings. As I will show in Chapter 6, this depiction of all – or virtually all – Belgrade feminists as antinationalists was also to be found among some of my Belgrade respondents, including self-declared antinationalist ones.

### **Belgrade or Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists**

There are no authors who speak about the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists jointly. Some authors formulate their argument in such a manner that at first glance it gives the impression of referring to the so-called nationalist feminists all over the post-Yugoslav region or at least to those in Belgrade and Zagreb alike. Still, a closer reading of the text and the presented positioning reveals that the statement actually concerns only the Zagreb cluster (eg *Forum*, 1995; Jansen, 2005; Korać, 2003; Stojsavljević, 1995).

There are few contributions which address the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists or – more often – (implicitly) point to the existence of war-related tensions among the Belgrade feminists (Duhaček, 1998; Milić, 2002; Mladenović, 1995, 2003; Mladenović and Litričin, 1993;<sup>58</sup> Nikolić-Ristanović, 2000, 2008; Zaharijević, 2007; Žarkov, 1999, 2002, 2007).<sup>59</sup> They are much fewer compared to the texts which explicitly or actually attend to the divisions in Zagreb (Batinić, 2001; Benderly, 1997a, 1997b; Bilić, 2011a; Fischer E., 1993; *Forum*, 1995; Helms, 1998; Irvine, 2007; Jansen, 2005; Kašić, 1994a, 2006; Knežević, 1994, 1995, 2004; Korać, 1998, 2003; Lindsey, 2002; Mikula, 2005; Obradović-Dragišić, 2004; *On the Issues*, Summer 1993; Pavlović, 1999; Stojsavljević, 1995; Zajović, 1995; Žarkov, 1999, 2002, 2007). This obvious discrepancy in quantity of scholarship indicates that the creation of hasty analogies between the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist cluster and between the dynamics among the feminists in each city should be avoided.

### Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists

The most frequently assigned explicit designations for the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist cluster are ‘nationalist’ (Bilić, 2011a; Fischer E., 1993, 1997; *Forum*, 1995; Irvine, 2007; *On the Issues*, Summer 1993; Pavlović, 1999; Stojsavljević, 1995; Žarkov, 1999, 2002, 2007) and, less often, ‘patriotic’ (Batinić, 2001; Korać, 1998, 2003). In one place, Batinić (2001) also uses ‘pro-nationalist’. Some authors employ both ‘nationalist’ and ‘patriotic’ (Benderly, 1997a, 1997b; Helms, 1998; Knežević, 1995; Korać, 1998; Obradović-Dragišić, 2004; Pavlović, 1999; Zajović, 1995). Also regarding these feminists, there are scholars who do the naming by using adverbial constructions instead of adjectives: ‘[reacted in a spirit] related to clear national identification and, frequently, to nationalism’ (Dobnikar, 2000), ‘with national (patriotic) belonging’ (Kašić, 2006), ‘who adopt the official ethno-national line’ (Mikula, 2005) and ‘who agree with the ruling nationalist politics’ (Knežević, 2004).

Pavlović (1999) uses ‘nationalist’ and ‘patriotic’ as synonyms, unlike Benderly (1997a), who states, without elaborating further, that ‘patriotic’ might be a more accurate term than ‘nationalist’ for this Zagreb cluster. This usage is questioned by

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58 The relevant claims made in this article are reused in Hughes and Mladenović (1995), Hughes, Mladenović and Mršević (1995), Mladenović and Hughes (2000) and Mladenović and Litričin (1998), but as these later texts do not add new information on this concrete issue, I do not include them in the list above.

59 I do not list here the texts which, besides quoting from Mladenović and Litričin (1993), do not provide any additional information on the war-related tensions among the Belgrade feminists.

Žarkov (1999:431, n 12), who asks why the other Zagreb cluster should not be called ‘patriotic’ as well: ‘[I]f patriotism is (naively) defined only as one’s love for one’s country, than [sic] why should a love expressed in criticizing one’s government’s nationalist policies be excluded?’<sup>60</sup> Batinić (2001:21, n 12), on the other hand, approvingly refers to Benderly’s choice and justifies her own preference for ‘patriotic’ by saying that the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists ‘developed articulate critiques of nationalism in general, and of nationalism of their state’s enemy in particular’. It seems, therefore, that Batinić suggests that to be patriotic means to turn a blind eye to the nationalism of one’s state, ie not criticise it explicitly.

Some authors mention – without providing references – that ‘patriotic’ was a complimentary name which this Zagreb cluster received from the Croatian media (Knežević, 1995, 1997; Žarkov, 2007) or from the media and politicians alike (Obradović-Dragišić, 2004). Obradović-Dragišić (2004) and Žarkov (2007) also state that ‘patriotic’ was this cluster’s self-designation. I could not confirm these claims during the fieldwork. I found only one article – in the Croatian pro-state political weekly *Danas* – which corroborated the claim about the media.<sup>61</sup> ‘Patriotic’ was used there to approvingly describe the women’s groups which, according to the journalist, had not remained apolitical and abstract, but had named the aggressors and victims of the (sexual) war violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia (*Danas*, 29.01.1993).

As to the claim that ‘patriotic’ had been a self-designation, I could not find any media record or organisational document in support of it. The so-called nationalist feminists might, however, have implied this self-designation by eg referring to the positionings of the other feminists as ‘unpatriotic’ or ‘insufficiently patriotic’. Some Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists spoke of such an instance of naming concerning their decision to remain active in the Antiwar Campaign Croatia (*Arkzin*, 01.11.1993a; *Danas*, 18.06.1993; *die tageszeitung*, 05.11.1992; respondent F1 in Obradović-Dragišić, 2004).

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60 The Croatian philosopher Igor Primorac conceptualises what he calls ethical patriotism in exactly this manner: ‘I ought to be concerned about immoral practices of my society, immoral laws and policies of my polity, since they tend to impose collective moral responsibility I, too, have to shoulder. I ought to be concerned that they be identified, acknowledged, and dismantled, and that their harmful effects be redressed’ (Primorac, 2004a:95; see also Primorac, 2004b). If this understanding of patriotism is used, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists – especially one part of them – could be designated as ‘patriotic’ with regard to Serbia, even though none of them has ever named herself and/or her fellow feminists from the same Belgrade cluster in this way or expressed her love for Serbia or the Serbs.

61 I have to note that my media search did not include TV and radio items.

In any case, the choice for ‘nationalist’ and/or ‘patriotic’ – or ‘loyal’ (Jansen, 2005; Zajović, 1995) – does not seem to affect the manner in which the positioning of this Zagreb cluster is presented: identification with and support to the victimised Croatia and its regime’s nationalist politics, use of an ethnicity-based conceptualisation of war rape in which Serb men are the exclusive perpetrators and Bosniak and Croat women the exclusive victims, perception of the rape of Bosniak and Croat women as a metaphor for the rape of the Bosniak and Croat nation, abandonment of the discourse of solidarity among women in general, and rejection of the cooperation with the Belgrade feminists due to their assumed ethnicity-based complicity with the Serbian regime. In addition to this, some Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists’ conceptualisation of war rape as a tool of genocide has led to designations such as ‘[those] claiming rape as genocide’ (Lindsey, 2002) or ‘feminists with a genocidal rape approach’ (Helms, 1998, 2003a), whereas the scholars who have cooperated with these feminists implicitly name them ‘genocide and rape acknowledgers’ (MacKinnon, 2006; Nenadic, 1996, 2010; *Northwest Ethnic News*, November 1994).

The contributions of MacKinnon and Nenadic differ from those by the other aforementioned scholars also in the (implicit) portrayal of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists as autonomous by virtue of being underprivileged outsiders during socialism. This difference in the distance from the Yugoslav state and its ideology remains unaddressed by the other authors. When the latter implicitly name the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists ‘not autonomous’ or ‘uncritical’, it is because of these feminists’ proximity to the Croatian state and its politics in the warring first half of the 1990s. It is exactly this position in the new state and the positioning vis-à-vis its politics that MacKinnon and Nenadic do not mention. Both groupings of authors accentuate, thus, some positions and positionings, while being silent about others.

The final discrepancy between the designations which are ascribed to this cluster concerns the term ‘antiwar’. Whereas Batinić (2001) and Benderly (1997a) explicitly state – but without any references or examples – that both Zagreb clusters had an antiwar positioning, in Kašić (2006), Kesić (2002a), Obradović-Dragišić (2004) and Zajović (1995) one finds implicit indications of the pro-war positioning of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. Such a positioning is also implied in the contributions wherein these feminists are presented as supportive of the Croatian state and its nationalist politics, but it is clearer in the four above works.

The allusion to the pro-war positioning in Kašić (2006) can be inferred from the explicit designation ‘antiwar’ which she assigns to the other Zagreb cluster (no further clarifications are given). In Kesić’s (2002a:314) contribution it is implied from her statement that ‘the simple divisions of “aggressors and victims,” “our rights” and

“their wrongs,” the differences constructed as insurmountable’ are ‘reductions needed for waging wars’. Obradović-Dragišić (2004:40) suggests it by saying that the ‘feminists were holding two different positions on the issue of war and pacifism’ and that some of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists spoke about the right to self-defence. Lastly, Zajović (1995:50) implicitly speaks of the pro-war positioning of these feminists by stressing that the identification ‘with male militaristic states means to assume the role of an accomplice in war and war propaganda’.

### **Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists**

The Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists is not only the least addressed cluster in the scholarship, but it is also the only cluster whose descriptions are more often than not only quite implicit indications which require much reading between the lines. As I explained in Chapter 1, unlike its Zagreb counterpart, the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist cluster did not consist of feminist groups, but of individuals who did not organise themselves jointly nor publish common statements. The demarcation of this cluster is further aggravated by the fact that the very few authors who address these feminists give only quite implicit indications on who they are.

In the most often referred to article on the divisions among the Belgrade feminists in the early 1990s (Mladenović and Litričin, 1993),<sup>62</sup> no feminist activists or groups are explicitly named ‘nationalist’. The closest these two authors come to such an explicit designation is when they speak of the activists who ‘were unable to keep their nationalist feelings out of their SOS [Hotline] work’ (1993:117). A more implicit indication of the existence of nationalism among some feminists can be read from the description that besides the groups ‘where the non-nationalist statement is clear’, there were those which ‘had many problems’ (ibid) and whose members were divided. Still, what exactly those ‘nationalist feelings’ and ‘many problems’ were, as well as what exactly a clear ‘non-nationalist statement’ entailed, does not get elaborated. It is also unclear in which ways the not kept under control nationalist feelings of some feminists prevented the creation of a clear non-nationalist statement in one part of the groups.

By listing the questions – but not the answers – which have caused divisions among the Belgrade feminists up to October 1992, Mladenović and Litričin (1993:117) give only a slight indication of the issues at stake:

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62 The comment on the several later versions of this article which I made in footnote 58 is also valid here.

Can a feminist be a nationalist chauvinist? Can a pacifist be a nationalist? Is a weapon an instrument of defence? Should the groups take clear attitudes toward nationalist questions (and therefore the war) and in that way lose some women? Should the groups avoid the issue of nationalism altogether? Should the women merely sit down and confront their beliefs about it and see what happens?

In a later text Mladenović (1995) clarifies somewhat more the points of contestation. This time she situates the different positionings in the second half of 1991 not among the Belgrade feminists in general, but only among the members of the SOS Hotline. It seems that Mladenović (1995:36–37) uses ‘nationalist’ to designate an expression of close belonging to the Serb ethnic group which entails a distance from and a discriminative attitude towards the allegedly inimical non-Serbs, a justification for the Serbs’ use of arms in self-defence, and a disagreement with the idea that the Serbian government is a fascist regime:

A new issue among the [SOS Hotline] volunteers was the extent to which each of the volunteers felt as a Serb...All of a sudden some women said ‘If they come to shoot at my daughter, I will shoot at them’. Others would say: ‘Serbs need to defend themselves’. Suddenly, some of the ‘ours’ became ‘theirs’ – in one day. Many women quickly managed to switch to new terms, ‘enemies’ and ‘theirs’...It took some of us a long time before we named the killings a war, before we realised that the government had become a regime and that that which the Serbian regime did was called fascism, as well as that the other regimes in the conflict were not much better. Despite all discussions, some of us did not manage to identify with the Serbdom...Since then a space for polemics was created: how to separate the national identity which gives to some a warm feeling of belonging from the nationalism which discriminates against the others.

The closer belonging of some Belgrade feminists to their ethnic group or state, and their concomitant lesser criticism of it, is also implicitly suggested by Duhaček (1998). She speaks of ‘unresolvable differences in the critiques of nationalism’ and rhetorically asks whether ‘contrary to what Virginia Woolf tried to teach us –...women, in fact, have a country, or a nation’ (Duhaček, 1998:492).

In her description of the discussion among Belgrade feminists on how justified shooting in self-defence is, Mladenović (2003) names the feminists who would approve of it ‘pro-nationalist feminists’ or those ‘with pro-nationalist feelings and interests’. A few sentences further, it turns out that they would defend such a use of arms by Serbs only some of the time. However, since the author does not specify in which situations

exactly these feminists would not approve of shooting, I cannot explore this example further, but only point to it as an instance of confusing incoherence.

Concerning the NATO bombing of the Bosnian Serb positions in 1995, Mladenović (2003:162) says that the feminists with pro-nationalist feelings were against the 'big power shooting at "their soldiers"' and did not address those soldiers' acts against non-Serbs. As to the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, the same author explains that the pro-nationalist feminists blamed NATO (instead of Milošević) for the bombing, unanimously opposed it and were silent about the then ongoing ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians by the Serb forces. In conclusion, and as I already indicated in the section on the other Belgrade feminist cluster, it appears that, according to Mladenović (2003), a (pro-)nationalist positioning of a Belgrade feminist always entails a primary conceptualisation of Serbs as victims, and silence about their perpetrators' role in the (post-)Yugoslav wars.

The distance from the allegedly inimical non-Serbs, which Mladenović (1995) seems to see as part of a nationalist positioning, is also observed by Zaharijević (2007). She does not speak, however, of a fixed distance towards non-Serbs in general, but specifically indicates that this distance varied based on whether those non-Serbs were Croat, Bosniak or Kosovar Albanian women:

[A]lthough the majority of [Belgrade] feminists was able during the first vigil of Women in Black to stand behind the banner stating 'The Croat women are our sisters' (the message on sisterhood is particularly feminist since it conveys the insistence that we as women cross national and ethnic markers, and that women's solidarity is more important to us than the national belonging and the loyalty to the nation/state), when the banner 'The Bosnian [read: Bosniak] women are our sisters' was to be held there were already those who were not all that easily convinced. The most controversial banner...'The Albanian women are our sisters' repulsed many feminists despite its unchanged feminist message (Zaharijević, 2007:243).

Zaharijević sees this gradual reduction of the number of Belgrade feminists who maintained a gender-based conceptualisation of solidarity among women as illustrating the progressive divergence of the initially intertwined feminism and pacifism of the Belgrade feminists. In other words, according to this author, there were fewer and fewer feminists who would second both the idea that all wars were by definition wrong and the one that all women were sisters. Those who refrained from expressing these two positionings jointly had, in fact, chosen patriotism, which entailed loyalty to their ethnic group and state.

Obviously, this conceptualisation of pacifism differs somewhat from the already addressed one of Mladenović (2003). Zaharijević conceptualises pacifism as opposed to patriotism: the abandonment of pacifism leads to choosing patriotism and putting an end to the solidarity with specific non-Serb women. For Mladenović, such an abandonment does not necessarily mean a choice for patriotism. It could be just another type of an antinationalist positioning driven by the wish to preserve exactly this solidarity with the specific ethnic Other.

Although Zaharijević does not formulate this explicitly, by stating that some feminists abandoned ‘the message on sisterhood [which] is particularly feminist’ (2007:243), she actually suggests that the feminists who chose patriotism not only abandoned pacifism but also feminism – at least partially. Another not explicitly articulated suggestion is that the feminists who refrained from expressing their solidarity with Bosniak or Kosovar Albanian women did so because of not considering these ethnic groups free from responsibility for the war violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, respectively. Put differently, the feminists who chose patriotism did not want to speak publicly about Serbs only as perpetrators, and about Bosniaks and Kosovar Albanians only as victims.

The kinds of classification and naming employed by Mladenović and Zaharijević are those which Žarkov (1999, 2002, 2007) disagrees with by saying that in Belgrade there were only antinationalist feminists, albeit with indeed two different positionings regarding the Serb ethnic group. The ‘academic feminists’ – the term she uses for those whom I name Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists – ‘were wary of the demonization of “the Serbs” as much as of Serbian nationalism and...disagreed strongly with radical feminist views’ (Žarkov, 2002:64).

Based on Žarkov’s criticism of the radicalism or extremism of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists, as well as the rebuke by Bilić (2011a, 2011b), Milić (2002) and Nikolić-Ristanović (2000, 2008), I suggest that these authors implicitly portray the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists<sup>63</sup> as being sensitive to both the suffering of Serbs and the not black-and-white power dynamics between the warring sides. Bilić, Milić, Nikolić-Ristanović and Žarkov, unlike Mladenović, do not see the explicit articulation of the victimhood of Serbs as an intrinsically (pro-)nationalist positioning, even when it is not followed by an explicit acknowledgement of their role of perpetrators. In a similar vein, contrary to Zaharijević, the same four authors deem that to refrain from publicly speaking of Serbs only as perpetrators and non-Serbs only as victims does not necessarily indicates one’s patriotism.

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63 I say ‘implicitly portray’ because Bilić, Milić and Nikolić-Ristanović, unlike Žarkov, do not explicitly mention the existence of Belgrade feminists whose positioning differs from that of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist ones.

## Conclusion

The already scarce scholarship on the war-related Belgrade and/or Zagreb feminist activism in the 1990s becomes additionally limited when information is sought regarding these feminists' war-related positionings and the divisions which they have caused. Not only are many lacunae and repeating information ('repeating' not in the sense of new confirmations of previous research findings, but in the sense of re-referencing of the same few scholarly works), but this scholarship is also in many ways biased. All these problematic places urge the readers to maintain a critical approach even when examining texts of authors whose political views largely correspond to their own ones. Such a reading attitude is essential also when the works in question have been inspired by and are a part of progressive emancipatory ideologies, such as feminism. The scholarship on the war-related activism of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the 1990s is a case in point. It contains overgeneralisations and oversimplifications, instances of misrecognition, uncritical portrayals of the assenting voices and delegitimation and silencing of the dissenting ones, and has not remained immune to the larger academic 'fashion trends' which dictate which topics are worth of researching and publishing and which are not.

To begin with, the first scholarly bias concerns the disparity in the designations which are used to describe the different positionings and/or the feminists who have employed them. There is an overwhelmingly greater presence of the terms which have been used by the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists compared to those which have been used by the so-called nationalist feminists. That is due to the greater correspondence between the former's designations and the actual positionings observed, the greater comprehensibility of these terms at face value, the larger number of scholars (Western and local) who have endorsed the positionings of the self-declared antinationalist feminists, and the much more extensive appearance of these feminists as authors of relevant scholarly contributions.

The second source of bias is the political role of this scholarship, ie its interaction with and participation in the efforts to stop the wars and war rapes, secure assistance for the victims and bring the perpetrators to justice, as well as obtain resources for the local feminists (the ones whose work the author endorses) to continue with their activities. This type of bias manifests first in the positive depictions of the like-minded feminists, the use of loaded terms in referring to the not like-minded ones and in an avoidance of calling the latter 'feminists' or mentioning them when describing the feminist field. Second, it is visible in the virtually total absence of attention for this political component, as well as for the process of naming, including

the self-ascribed and ascribed-to designations, and the consequences thereof. The interests which are contained in these practices are thereby misrecognised and the scholarship is incorrectly implicitly portrayed as disinterested and objective.

The third bias is formed by the lack of analysis of the war-related dynamics and positionings among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists after the end of the wars and war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. This concerns the explorations of these feminists' post-1995 interactions and positionings on the same war-related issues, their post-1995 analyses of their previous positionings, collaborations and splits, as well as the evaluation of the relevant scholarly information which was produced earlier, especially during the period of war violence.

I explain this absence first by the decreased political, media and academic interest for the post-Yugoslav region after the end of the wars, ie after the displacement of this interest to the parts of the world with ongoing (sexual) war violence. Second, the fact that the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 and the war in Kosovo 1998–1999 did not restore this interest is probably due to their shorter duration, the seemingly smaller incidence of war rapes, the saturation of the research interest for the region (including the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists), the lack of indications of related conflicts between these feminists, and the largely silenced tensions among the Belgrade feminists. This means that even the post-2000 works which touch upon the war-related divisions among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists only refer to the 1991–1995 wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

The fourth bias refers to the limited to non-existent attention for some of the divisions among the feminists. Depictions of conflicts within each of the four clusters are as good as absent. At the same time, there are minimal records of the tensions between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, which is quite different from the well-registered accentuation of the courageous boundary transgressing aspect of their cooperation. That might be due to these feminists' avoidance of reporting on the frictions in order not to saw off the legitimacy branch they were sitting on. Furthermore, these issues might have remained unnoticed to outside scholars. Due to eg time and language constraints and insufficient background knowledge, they might have been unable to decipher the written and oral allusions to the conflicts. Finally, considering that the outside scholars – most of whom were supportive of these feminists – were also a part of the struggle for legitimacy, it is very likely that the former did not want to delegitimise the latter.

The fifth bias is the lack of attention for the biographies of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists and the absence of analyses which would compare the differences and similarities between and among them in terms of eg age, ethnicity and education,

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and explore them in connection to the war-related positionings. I explain this bias by the great mobilising force of the war rapes on the gender scholars. While rightly resulting in many analyses of these atrocities and their conceptualisations, it has left no space for attending to the lives of those who assisted the rape survivors locally and struggled both locally and internationally for the, in their view, true definition of the phenomenon.

The sixth and final bias is the geographical one which entails that the analyses more often than not claim to address an area which is larger than the one the scholars have obtained data for. The arguments are eg presented as valid for post-Yugoslav feminism in general, while only Belgrade and Zagreb feminists have been interviewed. This homogenisation fallacy is especially problematic for the studies which explore the region after Yugoslavia's disintegration. Not only have the successor states developed differently, but they have also been exposed to dissimilar war violence – in terms of both form and duration. Additionally problematic are the studies which claim to address an even more heterogeneous terrain, the Balkans, while being only grounded in data on (one part of) the post-Yugoslav region. I suggest that this bias is due to the output pressure in academia which drives scholars to present their work as more broadly relevant, the wish to evade possible criticism because of leaving out some areas, lack of familiarity with the heterogeneity of the area under study, and – concerning the use of 'Balkans' – the choice to avoid the politically and emotionally laden direct reference to Yugoslavia.

When the scholarship is explored with regard to the ways in which the feminists (feminist groups) and their war-related positionings have been classified and named, the presence of a dichotomy between these feminists (positionings) is usually revealed. This dichotomy is commonly referred to as being one between antinationalist (non-nationalist) and nationalist (patriotic) feminists. In addition to these terms, a great variety of other adjectival and adverbial designations are employed or only implicitly suggested. One's choice for the used and alluded to terms is, however, left unattended. Moreover, the same names can mean different things. For example, depending on the author, 'autonomous' can refer either to the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist or to the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, and a 'neutral' positioning on the war rapes can be either used approvingly because of not spreading hate or disapprovingly because of denying genocide. Finally, 'antinationalist' can denote both the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, but also the Belgrade so-called nationalist ones.

The analysis of the scholarship also shows that some authors jointly address the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, whereas no truly joint

analyses exist of the two so-called nationalist clusters. Some authors present their argument as also including this Belgrade cluster, but actually present information only on the Zagreb one. The joint descriptions of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist clusters and the separate portrayals of the Zagreb one show many resemblances, which indicates that also these joint descriptions have been foremostly based on data from Zagreb and the splits induced by the 1991–1995 wars. This becomes even more obvious when the separate depictions of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist cluster are included in the comparison. First, it is revealed that the presence of tensions in Belgrade and the absence of tensions in Zagreb regarding the NATO bombing and the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo are glaringly absent from the joint portrayals. Second, one can notice the absence of some other specific issues which have played a role among the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists, but not among the Zagreb ones. This concerns the rejection of the affiliation with one's ethnic group and new state, the continuity of the affiliation with the old state (Yugoslavia) despite its disintegration, and the NATO bombing of the Bosnian Serb forces in 1995.

There is a predominance of authors who approvingly look at the positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists (some of these authors themselves belong to one of the clusters). They stress these feminists' critical distance from the nationalist and warmongering ideologies of their states, their disapproval of the manipulation of the war rape stories and figures for inciting further violence, the primary perception of the war rapes as gender-based (some scholars note the later less strictly gender-based positioning which included the ethnic component of the rapes) and the firm choice to continue the cooperation across the state and ethnic boundaries. The scholars who are critical of the positioning of the Zagreb (and Belgrade) self-declared antinationalist feminists – some of whom have worked with the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists – rebuke them sharply for denying the genocidal component of the war rapes and thereby distorting the reality. A number of these scholars specifically decry the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists because of their alleged connections to the Yugoslav state and politics, ie advocacy of Serb interests.

The separate favourable portrayals of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists indicate their identification with Virginia Woolf's adage about not having and not wanting to have a country (and an ethnic group). They attend hereby to these feminists' distancing from Serbia's politics and the Serb-induced victimisation of non-Serbs, but omit to say that this rejection presupposes a previous acceptance of one's (administrative) bonds with Serbia and ascribed-to belonging to the Serb ethnic collective. These Belgrade feminists are further depicted as having either approved

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or disapproved of the NATO bombings in 1995 and 1999, but both positionings are considered to be antinationalist because these feminists acknowledged the Serbs' foremost perpetrating role in the wars of the 1990s.

There are also scholars who are critical of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. In one case, the criticism concerns these feminists' Yugoslav nationalism, ie continuous adherence to Yugoslavia, and their insufficiently precise rebuke of Serbia's perpetrating politics. Others – part of whom are Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists – rebuke the former feminists' radical insistence on the rejection of the affiliation with the Serbs and/or Serbia because of their perception of this ethnic group and country as the exclusive perpetrators in the (post-)Yugoslav wars. According to these authors, this insistence of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists has not only led to their smaller interest in the non-Serb-induced suffering of Serbs (Serb women, in particular) but also to the portrayal of the Belgrade feminists who do not reject their affiliation and/or are (also) concerned about the Serb victimisation as nationalists.

When the positionings of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists are approvingly elaborated, these feminists are presented as being autonomous from Yugoslavia and its Serb-dominated politics because of being underprivileged outsiders. This argument is used to increase the legitimacy of these feminists' ethnicity-based conceptualisation of the war rapes. Furthermore, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists are praised for being able to look beyond the distorted views and discern the real, ie genocidal, nature of the Serb war rapes. The scholars who disapprovingly look at these Zagreb feminists differ in their perceptions of them as being pro-war or antiwar, but agree in criticising their proximity to Croatia's state politics and its exclusively ethnicity-based conceptualisation of (sexual) perpetrators and victims, their participation in the use of exaggerated war rape figures and accounts, and their rejection of the cooperation and solidarity with the Belgrade feminists.

The scarce scholarship on the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists is most difficult to grasp because of the virtual absence of explicit and unambiguous references and information. The critics disapprove of their affiliation with the Serb ethnic group and Serbia, and subsequent absence of sharp reproof of the extensive perpetrator's role of this country and ethnic group in the (post-)Yugoslav wars. Furthermore, they criticise their insufficient acknowledgement of and solidarity with the (female) victims of the Serb politics. One part of these victims – the Kosovar Albanians – are noted as a particularly strong point of contestation. The absence of acknowledgement of the Serb ethnic cleansing against them is seen as a clear indicator of these feminists' nationalism (patriotism). Their opposition to the NATO bombing – in 1995 and/or

1999 – is presented as testifying to their nationalism because it is accompanied by the denial of the Serb role of foremost perpetrators.

The authors who are less critical of the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists – either by explicitly mentioning them or only alluding to their existence when disapproving of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists – present them as being sensitive to the victimisation of Serbs and aware of the complexity of the (post-)Yugoslav wars. Attending to the suffering of Serbs and the perpetrating deeds of the other ethnic groups is not, according to these authors, a sign of one's nationalism or patriotism. Neither is that necessarily the case when the Serb-induced victimisation of the other ethnic groups is left unattended.

Having addressed the biases and silent places in the scholarship on the war-related positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the 1990s, as well as the diverse scholarly designations which are used to name and classify these positionings and/or feminists, I turn to Chapter 3. I begin with a short overview of the post-1945 historical context of Yugoslavia which led to the establishment of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminist groups. Afterwards, I portray the (predecessors of the) feminist groups which are important for this research.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Historical background

The social, political and economic contexts in which the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists have become feminists and produced an impressive legacy of feminist activism are briefly sketched in the first part of this chapter. My understanding of these contexts and the processes of construction and destruction of Yugoslavia is one which conceptualises them as consisting of multiple, sometimes successive and at other times simultaneously occurring events which did not happen overnight nor were completely inevitable and predetermined. Hereby I express my agreement with Dubravka Stojanović (2010:15), who has warned that

in history the possibility of choice always exists...[The] 'history of the present' is a history of 'longue durée', but also a history of contingencies, unforeseen events. That is why the 'history of the present' is also a story about responsibility. If we depart from [saying] that history is not causality and is not determined, then we accept that besides the [existence of] profound processes...individuals and groups bear responsibility for the decisions they had made which have directed the courses of the processes towards the outcome in which we find ourselves.

In the second part of this chapter I portray the Zagreb and Belgrade feminist groups which have been most often mentioned in the discussions of the war-related feminist activism in the two cities in the 1990s. I begin with Zagreb for the same reason as in Chapter 2. In addition to these portrayals, I pay limited attention to the feminist activities in the period 1989–1991. Although this period, strictly speaking, does not fall under the scope of my research, it is important to address it in order to better understand some of the processes which started from the second half of 1991 onward. For example, the enthusiasm and the consuming pioneering work conducted by the feminists in those last pre-war years can partially explain the disappointment, pain, anger and feeling of betrayal which many of them have felt vis-à-vis the feminists with different war-related positionings. Also, attention to some of the not war-related conflicts in the pre-war period helps clarify the divisions which occurred after the beginning of the war violence.

## **From the state of Yugoslavia to the post-Yugoslav states**

### **Creation and organisation of the Yugoslav federation**

Yugoslavia was a federation of six socialist republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) and two socialist autonomous provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina) which were constituent parts of Serbia. Belgrade was the capital of both the federation and Serbia. Yugoslavia was the successor of the monarchy Kingdom of [male] Serbs, [male] Croats and [male] Slovenes,<sup>64</sup> which was established in December 1918, after World War I, and renamed Kingdom of Yugoslavia in October 1929. The founding principles of the Yugoslav federation were set up in the midst of World War II, in November 1943, at the clandestine<sup>65</sup> Second Session of the Antifascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia<sup>66</sup> (*Odluka*, 29.11.1943). Soon after the end of World War II, on 31 January 1946, the Constituent assembly of Yugoslavia drew up its first constitution.

The creation of Yugoslavia during and after World War II required a mobilisation of the population for the processes of liberation and state formation. For this purpose, the communist ideology of equality was employed. This ideology, which was able to politically homogenise the population, was also necessary because of Yugoslavia's great cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, a diversity which would continue to exist throughout Yugoslavia's life. Actually, the communist ideology was used as a substitute for a state-building nationalism which resembled that of the decolonising states in Asia and Africa. As Wim Couwenberg (1994:66) has described it, this type of nationalism

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64 In the Kingdom's original name in Croatian and Serbian (*Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*) and in Slovenian (*Kraljevina Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev*) the masculine form of the nouns was used as generic. This important linguistic and societal gender discrimination is rendered invisible in the standard (and, in my view, incorrect) translation of the name in English: Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In order to attend to this discriminatory formulation, I add '[male]' in front of each noun designating an ethnic group.

65 Clandestineness was required as during World War II the Yugoslav monarchy was occupied by the Axis powers which had divided the country and installed their own puppet governments consisting of local collaborators.

66 This was the supreme decision making and executive body of the new Yugoslavia during World War II. It consisted of representatives of the national liberation committees from all over the future country (Bilandžić, 1985).

is not directed only against the foreign political, but also against the economic and social domination, including the domestic [one]. Political and social struggle go therefore hand in hand... [This nationalism] does not rely on an awoken national-cultural consciousness of the population. That population consists of very different ethno-cultural groups and its support for the national liberation movements has thus no ethno-cultural background, but rests mainly on the longing to shake off the colonial yoke.

In the Yugoslav case, 'foreign', ie 'colonial domination', was analogous to the fascist regimes which were installed all over the country during World War II, whereas 'domestic domination' corresponded to the undemocratic political system and the big economic and social differences existing in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia prior to World War II. This duality of the struggle which was carried out by the Yugoslav partisans and the Communist Party during World War II was expressed in its official name: National Liberation War and Socialist Revolution. By fighting the fascists and their local collaborators (portrayed by the Communist party as the enemy of the people, ie a national enemy) as well as the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy (portrayed as the enemy of the working class, ie a class enemy), the aim was to create a fascism- and class-free modernised state whose political organisation would be completely different from that of its predecessor.

The new and modernised state, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was officially a country of brotherhood and unity: a political community of equal nations (ethnic groups) which were united in the creation of a new, advanced and just society. To achieve this equality, the policy tool named 'ethnic key' was installed. This tool for ethnicity-based proportional allocation of positions – which resembles the present-day quota, positive discrimination or affirmative action tools – was created in order to both ensure that all Yugoslav ethnic groups would get a fair share of the pie in the short run and diminish the importance of ethnicity in the long run. While producing ethnically heterogeneous working environments, the unintended consequence of that policy was that the importance of ethnicity increased. It instilled 'a fixation of the thinking in ethnic terms' (Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005:100), and people kept a close watch on the actual distribution of positions. Žarkov has also pointed to this problematic and paradoxical effect of the ethnic key policy:

*[I]n socialist Yugoslavia, political power was always distributed among the ethnically divided republics, and within each republic, among the ethnically defined groups. That in itself was not problematic, for it could have been an element adding to the equality of the groups and to the democratization of society. However, it became problematic*

at the point when ethnicity became the most significant channel through which political power was distributed (1999:9, emphasis in the original).

This wariness became even more salient in periods of economic decline and scarce job positions: 'Suspicion of ethnic bias was as powerful as its reality, and such resentments particularly threatened poorer, ethnically mixed communities' (Woodward, 1995:56). In addition to this, the immanent criticism of this type of policies – the questionable qualities of the selected people – was occasionally articulated as well (Zukin, 1985).

Officially, Yugoslavia also embraced the full-fledged equality of women and men. This premise was set already in its first constitution of 1946: 'Women have equal rights with men in all segments of the state, economic and socio-political life' (in: Božinović, 1996:151). Indeed, the position of women in Yugoslavia after World War II was in many ways much better than the pre-war one. Women and men were granted full franchise and equal marital and inheritance rights, abortion was legalised, primary education was made compulsory for all children, and women were encouraged to join the work force and political life. Furthermore, varied courses were organised in order to decrease the illiteracy among them and improve their low educational level, as well as to inform them about the new legislative changes granting them more rights (Božinović, 1996; Gudac-Dodić, 2006; Tomšič, 1980). Still, '[w]omen were included and represented as "equal" only on the abstract level as citizens, not through a gender approach' (Kesić, 2002b:68; see also *Svijet*, 09.12.1989).

In other words, women and men were equal citizens and, as such, had the same formal 'public' and 'private' rights and responsibilities, but the practices of daily life showed more often than not another picture than one of true gender equality. By 1958 only 7% of the members of the Federal parliament had been women, and 30 years later, in 1986, this percentage was no more than 16.2.<sup>67</sup> In 1980 women made up 36% of the labour force (Morgan, 1985), but 'were employed in low wage industries, at the lower professional levels and hardly ever held public offices, except at the lower level of the judiciary system and education' (Kesić, 2002b:72; see also Tomšič, 1980). Child- and eldercare as well as domestic responsibilities remained women's tasks (Iveković R., 1985; Milić, 1994a; Swaneveld, 1984), which meant that employed women suffered from what came to be known as the 'double shift' (Molyneux, 1981) or the 'double burden' (Sklevicky, 1984) of women in socialism.

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67 Data from the Yugoslav Statistical Office (in: Božinović, 1996:249).

This is not to say that the double burden of women was unique to the former socialist countries. However, in these countries – including Yugoslavia – the official state ideology and policies emphasised the equality of women and men in all spheres of life, but did not deliver it. While women were expected to actively participate both in the ‘public’ realm (the labour market and the cultural, social and political life) and in the ‘private’ one (the household), there were hardly any stipulations and expectations about men’s active participation in the latter.<sup>68</sup>

Interethnic and gender equality were two but not the only terrains with an observable discrepancy between the official ideology and the actual reality. This discrepancy also existed regarding the economic and political organisation of the federation as well as the workers’ participation in the decision-making and management processes in the enterprises – the famous Yugoslav concept of self-management. In the aftermath of World War II, Yugoslavia was organised as a unitary and strongly centralised country, which was in contradiction with its official federal structure (Tepavac, 2000). The Soviet-like organisation of the economy entailed extensive state planning and control, almost non-existent private ownership and a centralised market.

The Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito was, however, both running with the hare (the Soviet leader Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin) and hunting with the hounds (the Western leaders). Due to the latter alliance, and especially after the split between Stalin and Tito in June 1948, the Yugoslav economy by the mid-1950s underwent different reforms which brought it closer to the free market model. The centralised state planning and control mechanisms were constrained to make space for the policy of self-management. In view of the Cold War, the introduction of such reforms was gladly supported by Western leaders through and outside the international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund. The goal was to ‘keep Yugoslavia afloat as an independent but successful state within the Eastern bloc and thus an attractive example for dissidence’ (Freyberg-Inan, 2006:228).

The law which launched the policy of self-management was passed in June 1950 and was colloquially called ‘Law on delivery of the factories to the workers to manage’ (Bilandžić, 1985:171). The envisioned increased workers’ participation was supposed to lead to ‘decentralization of the economy and creation of some space for market competition and professional competence within that economy’ (Kesić, 2002b:71), as well as expand workers’ class awareness and solidarity at the expense of the ethnic or republican/provincial ones (Sekulić et al., 1994). However, the implementation

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68 Concerning Yugoslavia, see the Resolution on the Main Lines of Social Action to Promote the Socioeconomic Status and Role of Women in the Socialist Self-Managing Society (in: Tomšič, 1980).

and the effects of the self-management did not really correspond with the intentions. Whereas some token blue-collar workers entered the decision-making bodies (worker councils), the real power remained with those in the top managerial positions who did not necessarily possess the needed competences but were loyal members of the League of Communists.<sup>69</sup> In addition to this, women were widely underrepresented in these councils. Finally, the class affiliation did not gain primacy: the uneven development of Yugoslavia's constitutive units unfavourably affected the development of such meta-identification (Kesić, 2002b; Schierup, 1993; Sekulić et al., 1994).

In 1965 a broad set of economic reforms was introduced in Yugoslavia once more, this time in order to counteract the unfavourable economic situation. The reforms included liberalisation of the prices instead of their determination at federal level, transfer of regulatory power from the federation to the republics, greater autonomy to the enterprises and a loosening of the foreign trade rules. Unfortunately, those remedies did not have the desired effect due to being ill-prepared and inconsistently applied. The unemployment rate – and the subsequent economic migration to Western Europe – rose and the economic disparity between and within the republics was exacerbated (Bilandžić, 1985; Stokes, 1997; Žarkov, 1999).

The end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s were additionally marked by big political turbulence. The students protested for political decentralisation, pluralisation and liberalisation, as well as reduction of the social inequalities and the unemployment rate, the Kosovar Albanians demanded a change of the status of Kosovo to that of a constitutive republic, and prominent members of the Leagues of Communists of Croatia and Serbia advocated radical changes in the political and economic organisation of the federation. Those utterances of dissent disclosed the existence of dissatisfaction about the Yugoslav situation and the need for reforms, thereby directly challenging the official (dis)course of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and its power monopoly. There was no consensus and clarity, though, about the solutions which were supposed to be implemented so that the different political options and power struggles would be accommodated:

[T]here was, most often, no clear-cut division with regard to the economic and political demands of liberals, nationalists and communist hard-liners. Questions of political decentralisation, democratisation and pluralism merged with questions of economic liberalisation and the demand for market reforms (Žarkov, 1999:12).

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69 In November 1952 the Communist Party of Yugoslavia changed its name into League of Communists of Yugoslavia. The name change also applied to its republican and provincial branches.

The response by the League of Communists to those power challenges was a dual policy of restoration of its monopoly. On the one hand, the Party exercised its power against the leading dissident voices by making sure they lost their jobs and/or were sent to prison. On the other hand, the Party was also aware that some reforms needed to be conducted in order to appease the political and social tensions. For example, although the 1968 protests of the Kosovar Albanians had been silenced by massive police violence and large layoffs, some of their demands were granted in the succeeding years. In 1969 they were granted the right to fly the flag of Albania as their ethnic flag, and the bilingual Albanian/Serbo-Croatian University of Prishtina opened up its doors in 1970 (Clark, 2000; Malcolm, 1999; Pipa, 1989).

The reaction to the Croatian Spring or Maspok<sup>70</sup> in 1971 was similar. The leaders of this political movement (which gathered, inter alia, dissident voices within the League of Communists of Croatia, intellectuals and students) demanded Croatia's economic and political sovereignty over its territory, including the right to form its own territorial defence forces and exercise full control of all tax revenues collected within its borders.<sup>71</sup> The leaders and prominent supporters of the Croatian Spring, many of whom eventually ended up in prison, were accused of Croat nationalism and fired and/or forced to resign from their jobs and/or positions within the Party. Nonetheless, the Yugoslav constitution of 1974 incorporated some of their demands, such as the transfer of the decision-making power from the federal level to that of the constitutive units and the establishment of territorial defence forces in each Yugoslav republic and autonomous province (Ponoš, 2007; Rusinow, 1978; Stokes, 1997; Žarkov, 1999).

The 1974 Constitution – which would turn out to be Yugoslavia's last – extensively decentralised the federation, with the exception of foreign affairs, foreign trade and defence policies (Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005). While the envisioned territorial defence forces were to be organised on a municipal level, to consist of local personnel and not fall under the jurisdiction of the Yugoslav People's Army, they were nonetheless supposed to support and supplement the Army in the event of a major threat. This constitution removed, in fact, the up to then valid legal principle of all (republics) for one (federation) and one (federation) for all (republics),<sup>72</sup> thereby

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70 The abbreviation 'Maspok' comes from 'Masovni pokret', which means 'a mass movement'.

71 The request for full control of all tax revenues was not coincidental. Due to its profitable tourist sector, Croatia was the second richest Yugoslav republic – after Slovenia – and, therefore, obliged to financially support the less developed parts of the federation (see also Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005).

72 I obviously borrow here the famous adage from Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*.

pushing the country into the direction of a confederation and giving the constitutive units infrastructure and legitimisation to pursue their own interests. The autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina remained *de jure* subordinated parts of Serbia, but were granted a *de facto* status of full federal constitutive units, only without the right to secession. This new status of Kosovo also meant a partial accommodation of the demands of the protesting Kosovar Albanians from several years earlier.

As a consequence of the decentralisation and the disregard for the needs of the federation (Tepavac, 2000), each republic began to attend to its own financial ambitions and 'directly and without prior authorization to contract enormous foreign currency debts that were guaranteed by the Federation' (Iveković I., 2000:55). The increased influx of foreign loans meant that the 1970s were 'the most prosperous time ordinary Yugoslavs have ever known' (Stokes, 1997:116). This prosperity led to improvement of the lives of women since 'electronic goods replaced female labour in the households' (Žarkov, 1999:15). However, the superficially prosperous time did not last long: the economic backlash was just around the corner. The Second Oil Crisis of 1979 accelerated the downward spiral of the Yugoslav economy, and not only because of the increased prices of oil on the world market. Yugoslavia also had to miss much of the remittances from its economic emigrants who had lost their jobs in Western Europe. What made things worse was that these people could not find new employment upon their return in the homeland (Iveković I., 2000; Woodward, 1995; Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005). In 1981 the country's foreign debt almost equalled its gross domestic product, whereas the servicing of that debt 'exceeded the sum of export earnings' (Iveković I., 2000:55).

The following years would be marked by a minuscule average growth of the national income and by hyperinflation. In 1990 the federal prime minister Ante Marković introduced market reforms in the form of the shock therapy approach of the International Monetary Fund. The hyperinflation was brought down in no time and the Yugoslav Dinar made convertible and tied to the German Mark. However, the positive effect of these reforms did not last long and the once again rising inflation caused a decline in Marković's popularity (Freyberg-Inan, 2006). The inflation, the growing unemployment and the other negative effects of these reforms were further exacerbated by their unfortunate timing. Marković aimed at preserving the already quite loose federation at a moment when the key Yugoslav republics had other aspirations, none overlapping with those of Marković. Croatia and Slovenia were headed towards increased decentralisation, while Serbia aimed at undoing the 1974 Constitution and a recentralisation of the federal state with Belgrade as its centre (Iveković I., 2000; Udovički and Torov, 2000; Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005). Moreover,

for the reforms to have a longer lasting positive effect substantial Western aid was needed, but this necessary aid was never obtained. Due to the end of the Cold War, Yugoslavia lost its up-to-then high geopolitical value. Consequently, the preservation of Yugoslavia as a stable country was no longer a priority for the West (Freyberg-Inan, 2006; Udovički and Torov, 2000; Wachtel and Bennett, 2009; Woodward, 1995).

In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s Yugoslavia witnessed an increasing political liberalisation. This process was similar to the simultaneously occurring ones in other Central and Eastern European countries, but was more pronounced in Yugoslavia given its already more liberal and open attitude compared to the other socialist countries and the death of Tito – its charismatic president for life – in 1980. As a result of these developments, ‘there was a huge flowering in Yugoslav cultural and intellectual production’ (Slapšak, 2000b:37).

This liberalisation was, however, a double-edged sword. It opened up space not only for the development of feminist, antimilitarist, environmental and human rights discourses, but also for expressions of conservative religious views, peripheral and irredentist nationalism,<sup>73</sup> and ethnic hatreds and grievances. The constitutionally guaranteed or simply asserted right of an ethnic group to self-determination and secession,<sup>74</sup> as well as this group’s alleged historically unfavourable economic and political position in the federation,<sup>75</sup> became the rationale for all flare-ups of

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73 I use here the typology of Hechter (2000). He sees peripheral nationalism operating when a culturally distinctive territory aims for secession or resists incorporation into an expanding state. In Yugoslavia, this corresponded to the Croat, Kosovar Albanian, Macedonian and Slovene nationalism. Irredentist nationalism takes place when an existing state expands by appropriating territories of a neighbouring state populated by co-nationals. This was the case of Serbia in relation to the regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia with a great concentration of ethnic Serbs, and the case of Croatia in the first half of the 1990s regarding the parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina predominantly inhabited by ethnic Croats.

74 Yugoslavia was not a nation-state, but a federation of nation-states. In all its six republics there was at least one ethnic group which was considered as a constitutive nation of that republic. Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia had a single constitutive nation – Macedonians, Montenegrins, Serbs and Slovenes, respectively. Bosnia and Herzegovina (up to 1971) and Croatia had two ethnic groups as constitutive nations: Croats and Serbs. In 1971 the Bosnian Muslims became the third Bosnian and Herzegovinian constitutive nation. The ethnic groups which were not constitutive nations on the territory of the republic in question were called nationalities, ie national minorities. Despite not belonging to the same category as the constitutive nations, the nationalities had declaratively the same rights. However, while the Yugoslav federal constitutions guaranteed to the constitutive nations the right to self-determination and secession, no stipulations were given on the right to self-determination of the national minorities.

75 This victimisation competition has been aptly summarised by Jović (2009:17): ‘[E]veryone in Yugoslavia was claiming to be disadvantaged and that somebody else was privileged’. See also Žarkov (1999).

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nationalism. Up to then silenced and prohibited, they increasingly started losing this status and, consequently, becoming more prominent in the public space.

The Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts is a case in point, even though it was not published in its entirety at the time. Only some parts of it appeared in a Belgrade daily in 1986 (*Večernje novosti*, 24.09.1986, 25.09.1986). The core point of this document was the disadvantaged position of Serbs in Yugoslavia and especially in Kosovo, where they were supposedly exposed to the genocidal practices of the Kosovar Albanians (Mihailović and Krestić, 1995; Milosavljević, 1996; Wachtel and Bennett, 2009). Another example are the protests of the Kosovar Albanians in the spring of 1981. Their initial demands for better living and working conditions for the students changed very soon into requests for Kosovo's independence from Serbia and transformation into a Yugoslav constitutive republic. Some also called for Kosovo's unification with Albania (Clark, 2000; Malcolm, 1999). Finally, in Croatia and Slovenia there was criticism of Serbia's hegemony within Yugoslavia, as well as of the structure of the Yugoslav economy due to which these two republics were financially exploited by the less developed parts of the country (Ramet S., 2006; Wachtel and Bennett, 2009).

The discourse of grievances was supported by the legacy of interethnic atrocities during World War II which the Party had never dealt with properly. No safe spaces were created for discussing the atrocities at school, in the media and in the local communities, or through scholarly or art works. In place of conducting or at least initiating grassroots reconciliation processes, the Party repeatedly illuminated only the legacy of interethnic cooperation and solidarity during World War II. Furthermore, it imposed in a top-down manner the ideology of brotherhood and unity, as well as a black-and-white image of perpetrators, victims, defeated and victors:

Instead of permitting the Yugoslavs to face this unpleasant past, the Communists simply condemned the horrors of the wartime experience as an extreme outburst of bourgeois society and proclaimed that such things could not happen in the new order. Any effort to confront the issues directly was forbidden...The wounds of World War II were covered over, but they never healed (Stokes, 1997:114; see also Höpken, 1996; Jančar-Webster, 1999; Tromp-Vrkić, 1995).

This form of (not) dealing with the past did not only help the revival of nationalism in the (post-)Yugoslav region, but also encouraged the repetition of similar interethnic atrocities during the wars of the 1990s. In other words, the unhealed wounds and the silence they had been surrounded by inspired the victimisation discourse, while also proving to be fertile soil for its further growth and transmission,

as well as transformation into acts of violence. Nationalist politicians used this legacy of socialism to mobilise people as members of homogenous ethnic collectives and demobilise them as heterogeneous citizens of Yugoslavia (Gagnon, 2004).

One component of this demobilisation was the downplaying of the progressive role of the partisans and the antifascist movement, including its multiethnic composition. The nationalist narrative was set in motion first to serve as a reminder of the past atrocities committed against the ethnic group in question and/or its perceived leaders, even when the men in question had been collaborators of the Nazis. Second, this discourse also transmitted a warning of what could happen in the future to the members of that ethnic group unless they protected themselves against their enemies from the other ethnic groups. Finally, as Vesna Pešić (1996:40–41) has pointed out, an important part of this propaganda was the proclamation that the time had come to take revenge and “settle the accounts” from the “unfinished” World War II. This is what Papić (2002), writing on Serbia, has called peregrination of trauma in a context of time fusion and confusion.<sup>76</sup>

The Yugoslav state’s failure to produce reliable statistics on the population losses (including those resulting from interethnic violence) in World War II<sup>77</sup> further

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76 Tony Judt’s (2005) book *Postwar* features a telling visual illustration of this time fusion and confusion: a photograph taken on 28 June 1989, on the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo. Despite the total Serb defeat by the Ottomans, this battle is commemorated in Serbia as a symbol of national pride and superiority (Zirojević, 1996). The photograph in question depicts two men with a painted portrayal of Tsar Lazar, the leader of the Serbs at the time of the battle. Next to them, two women hold a photograph of Slobodan Milošević, the then president of the Socialist Republic of Serbia. Obviously, just like in 1389, Serbia was seen as facing a great danger and Milošević was perceived as the reincarnation of Tsar Lazar and a saviour of the Serbs – an analogy which Milošević all too gladly accepted and exploited further. Another telling example is a more recent Croatian one. In April 2011 the ICTY convicted the Croatian general Ante Gotovina for his command responsibility for the war crimes committed in August 1995 against the Croatian Serbs (Gotovina’s release in November 2012 is irrelevant for the point which I make here). His conviction led to mass protests in Croatia. One of the protestors in Zagreb held a banner with the word ‘BETRAYAL: ‘1945’ had been written above this word and ‘2011’ below it (*E-novine*, 16.04.2011). 1945 referred to May 1945, when after the end of World War II, the British troops handed over to the Yugoslav partisan troops several tens of thousands of Croat prisoners of war who would shortly afterwards be summarily executed near Bleiburg (Austria). The banner claimed, thus, that just like in 1945, the Croats were betrayed once more in 2011. See also Vasiljević (2008) on how in both Croatia and Serbia in the period 1991–1995 much of the media propaganda was dedicated to making analogies between the then current interethnic violence between Croats and Serbs and the one during World War II.

77 For a general analysis of this lack of reliable data, see Bogosavljević (1996), Đilas (1990) and Tomasevich (2001). Regarding one specific case, the numbers of victims of the concentration and extermination camp Jasenovac, which was run by the Croat collaborators of the Nazis, see Okey (1999).

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contributed to the growth of the discourse of ethnic grievances and the replication of distorted portrayals of the past. The political liberalisation of the 1980s created space for historical analyses which explored the previously hushed up war crimes, but this process did not, unfortunately, result in the appearance of balanced historical research. Instead, scholarly and literary works started appearing wherein the number of victims of one's own ethnic group was increased, and the number of atrocities committed by members of the same ethnic group decreased (see the criticisms of this trend in Papić, 2002; Sindbaek, 2006 and Štitkovac, 2000). The appearance and acceptance of such an approach to history, which was as one-sided and biased as the previous one, was again possible due to people's insufficient knowledge of the past and the malleability of human memory:

The political mobilization of the masses on the grounds of historical awareness does not at all mean that every citizen possesses a solid knowledge of the past. Quite the contrary, it is ignorance about basic historical facts that opens doors to all kinds of manipulations... [E]very ideology can selectively seek 'historical evidence' to endorse its points (Tromp-Vrkić, 1995:223–224; see also the quotation from Gouda, 2007 in Chapter 1).

Next to the (manipulated) memory of interethnic atrocities in World War II, as well as the political liberalisation, economic hardship and defederalisation, the spread of nationalism was further facilitated by the strategy which many members of the Yugoslav political elite had adopted in order to remain in power at times when the League of Communists and its ideology were losing ground.

[N]ationalism was chosen for...the preservation of the fading political monopoly of [the] communist political elites who were faced with failing economy and the emergence of alternative political projects. These projects, although also based on socialist ideas, were very critical of socialism as it had been practiced in Yugoslavia (Žarkov, 1999:10; see also Udovički and Torov, 2000).

In a similar manner, Michael Ignatieff (1994:16–17, italics in the original) has observed that

[e]thnic difference *per se* was not responsible for the nationalistic politics that emerged in the Yugoslavia of the 1980s. Consciousness of ethnic difference turned into nationalist hatred only when the surviving communist elites, beginning with Serbia, began manipulating nationalist emotions in order to cling to power.

According to Anđelka Milić, this manipulation of nationalist emotions and the transformation of communist leaders into nationalists were in hindsight not all that surprising. Instead of undertaking the more laborious effort of creating a democratic society, these leaders had chosen the easier way of replacing one undemocratic collectivist ideology with another:

Although unexpected, the switch to nationalism by former communist parties seems logical because the distance between the communist collectivist ideology, based on such concepts as ‘the working class,’ ‘the class interest,’ and ‘the class enemy,’ and the nationalist collective ideology, based on such concepts as ‘nation,’ ‘the national interest,’ and ‘the national enemy’ is much shorter than the distance between communism and democracy (Milić, 1993:110).

Such a replacement was possible because, despite the developing political liberalisation and the appearance of political alternatives, the long-term political monopoly had hindered the emergence of wide-spread democratic attitudes. In the words of Papić (1994:12), the totalitarian practices of socialism ‘prevented the rise and growth of the conditions necessary for the construction of the democratic character of people.’

Slobodan Milošević is probably the best example of such a transformation. As the head of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, he gained additional support and power after addressing the protesting Kosovar Serbs in April 1987. The protestors had gathered to express their grievances about the discrimination and harassment which they had been subjected to by the Kosovar Albanians. Having heard Milošević’s infamous words ‘Nobody should dare beat you!’,<sup>78</sup> the crowd greeted him overwhelmingly. This unexpected support apparently made him realise his power to move people. Moreover, it seems that on that occasion Milošević noticed the hitherto not extensively exploited potential for mobilisation of Serbs on the basis of their alleged victimisation by others. Consequently, he built his political programme upon the already existing Memorandum which had the Serb victimisation as its basic premise (Stokes, 1997; Udovički and Torov, 2000).

By manipulation and replacement of his opponents with his supporters, Milošević managed to become the president of Serbia and in March 1989 change the

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78 ‘Niko ne sme da vas bije’ in the original. The Belgrade feminist Nadežda Četković has aptly spotted the discrepancy between those words – allegedly addressed to all Serbs – and the high rate of violence against women in Serbia’s capital: ‘It was said that nobody should dare beat this nation, but the public does not know that in Belgrade every 6 minutes one woman is beaten up’ (*Vreme*, 12.11.1990).

Serbian constitution. Thereby, the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina was 'reduced to a mere token' (Malcolm, 1999:344) and the two provinces placed 'firmly under the control of the Serbian central government' (Stokes, 1997:126). Earlier that year he had managed to convince the leadership of Montenegro to support him, which meant that 'four of the eight positions on the Yugoslav Federal Presidency [were] under the control of one man, creating a "Serb Bloc" that shattered Titoist equilibriums' (Nation, 2003:94).<sup>79</sup> In a situation where Yugoslavia was already a rather loose federation, Milošević's thirst for power and expansionist tendencies provided an additional justification to the increasing demands of Croatia and Slovenia to restructure Yugoslavia into a confederation or even secede from it.

In January 1990 the Slovenian delegation walked out of the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, expressing in that way a refusal to further take part in a body which rejected all Slovenian amendments and was heavily dominated by Milošević and his supporters (Jović, 2009; Stokes, 1997). The Croatian delegation opposed Milošević's proposal to continue the Congress without the Slovenians, which resulted in termination of the Congress and a subsequent dissolution of both the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the one-party political system. In this way, the party pluralism which the Slovenian delegation had up to then advocated in vain was soon to become a reality. By the end of 1990 the first multiparty parliamentary and municipal elections were conducted in all Yugoslav republics. As a harbinger of the forthcoming (violent) disintegration of the country, the preceding electoral campaigns showed an abundance of nationalist paraphernalia and discourse: 'In the interests of electoral success, candidates used ethnic stereotypes to simplify voters' choices and avoid debate on difficult issues, and gave themselves permission to exploit openly a language of intolerance and hate' (Woodward, 1995:132–133).

The 1990 elections brought throughout Yugoslavia a victory – albeit not an overwhelming one – of the parties which gave primacy to the ethnic instead of class or civil affiliation and solidarity. Moreover, these parties exploited the discourse of unfairness in the interethnic and inter-republican relations in Yugoslavia (Goati, 2001; Nation, 2003; Stokes, 1997; Woodward, 1995). Next to this, the elections resulted in a dramatic decrease of the number of elected female parliamentarians in all Yugoslav republics. This number had not been particularly high even in the previous single-

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79 After the death of Tito in 1980 the presidential function he had performed on his own was replaced with a collective Presidency which was very similar to the present-day one of the European Union. The Yugoslav Presidency consisted of eight members (one representative of each of the six republics and two autonomous provinces), and the position of Chair rotated annually.

party system, but it became drastically smaller in 1990 due to the virtual absence of women on the candidates lists of the big parties.

For example, the percentage of women in the Croatian parliament was 15.8 in 1986, compared to 5.2 in 1990. Serbia experienced the most astounding decrease: from 23.5% in 1986 to 1.6% in 1990. The least dramatic changes occurred in Slovenia, but even there this percentage was reduced by more than 50% – from 24.0 to 11.2. It seems that the formal constitutional equality of women and men additionally went by the wayside due to the abandonment of quotas for women (as a remnant of the previous political system) and the growing nationalist and conservative discourses. Women only figured in these as homemakers and biological and ideological reproducers of ethnic collectives, but definitely not as political actors who would be capable of successfully handling the quite precarious economic and political situation (Božinović, 1996; Lokar, 2004; Milić, 1994b; *Nove omladinske novine*, 20.05.1990; Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989).

The winning party in Croatia was the Croatian Democratic Union – the party of Franjo Tuđman who became the president of Croatia after the elections.<sup>80</sup> Tuđman was a former partisan, communist and general in the Yugoslav People's Army who had spent two years in prison in the 1970s due to his active role in the Croatian Spring. Despite his partisan past, in order to more successfully claim a continuity of the Croat struggle for independence and nationhood, he sought to remove the hitherto notorious image of the Independent State of Croatia. During World War II this was a fascist puppet state which had been administered by the Croat collaborators of the Nazis, called Ustashas.<sup>81</sup>

Tuđman began portraying the Ustashas as honourable advocates of the Croat cause and nation, and played down the severity of their war crimes against the Serb, Jewish, Roma and antifascist (regardless of ethnicity) population of Croatia. But fear among the Croatian Serbs was not only caused by those alterations of Croatia's past which depicted them less as victims, and the Ustashas less as perpetrators. The new Croatian Constitution, introduced on 21 December 1990, removed the Croatian Serbs' status of a constitutive nation of Croatia (a status which they had shared

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80 According to the then current electoral laws in Croatia, the president of the republic was elected by the parliament and not through direct elections, as would become the case from 1992 onward. In Serbia the president was decided by direct vote already in 1990.

81 'Ustasha' (in singular, 'Ustaša' in original) means 'the one who has risen/rebelled' (ustati = to rise, to rebel). The Serb collaborators of the Nazis called themselves 'Četnici' ('Chetniks' in English). In singular, 'Četnik' means 'the one who belongs to a band' (četa = a band). Just like the Ustashas, the Chetniks were infamous for their atrocities against the antifascists of all ethnicities and – in this case – the non-Serb (Croat, in particular) population.

## CHAPTER THREE

with the Croats) and reduced them to an ethnic minority. Moreover, many Serbs employed in both state-owned and private-owned companies, as well as in the public administration and the police force – where they had been overrepresented – were laid off and replaced with Croats (Glenny, 1993; Nation, 2003; Štirkovac, 2000; *Ustav Republike Hrvatske*, 22.12.1990).

Parallel to this, the Croatian Serbs who lived in the parts of Croatia where they were a majority received extensive political, financial and military (including weaponry) support from Milošević and his allies for the purpose of seceding from Croatia and uniting those ‘Serb territories’ with Serbia. Milošević had started providing such support earlier in 1990, but after the electoral victory of the Socialist Party of Serbia – the party he presided over – in December 1990 he gave this support in his role of the president of Serbia. On 21 December 1990 the Croatian Serbs in Croatia’s region of Northern Dalmatia announced the establishment of the Serb Autonomous Region of Krajina (later renamed Republic of Srpska Krajina), with the town of Knin as its centre. Only a couple of months later, on 28 February 1991, this newly established autonomous region declared its independence from Croatia and its readiness to unite with Serbia.

Facing the rapidly approaching threat of a violent breakup of the country and restructuring of its territory, in the first half of 1991 the presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Alija Izetbegović) and Macedonia (Kiro Gligorov) decided to organise a series of summits of the presidents of the six Yugoslav republics in an attempt to find a peaceful way to transform the federation. It was not a sheer coincidence that this initiative came exactly from the presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Both republics, while exhibiting great ethnic diversity, were political and economic outsiders in the Yugoslav federation. Gligorov and Izetbegović, therefore, perceived the disintegration of Yugoslavia as a serious threat to the existence of their republics. However, none of the three Yugoslav key players – the presidents of Croatia (Franjo Tuđman), Serbia (Slobodan Milošević) and Slovenia (Milan Kučan) – was willing to compromise. Slovenia and Croatia aimed for increased decentralisation and eventual secession. Serbia opted for the restoration of a centralised federation, while at the same time announcing that it would defend the rights of the Serbs on the whole territory of Yugoslavia (Nation, 2003; Pešić, 1996).<sup>82</sup>

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82 Pešić (1996:44) has described this, only at first glance schizophrenic, position of the Serbian leadership as follows: ‘[E]ither Yugoslavia will be a state tailored to suit the Serbs... or the Serbs will, armed with weapons (“if needed”), hit...the road of creating the Great Serbia which will gather all Serbs.’

The failure of the presidential summits meant the loss of the last chance to reach a non-violent agreement on the (post-)Yugoslav region and was partially due to the role of the major actors of the international community, including the international financial institutions. When Yugoslavia's disintegration began to accelerate in 1990 and 1991, next to the absence of foreign aid or possible debt relief (Freyberg-Inan, 2006), no 'serious commitment to preventive diplomacy or conflict management among key international actors was in place' (Nation, 2003:101). In addition to the international community's foremost preoccupation with the (consequences of the) Gulf War, the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, there was no unanimity regarding the future course of Yugoslavia. The country had simply lost its strategic importance for the West. The United States and the then European Community member-states, with their divergent domestic and foreign interests, did not stop the main Yugoslav actors from pursuing their plans (De Boer, 1992; Freyberg-Inan, 2006; Nation, 2003; Ramet S., 1999; Woodward, 1995).

### **The reappearance of organised feminism in Yugoslavia**

As I have stated earlier, the gradual political liberalisation in the late 1970s and the 1980s proved to be beneficial to the development of organised feminism. It would, however, be incorrect to say that such feminism appeared in Yugoslavia only in the 1970s, since then it actually re-appeared. There had been feminist organisations on the territory of Yugoslavia starting from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their work had primarily focused on female suffrage, equal pay and marital and inheritance rights, as well as fighting against the different moral standards for men and women (Božinović, 1996; Jalušič, 1994; Kecman, 1978; Sklevicky, 1996; Vučetić, 2004).<sup>83</sup> However, the coming to power of the Communist Party after the end of World War II meant, among other things, the installation of an ideology which, while to a certain extent promoting the emancipation and equality of women, simultaneously denounced and silenced

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83 Some authors have referred to the Yugoslav feminism during socialism as 'neo-feminism' (Iveković R., 1981, 1985; Jalušič, 1994) or 'new feminism' (Bonfiglioli 2008; Jančar, 1985). In her influential article on women's studies and the women's movement, Rada Iveković (1981:5) has explained her terminological choice as follows: 'I call neofeminism all newer women's movements (from the 1960s onward), including their theoretical foundations; they regularly have a left-wing political orientation'. The use of 'neo-' and 'new' distinguishes the feminists active in Yugoslavia from the late 1970s onward from the earlier ones, while alerting the reader to the important continuity of feminism in the Yugoslav region. While agreeing with this usage, I do not employ it here for practical reasons. The designations which I work with – eg 'self-declared antinationalist feminists' – are already complex enough.

feminism. Feminism was portrayed as a false Western bourgeois strategy of betraying the socialist revolution and separating women's liberation and emancipation from the all-encompassing liberation and emancipation of the working class (Božinović, 1996; Drakulić-Ilić, 1985; Feldman, 1984; Jalušič, 1994; Jančar, 1985; Tomšič, 1987).

It would be only in the second half of the 1970s that a new generation of mostly female and some male Yugoslav intellectuals – academics, journalists, writers, and students of humanities and social sciences – would start re-discovering and reclaiming feminism. They were becoming increasingly aware of the persistence of traditional gender roles and violence against women in the Yugoslav society despite its formal foundation on the principle of equality of women and men. At the same time, the Yugoslav feminism echoed the Western Second Wave feminist movement which had arrived in Yugoslavia thanks to its open borders and the access which these intellectuals had to foreign (academic) literature and international (academic) exchanges. The production of analyses on the position of women (and men) was additionally facilitated by the existence of accessible and detailed gender sensitive statistics which the Yugoslav Statistical Office had started gathering from the 1950s onward (Benderly, 1997b; Blagojević, 2010; Bonfiglioli, 2008; Dević, 1997b; Jalušič, 1994).

The first occasion where feminism was semipublicly discussed was the conference entitled 'Social Position of the Woman and the Development of the Family in the Socialist Self-Managing Society', which took place in Portorož (Slovenia) in March 1976. It gathered many of the women who would later be considered Yugoslavia's leading feminists and was jointly organised by the Marxist centre of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia and the Centre for Ideological and Theoretical Work of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia. The conference proceedings were published by the publishing house of the League of Communists of Slovenia (Hvala, 1979; Jalušič, 2002b). This organisational backing is a good indicator of the porosity of some of the Party structures at the time, due to which spaces started opening up even for feminism. Furthermore, the support shows that some of the future feminists were members of the Party.

This certain degree of proximity is also visible in the example of the international feminist conference 'Comrade (m/f) Woman: Women's Question – New Approach'. It was organised in Belgrade in October 1978 by three emerging Yugoslav feminists: the Belgrade-based Dunja Blažević and Žarana Papić, and the Sarajevo-based Nada Ler-Sofronić.<sup>84</sup> This conference – first of its kind not only in Yugoslavia

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84 The last example of the same phenomenon which I mention here is the scholarly journal *Marksizam u svetu*, which was published by the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. Its

but in a socialist country in general – provided a significant additional stimulus for the development of feminism in Yugoslavia. The discussions took place at the Student Cultural Centre, which was very popular because of its liberal programming. The rather easy access which the feminists-in-becoming had to this location was due to the fact that Dunja Blažević was its director. The conference slogan ‘Proletarians of all countries – who washes your socks?’ lucidly combined the class and women’s issues, while critically attending to ‘socialism’s unfulfilled promise of women’s emancipation’ (Benderly, 1997a:61; see also Bonfiglioli, 2008; Feldman, 1984).

The re-entrance of feminism in Yugoslavia did not proceed all too smoothly, though. Due to the above mentioned criticism, both the Conference and the reappearance of the concept of feminism in the Yugoslav public space were attacked by the League of Communists and especially by its highly-ranked female officials. Some of these women were veterans of World War II and/or established members of the Yugoslav state organisations dealing with women’s issues as part of class issues. This conflict was, thus, not only grounded in the ideological differences between the two sides, but it also had to do with the rebellion of a new generation which challenged the extent of the achievements its foremothers had fought and were fighting for (Benderly, 1997b; Drakulić Sla., 2005a [1982]; Feldman, 1984; Jalušič, 1994; Jančar, 1985; Perović, 2008; Ramet P., 1983).<sup>85</sup>

The 1978 conference had announced the birth of a small but active Yugoslav feminist circle whose members were mainly located in the three Yugoslav cultural and political centres: Belgrade, Ljubljana and Zagreb (Benderly, 1997b; Iveković R., 1985; Swaneveld, 1984). Actually, many Yugoslav feminists refer to this event as the founding moment of Second Wave feminism in Yugoslavia (Bonfiglioli, 2008, 2009). In the initial phase, between the end of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, the feminists-in-becoming were foremostly concerned with their own education, consciousness raising, and empowerment as feminists (and women). In order to develop their feminist affiliation, positionings and work methods, they read, translated and discussed texts of international feminist authors from different linguistic backgrounds. This

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thematic issue on women’s studies and the women’s movement (no. 8–9, 1981) featured articles by international feminist scholars. The guest editor, the Zagreb philosopher and feminist Rada Iveković, introduced the topic with an extensive article which would be widely read and discussed among the Yugoslav feminists (the same article I quoted from in the previous footnote). See also Blagojević (2010).

85 On a comparable generational conflict in the Netherlands between the Second Wave feminists and the women from the Dutch Women’s Movement, see Withuis (1990). The latter was a women’s organisation, jointly established after World War II by resistance fighters and survivors of the women’s concentration camp Ravensbrück. It transformed later into a communist women’s organisation related to the Dutch Communist Party.

was possible due to the diverse foreign languages which were mastered among the Yugoslav feminists. Consequently, they developed a positioning which was based on the Western Second Wave feminist idea of sisterhood: solidarity of all women due to the shared problems, interests and standpoints which resulted from the same gender-based position within a patriarchal society (Delmar, 1986).

The Yugoslav feminists accentuated the similarities among women and did not pay much attention to the articulation, recognition and discussion – let alone the theorising – of the differences among them. In addition to the discourse of sisterhood, the communist ideology of equal educational, employment and housing opportunities for everybody contributed towards the absence of (articulated) awareness that not all feminists shared the same background, experience or positioning. In fact, the Yugoslav feminists were far too immersed in challenging the proclaimed equality of women and men to be able to also address the other inequalities in the society, particularly those which existed among them and among women in general. In the early 1990s this oblivion would strengthen the disbelief, pain and anger with which these feminists would meet the splits resulting from their divergent views on the war violence (Mladenović and Litričin, 1993; Kašić, 1994a; Korać, 2003; *Žene u crnom - Beograd*, n.d.).

Even though the initial activities of the Yugoslav feminists had been 'synonymous with academic debates and feminist grass root [sic] activism was simply unknown' (Žarkov, 2002:59), by the late 1980s the dominance of the theoretical work has started to fade. More and more activist groups – self-help groups, counselling centres and SOS hotlines for women and children victims of violence – emerged due to the increased awareness among the feminists of the existence of violence against women as a widespread societal problem. The first Yugoslav SOS Hotline for beaten and raped women began operating in Zagreb in March 1988 as the first such hotline in Eastern Europe (Benderly, 1997b; Božinović, n.d.; Iveković R., 1996; Vidović, in: *Vragovi crveni, žuti i zeleni*, 2007). Already in its first month of work it received around 400 calls, and at the end of its third year, this amount rose to 15,000. The Ljubljana SOS followed in October 1989 (receiving around 500 calls in the first ten months) and the Belgrade one in March 1990 – with more than 1,200 calls in the first year (*Informacija*, 19.04.1988; *Informacija SOS Ljubljana*, n.d.; *Informacija SOS Beograd*, 08.03.1991; *Vjesnik*, 26.11.1990). This overwhelming amount of calls was a direct slap in the face of the communist authorities which claimed that there was no violence against women in Yugoslavia and that Yugoslavia had the lowest rape rate in Europe (*Danas*, 28.02.1989; Drakulić Sla., 2005b [1982]; Mladenović and Protić, 1995a).

In the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s the Yugoslav feminists saw sexual violence strictly in gender terms and detached from ethnicity. This is very important to keep in mind in order to understand their later war-related dynamics and positionings. A very good example of the initial gender-based positioning is the joint appeal from November 1987 which was made in reaction to the news – and the subsequent political turmoil – of a statement by the Kosovar Albanian politician Fadil Hoxha. The then representative of Kosovo in the Yugoslav Presidency was reported to have said that the problem of rapes of Kosovar Montenegrin and Serb women by male Kosovar Albanians could be solved by employing more non-Albanian women in the inns in Kosovo, given that Albanian women would not do that kind of work<sup>86</sup> (Dević, 1997b; Marković, 1996; Mežnarić, 1994; Žarkov 2000, 2007). The Yugoslav feminists reacted with the following appeal:

Women, let's not allow men to divide us into 'whores', 'mothers', 'raped and not-raped', theirs and others'...Rape is an act of violence against women. It has no connection to nationalism. It is women who are raped, while it is men who rape, regardless of ethnic origin, faith, race or political conviction. Let's not fall therefore for the nationalist care for the rape victims! Women of Yugoslavia, let's not allow ourselves to be manipulated on an ethnic basis: let's position ourselves as human beings and not as a private property of all nationalists! (*Klic k razumu*, November 1987; see also *Svijet*, 07.10.1988).

This strictly gender-based conceptualisation of rape included war rape, as can be discerned from the article on the Gulf War written in February 1991 by Staša Zajović and Lepa Mladenović – two prominent Belgrade feminists:

In each war soldiers rape the women of the occupied territory... Women were also raped on our territories by all who ever had the power in wars, Chetniks, Ustashas, Germans, Serbs, Croats, Albanians etc. War rape is not a characteristic of men's ethnicity, but of men's position of power vis-à-vis other men and women (in: *opet Feminističke novine*, March 1991a).

In the late 1980s the Yugoslav feminists also opposed the at the time recurrent voices calling to redraw the borders of the Yugoslav constitutive units and Yugoslavia as a country, and discarded these ideas as issues only men could get enthusiastic about.

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86 The framing of Hoxha's alleged statement implies that he used 'working in the inns' as a euphemism for sex work. For the text of this statement and its analysis, see Bracewell (2000).

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In the first days of December 1987 the participants of the 'First Yugoslav Feminist Gathering' in Ljubljana announced that

women would not recognise artificial male boundaries;...they were united in sisterhood, and their common experiences as women over-rode male concerns for territorial rights and geographic boundaries...[T]he male power struggles should not be enacted across women's bodies (Stojsavljević, 1995:36).

As Benderly observes, the Yugoslav feminists 'showed little interest in the [possible] independence of the republics, calling these matters "male politics"' (1997a:61). Moreover, they could not conceptualise how women could take an active role in projects involving ethnic belonging, territories and borders unless they had been manipulated into participating in them by men (Benderly, 1997a; Dević, 1997b; Jansen, 2005; Žarkov, 1999, 2000, 2007). This simplifying conceptualisation was also due to the absence of a theoretical apparatus which could offer a broader conceptualisation of gender, feminism, ethnic affiliation and nationalism. In her interview with Stef Jansen (2005:68), one anonymised Zagreb feminist has referred to this as follows:

[At] the beginning of the war or just before the war...exactly because the women [from Belgrade, Ljubljana and Zagreb] who engaged with feminism were uneasy regarding the issue of nationalism, or at least because the Marxist feminists thought that nationalism was an issue which was not to be questioned since we were all allegedly a priori internationalists and a priori antinationalists, an uneasiness, a problem and a confusion took place...I reckon that there was no theoretical basis among the feminists for a substantiated conversation about what was nationalism and what was ethnic identity.

It is important to note, though, that the absence of scholarly interest for nationalism was not only characteristic for the feminists:

Nationalism was hardly ever theorized by Yugoslav scholars... Within the Yugoslav socialist division of political and academic labour, nationalism was addressed as a political, not as an academic issue. As such, nationalism was banned from academia in general, there was almost no scholarly interest in nationalism nor was it of any significance for academic feminism (Žarkov, 1999:19).

However, when in the late 1980s the emerging nationalist discourses – which were often endorsed by religious leaders – started addressing the birth rate, female sexuality, the up to then constitutionally-guaranteed freedom of choice regarding

childbirth, and the employment of women, nationalism became an academic and activist concern for the Yugoslav feminists. The unfavourable economic situation and the restructuring of the welfare state were also responsible for those regressive proposals. The beginning of a market orientation of the health-care system resulted, inter alia, in cost-cutting policies regarding abortion, due to which this health service was no longer provided for free. In addition, women began to be called upon to relieve themselves from the previously forced upon them double burden by withdrawing from the labour market and returning to their traditional role as child bearers (preferably of more children) and homemakers (Benderly, 1997b; Iveković R., 1995; Jalušič, 1999; Kesić, 2002c; Licht and Drakulić Slo., 1996; Žarkov, 1999).

In spite of the existence of a common general platform among the Yugoslav feminists, most of the concrete work which they conducted in opposing the nationalist discourses and pronatalist legislative proposals was not done jointly at the federal level, but at the republican level and by the feminists who were active in the republic in question. I explain this by Yugoslavia's increasing confederative character after 1974, due to which the specific activist endeavours had to target the legislation and the legislative bodies of the concrete constitutive unit.

For example, the Ljubljana feminists had throughout 1990 and 1991 successfully lobbied to keep the article on the freedom of choice regarding childbirth in the new Slovenian constitution. This article was inherited from Slovenia's socialist constitution, but during the debates on the draft new constitution there were prominent voices – such as that of the Slovenian prime minister – which called for its erasure (Jalušič, 1999, 2002b). In Croatia, one of the amendments submitted to the Croatian parliament by the 'Women's Assembly of Croatia'<sup>87</sup> was incorporated in the final version of the Croatian Constitution, but this was a partially Pyrrhic victory. The newly proposed provision which stipulated the right to life of the unborn child was indeed erased, but the same happened to the inherited provision on the human right to freedom of choice regarding childbirth (*Vjesnik*, 27.11.1990, 13.12.1990;

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87 This was a one-day meeting which was held in Zagreb in December 1990. It gathered around 600 feminist and non-feminist women from all over Croatia and several guests from other parts of Yugoslavia. The assembly was organised on the occasion of the preparation of the first constitution of Croatia – whose first draft was at that time open to public discussion – as well as in reaction to the minuscule percentage of elected women in the Croatian parliament after the elections in April/May 1990 (*Danas*, 25.12.1990; *Kareta feministički časopis*, March 1991a; *Nedjeljna Dalmacija*, 23.12.1990a, 23.12.1990b; *opet Feminističke novine*, March 1991b, March 1991c; *Program održavanja*, n.d.).

*Ustav Republike Hrvatske*, 22.12.1990).<sup>88</sup> Finally, the Belgrade feminists repetitively protested in 1990 against the draft law on family planning and the proposed resolution on demographic restoration. These documents did not explicitly object to the freedom of choice regarding childbirth, but nevertheless aimed at controlling it by taxing childless married couples and those with more than three children, while providing benefits for having a third child. As the Belgrade feminists had rightly observed, this discriminatory provision was seemingly ethnically neutral, but factually ethnically based. Since most of the families with more than three children were ethnic Albanians, and most of the families with no or one or two children Serb, the goal was to increase the birth rate of the Serbs, while decreasing that of the ethnic Albanians. The result of these efforts was that both documents were withdrawn even before being put to the vote in Serbia's parliament (Ćetković, 1998a; Lilly and Irvine, 2002; Milić, 1994b).

The explicitly antinationalist positioning which the Yugoslav feminists were publicly proclaiming in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s was visible in their articles, protests and press releases, as well as in the continuation of the communication, the gatherings, and the academic and activist exchange between them (Benderly, 1997b, 1997b; Blagojević, 1998a; Žarkov, 1999, 2002). However, when in the summer of 1991 the wars in Slovenia and Croatia began, ie the war violence became a reality and Yugoslavia as a country was rapidly becoming 'former', not all feminists wanted to maintain the pre-war communication and cooperation.

Some found it difficult, inappropriate or no longer relevant to maintain the pre-war allegiances. Others chose to put an even stronger accent on maintaining the communication and cooperation across state borders and ethnic boundaries. This was done despite the great obstacles which were posed by the partially destroyed and partially controlled transportation and telecommunication infrastructure, and the closed borders between some of the republics, ie emerging states.<sup>89</sup> As it was

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88 The deletion of the latter provision would enable the opponents of abortion in Croatia to push throughout the 1990s – albeit unsuccessfully – for the criminalisation of abortion (*Call for solidarity*, May 1991; *Danas*, 16.07.1991; *Narod*, 01.06.1995; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 29.03.1995, 17.01.1997; *Večernji list*, 16.01.1993).

89 In addition to the meetings in third countries, another way in which the activists struggled to maintain the communication was through the *ZaMir BBS* (Bulletin Board System: a now outdated system of electronic communication using computers, phone lines and modems). *ZaMir* [= For Peace] was set up in the period 1992–1994 by foreign and post-Yugoslav civil society activists. It connected the activists from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia proper, Slovenia and Vojvodina, while also enabling them to exchange emails with people outside of the BBS (both within the post-Yugoslav region and in third countries). The possibility to exchange news and otherwise communicate only by dialling a local phone number via (intermediary) computers and modems was an extremely important communication tool in a context of state-controlled media, closed

increasingly becoming important to publicly take sides and show which side one adhered to, the feminists started using different positionings to declare their affiliations and distinguish among themselves. These practices will be discussed in the following chapters.

### **The violent creation of the Yugoslav successor states**

Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence on 25 June 1991, Macedonia followed later that year (17 September), and the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina was proclaimed on 3 March 1992. The two remaining republics, Serbia and Montenegro, until 2003 remained in a joint federal state, which was called Federal Republic of Yugoslavia<sup>90</sup> and sometimes referred to in English as ‘rump Yugoslavia’. On 4 February 2003 the parliament of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia approved the restructuring of the state into the looser federation called State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. This union existed until 3 June 2006, when the parliament of Montenegro announced the independence of the country. This resulted in the establishment of two separate states: Montenegro and Serbia. On 17 February 2008 the Assembly of Kosovo declared Kosovo’s independence from Serbia and the establishment of the Republic of Kosovo – a move which is still contested by Serbia and some other countries, such as Greece, Russia and Spain.

The declarations of independence of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were followed by military interventions of the Yugoslav People’s Army.<sup>91</sup> This ironical twist in the process of Yugoslavia’s disintegration requires some

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borders, non-functioning postal services and cut-off phone lines between some of the post-Yugoslav republics. Without *ZaMir*, one would need to send a fax from Croatia to somebody in Austria and ask that person to send the same fax to Serbia. Or, a person in Sarajevo would call somebody in Germany and give them the news so that the intermediary would call the person in Croatia for whom the information had been intended in the first place. Obviously, the development of this BBS made communication easier, cheaper, more direct, and consequently – more intense (*Arkzin*, 01.09.1995, 12.04.1996; *die tageszeitung*, 06.07.1995; *Die Zeit*, 09.12.1994; *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 18–19.05.1996; Janković, 2009; Janković and Mokrović, 2011; Knežević, 2000; Stubbs, 1998, 2004; *Wired*, November 1995).

90 Actually, until 27 April 1992 this federation still used the name of the already former state (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). On that day, the Federal parliament of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (consisting at the time only of the representatives of Serbia and Montenegro) created the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The maintenance of the name ‘Yugoslavia’ in the name of the new federation was consistent with Milošević’s claim about struggling to preserve Yugoslavia and protect its legacy which he used for obtaining support for his politics (Vasiljević, 2008; Zaharijević, 2007).

91 The war in Slovenia lasted ten days, whereas the peace agreements marking the official end

explanation. During the existence of Yugoslavia the Army had the role of defending the Yugoslav constitutional order and territorial integrity (Hadžić, 2002; Marijan, 2006). Due to the general conscription regulation for men, draftees were called up from all over the country, and, in order to foster brotherhood and unity, they usually served outside their home republics. The Army headquarters were in Belgrade, and up to 1991 there was some ethnic diversity in the Army leadership and among the officers, despite Serb overrepresentation (Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005; Žunec, 2007).

However, during the war in Slovenia and at the beginning of the war in Croatia many non-Serb members of the commanding personnel left the Army or were laid off and replaced with Serbs (Vasić, 1996; Žunec, 2007). The Army initially justified its intervention in Slovenia and Croatia by its task to defend Yugoslavia. This was not just a cover up. The leading commanding staff was in the beginning indeed divided on what the Army was supposed to protect: Yugoslavia or the Serbs (Jović, 2009; Ramet S., 2006; Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005). Still, soon after the beginning of the war in Croatia, it became clear that the Army had sided with the secessionist Croatian Serbs (and Serbia's official politics) and that it fought – together with their military units and the paramilitaries coming from Serbia – against the military units of the Croatian state in the making.

It is very important to note here that this fighting did not take place between two equally powerful combatants: the Yugoslav People's Army was already in possession of an enormous weaponry arsenal,<sup>92</sup> whereas Croatia was still in the

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of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina would not be signed until November and December 1995, respectively. Different authors offer different explanations for the short duration of the Slovenian war in comparison to the two other wars. Gale Stokes (1997) accentuates the good military strategy of the Slovenian territorial defence forces, due to which they managed to outwit the Yugoslav People's Army. (Although the territorial defence forces had been intended to assist the Army, when the Army intervened in response to Slovenia's declaration of independence, the Slovenian territorial defence fought back.) Stipe Sikavica (2000) claims the same as Stoke, but also points to the agreement between Kučan and Milošević regarding the withdrawal of the Army from the Slovenian territory. Craig Nation (2003:132) traces the explanation to the presence of an internal Slovenian consensus regarding the independence and the absence of a critical mass of secessionist Serbs in Slovenia, due to which the Slovenian independence 'did not threaten the agenda of Serbian national consolidation that had become the core motivation of the Milošević regime'. On a different note, given the short duration of the military violence and the small number of casualties (between 70 and 80; the estimates differ), some authors object to calling the military violence in Slovenia a war and speak instead of an armed conflict (Prešeren, 2009; see also *Novi list*, 24.06.2011).

92 Anton Bebler reports that in the beginning of the 1980s the appropriations for the Yugoslav People's Army had amounted to a spectacular 70% of Yugoslavia's federal budget. Although in that decade they were reduced to 50% of the federal budget, this still very large figure indicates the magnitude of the Army's role (*International Defense Review*, April 1991).

process of establishing and equipping its military forces – the latter task made more difficult after the United Nations embargo of 25 September 1991 on selling weapons to all (post-)Yugoslav republics/countries. This embargo had been intended to affect all sides in the war equally and end the fighting, but it only contributed towards the military supremacy of Serbia and the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs (Hadži-Vidanović and Đurić, 2007; Kipp and Sanz, 1991; Stiglmayer, 1994b).<sup>93</sup>

On 3 January 1992 a cease-fire came into force in Croatia. Under the provisions of this agreement, the contested parts of Croatia were to be divided into four demilitarised areas under the protection of United Nations peace keeping forces. The local administration (including local police) was to come into the hands of the insurgent Croatian Serbs, and the Yugoslav People's Army units had to withdraw from the whole territory of Croatia. However, one third of Croatia remained Serb-held and inaccessible to Croats. This ethnically cleansed part of Croatia was a thorn in Zagreb's side, but until the spring of 1995 no major attempts were made to restore its power monopoly and ensure the return of the Croats to that territory. The blitzkrieg actions of the Croatian police and army in May 1995 (Operation Flash) and August 1995 (Operation Storm) successfully brought three of the four Serb-held areas under the control of Zagreb. Hereby the Republic of Srpska Krajina ceased to exist.<sup>94</sup> As a result of these developments, around 150,000 Croatian Serbs fled to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

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93 The disparity of military power between the Yugoslav People's Army, on the one hand, and the Croatian Army and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other, was further increased after the independence of Macedonia. On 21 February 1992 Kiro Gligorov (the president of Macedonia) and Blagoje Adžić (the chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav People's Army) signed an agreement for a peaceful withdrawal of the Army units stationed in Macedonia by mid-April 1992. The agreement permitted the Army to withdraw all its weaponry and other equipment from Macedonia, thereby ensuring Macedonia's peaceful secession from Yugoslavia. The disturbing other side of this very favourable outcome for Macedonia points to its indirect responsibility for the power imbalance between the warring parties. The withdrawn weaponry (the operation was completed on 27 March 1992) had largely benefited the already existing military superiority of the Serb forces, particularly in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would break out in early April 1992 (see eg Maleski, 2012; *Nova Makedonija*, 27.03.2012).

94 The only area which remained under the jurisdiction of the Croatian Serbs was the region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. After the end of the war in Croatia, this region came under the temporal administration of the UN and became known as the UNTAES-region (United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia). On 15 January 1998 the UN mission was concluded and the region peacefully reintegrated into Croatia.

## CHAPTER THREE

Although 5 August – the day the Croat militaries had entered Knin (the capital of the Republic of Srpska Krajina) – was declared a public holiday in Croatia, Operation Storm also represents a dark stain in Croatian history, due to the successive ethnic cleansing. Particularly unsettling is Tuđman's assurance to the Croatian Serb civilians that they did not need to flee since nothing would happen to them. Despite this promise, most of the chiefly elderly Serbs who had remained in their houses were killed. In addition to this, the Croat militaries destroyed the properties of the Croatian Serbs, making their possible return to Croatia even more unrealistic. Several months after these events, on 12 November 1995, the peace agreement on Croatia – the Erdut Agreement – was signed in both Erdut (a Serb-controlled village in Eastern Croatia) and Zagreb. Hereby the war in Croatia was officially ended (Bjelajac and Žunec, 2009; *Poruka*, 04.08.1995; *Radio 101*, 24.01.2009; Šitkovic, 2000; Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005).

The support which the Yugoslav People's Army gave to the Bosnian Serbs provided the ultimate proof that it had ceased to be the army of all Yugoslav people (Hadžić, 2002; Malcolm, 1994). Starting from September 1991, ie seven months before the official beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosnian Serbs had begun declaring their autonomous regions in that republic. In early November 1991 they organised a referendum, in which an overwhelming majority voted for keeping these regions attached to Yugoslavia (Bougarel, 1996). A couple of months later, in January 1992, a Serb republic called Republika Srpska was established within the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Republika Srpska's constitution of 28 February 1992 instituted this new polity as a part of Yugoslavia. This happened only one day before the referendum on Bosnia and Herzegovina's independence from Yugoslavia would be held throughout the whole republic.

The referendum resulted in an almost unanimous support (99.7%) for an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, although the votes of the Bosnian Serbs were largely missing. That was partially a consequence of the pressure which Radovan Karadžić<sup>95</sup> and his supporters exercised on the Bosnian Serbs to boycott the plebiscite and the actions which he undertook to prevent the organisation of the referendum in many places in Republika Srpska. Actually, Karadžić had opposed this plebiscite from the beginning. On 14 October 1991 he and his fellow party members had walked out of the session of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian parliament in protest against the

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95 Karadžić was the leader of the Serbian Democratic Party – the political party of the Bosnian Serbs which received the majority of the votes of the Bosnian Serbs at the elections in November 1990. Between December 1992 and July 1996 he was the president of Republika Srpska. At present he is on trial at the ICTY.

organisation of the referendum (Malcolm, 1994; Nation, 2003; *Report*, n.d.; Stokes, 2009).

After Alija Izetbegović declared the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in particular after its recognition by the European Community on 6 April 1992, the Bosnian Serbs – supported by the Yugoslav People’s Army and the Serbian government – intensified their attacks on the Bosnian non-Serb population. The Bosniak and Bosnian Croat forces,<sup>96</sup> in spite of occasional clashes, jointly fought against the units of the Bosnian Serbs. At the same time, already from 18 November 1991 onward, there was also a separate Croat entity formed on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina: the Croat Union of Herzeg-Bosna. This entity – which was transformed on 3 July 1992 into an independent state: the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosna – enjoyed generous political, financial and military support from Croatia.

The military cooperation between the Bosniak and Bosnian Croat forces dramatically changed in the spring of 1993, when the Bosnian Croats turned against their allies and the civilian Bosniak population. This manoeuvre caused a tumult in Croatian politics. Not only the oppositional politicians, but also (prominent) members of Tuđman’s party, as well as the Catholic Church, which had up to then been a close ally of Tuđman, openly condemned this move as an act of aggression and territorial expansion. However, it took a year before Franjo Tuđman and Alija Izetbegović would sign a peace agreement in Washington in March 1994.<sup>97</sup> Despite the resumed joint military operations of the Bosniak and Bosnian Croat forces against the Bosnian Serbs, the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina would not be in sight before the NATO bombardment of the Bosnian Serb positions between 30 August and 20 September 1995. It was only after this bombardment that the leadership of the Bosnian Serbs and Milošević conceded to peace negotiations. The Dayton Peace Accords were agreed upon on 21 November 1995 in Dayton (United States) and signed on 14 December 1995 in Paris (Calic, 2009; Pusić, 1994; Ramet S., 2006; Stokes, 2009; Woodward, 1995).

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96 What is often referred to as the ‘Bosnian Muslim forces’ or the ‘Bosniak forces’ – as I also do for the sake of simplicity – actually designates the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was established on 15 April 1992 from the territorial defence forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and several Bosniak paramilitary units. Its goal was to counter the attacks of the Yugoslav People’s Army and the Bosnian Serb paramilitaries. Even though the Bosniaks formed the majority, its personnel also included men of other ethnicities, some of whom in commanding positions. However, as the war progressed, the non-Bosniak commanding staff was increasingly replaced with Bosniaks (Nation, 2003; Udovički, 2000a).

97 The Washington agreement also included the provision for disbandment of the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosna and its incorporation in the Bosniak and Bosnian Croat federation – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This Federation and Republika Srpska are the two constitutive entities of the present-day Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina severe war crimes were committed by all warring sides. For example, members of the Bosnian Croat forces were responsible for the killing of Bosniak civilians in the village of Ahmići and its devastation, as well as the destruction of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Mostar bridge. The Bosniak forces were responsible for the torture and killing of Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb men who were detained in the prison camp in the village of Tarčin, the killing of Bosnian Croats in the village of Uzdol, and – together with the Bosnian Croat forces – for the torture and killing of Bosnian Serb men in the prison camp Čelebići. Still, considering their extreme extent and severity, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is foremostly marked by the war crimes committed by the Bosnian Serb forces, in particular the Srebrenica genocide in July 1995, in which more than 8,000 Bosniak men were murdered and the 1,425-days long siege of Sarajevo, during which 11,541 Sarajevans of all ethnicities were killed (*BIRN Justice Report*, 21.12.2011; Calic, 2009; *ICTY Čelebići Camp*, n.d.; Ingrao, 2009; *Novi list*, 16.04.2010; Woodward, 1995).

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has become additionally infamous for the prevalence of war rapes. Approximations usually vary between 20,000 and 50,000 raped women. Most of these women are considered to be Bosniak women raped by Serb soldiers, although war rapes by Bosniak and Croat men against women of the supposedly antagonistic ethnicities have been reported as well. This type of war crime<sup>98</sup> has also taken place in the wars in Croatia and Kosovo, but those figures seem to be even more obscure. There are reports of individual cases, but I have been unable to find more reliable extrapolated estimations, as they exist for Bosnia and Herzegovina. What makes these latter reports additionally partial is that they only address the

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98 The legal classification of war rape as a war crime was not accomplished until July 1998. The statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Rome defined rape both as a war crime and a crime against humanity. This classification was later confirmed and extended in UN Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008), which stated that 'rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide'. The ICTY statute treated rape solely as a crime against humanity, but this was, nevertheless, as Kesić (2005) has pointed out, the first international legal document which explicitly mentioned rape under this category. Based on this provision, a historical legal precedent concerning the treatment of war rape took place in February 2001. The ICTY sentenced three members of the Bosnian Serb forces – Dragoljub Kunarac, Radimir Kovač and Zoran Vuković – for sexual enslavement, torture and rape of Bosniak women during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was the first time in judicial history that a person was convicted exclusively for committing war-time sexual violence against women (Dixon, 2002; *Judgement ICTY*, 22.02.2001; *Rome Statute ICC*, 17.07.1998; *Report of the Secretary-General*, 03.05.1993; *UN Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008)*, 19.06.2008). I second Kesić's (2005) observation that this profound step forward in the awareness of women's rights and their violations – in peacetime and war time alike – was largely due to the work of many women's rights advocates around the world.

Croat and Kosovar Albanian women who have been raped by Serb militaries (*Amnesty International*, January 1993, September 2009; *Bassiouni report*, May 1994; *Human Rights Watch*, March 2000; *Mazowiecki report*, November 1992, February 1993; Nikolić-Ristanović et al., 1995; Slišković, 2011; *UN Fact Sheet*, February 2008; *Warburton report*, February 1993; Wareham, 2000).<sup>99</sup>

The end of the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia did not mean a return of peace to the post-Yugoslav region. In 1996 the Kosovar Albanians' military formation Kosovo Liberation Army appeared on the territory of Kosovo and started clashing with the police and armed forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It also attacked and killed Kosovar Serb civilians, as well as Kosovar Albanians who criticised it or were seen as collaborating with the Serbian state. Up to then, the resistance of the Kosovar Albanians had been mostly of a non-violent nature, despite the harsh deterioration of their living conditions since 1989. This deterioration was exemplified by the de facto anti-Albanian police state which Milošević increasingly started introducing in Kosovo, the mass layoffs of ethnic Albanians from the state-owned companies and the public administration, as well as the banning of the Albanian language in the state institutions, including the University of Prishtina.

The leader of the pacifist resistance was the writer and later politician Ibrahim Rugova. On 24 May 1992 he became the first president of the – unrecognised by Serbia – Republic of Kosovo which, following a clandestine referendum, the Kosovar Albanians had declared the year before. Rugova and his non-violent strategies, including the creation of clandestine parallel Albanian para-state institutions in Kosovo, were widely respected by many Kosovar Albanians, but began to lose popularity given the unceasing oppression by the Serbian state. The perceived need to change course grew further after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in late 1995. These accords did not include any provisions which would open up space for Kosovo's disentanglement from Serbia (Clark, 2000; Janjić et al., 2009; Malcolm, 1999; Pula, 2004; Udovički, 2000b; Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005).

Additionally beneficial to the expansion of the Kosovo Liberation Army was the crisis in Albania in the spring of 1997, due to which a great amount of arms, plundered from military buildings, became easily available on the black market.

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99 The impossibility to come up with exact figures on the actual magnitude of war rape is caused by several factors: the shame and stigma which are attached to the rape victims (just like in the cases of peacetime rape), the killing of many raped women, the manipulation of numbers for political purposes, as well as the fact that even if a more precise estimation of the number of raped women would be established, it is not feasible to correctly estimate the instances of rape acts. The latter especially concerns the women who were held detained for a longer time.

Partially as a result of this occurrence, the clashes between the Kosovar Albanian forces and the (paramilitary) forces of Serbia – joined by the Army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – escalated throughout 1998. Each attack of the former was followed by a heavy response of the latter, which were vastly superior in terms of weaponry and personnel. In this period, the violence committed by both parties against civilians was also on the rise. In order to stop the further upsurge of violence, on 24 September 1998 NATO issued the first air strikes warning to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

However, it would be only after the Kosovo Liberation Army had agreed to a cease-fire, and extensive negotiations between Milošević and the American envoy Richard Holbrooke had taken place, that Milošević would announce a cease-fire from his side and allow international preventive monitoring presence in Kosovo. Hereby the threat of bombing was removed and the situation in Kosovo pacified, albeit only temporarily. Milošević was preparing for one more war. On 20 October 1998 the Parliament of Serbia hastily and secretly delivered the infamous ‘Public Information Law’, which legalised censorship also by criminalising the transmission of information from foreign sources (Clark, 2000; Gow, 2009; Ramet S., 2006; *Vreme*, 18.12.1999; Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005).

Despite the presence of international monitors, starting from the last days of 1998 the clashes between the Serb and Kosovar Albanian forces were resumed. In reaction to this, on 6 February 1999 the Contact Group<sup>100</sup> summoned the representatives of the Kosovar Albanians and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for peace negotiations in Rambouillet (France). The proposed agreement, which demanded more concessions from Serbia than from the Kosovar Albanians, was unacceptable to Milošević. The failure of these negotiations, as well as the exacerbation of the killing, harassment and expulsion of the Kosovar Albanians by the Serb forces, served to NATO as a green light to start bombing the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. NATO thereby overrode the absence of approval by the United Nations Security Council. Immediately after the beginning of the bombing on 24 March 1999 the federal government declared a state of war and introduced martial law on its territory.<sup>101</sup> This was not only the first time in

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100 An informal diplomatic pressure group consisting of the representatives of France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – countries with great interest in and diplomatic influence on the Balkans in general. It was established in April 1994 with the goal of facilitating a solution to the war crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see eg Leigh-Phippard, 1998; Weller, 1999).

101 Nevertheless, they were not operational on the territory of Montenegro, since its government did not recognise the decision of the federal government. This situation enabled some of Milošević’s outspoken critics to seek refuge in Montenegro after having left Serbia due to the increased repression (*BBC News*, 15.05.1999; *Los Angeles Times*, 28.03.1999; *NATO in the Sky*, 28.03.1999).

the 1990s that a war was waged on the territory of Serbia proper, but also the first time in this decade that Serbia, by declaring a state of war, did not deny its involvement in the war violence.

During the bombing the Serb forces expelled more than 800,000 Kosovar Albanians to the neighbouring Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro. In Belgrade, due to the martial law, the censorship was intensified and all anti-governmental political activities banned. The murder of the journalist Slavko Ćuruvija – the publisher of an oppositional newspaper and magazine – on 11 April 1999 further increased the pressure on and the fear among the political opponents, including the (feminist) antiwar activists.

After 78 days of bombing, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 9 June 1999 signed a peace agreement in Kumanovo (Macedonia) and agreed to withdraw its armed forces from Kosovo. The bombardment was suspended the next day. Following the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999), Kosovo was placed under the interim administration of the United Nations, but officially remained within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Kosovar Albanian refugees returned, whereas most of the remaining Kosovar Serbs – due to the anti-Serb violence and the changes in political power – concentrated in Northern Kosovo. They maintained their own administration which, much to the annoyance of the Kosovar Albanians, still does not recognise the government in Prishtina, but the one in Belgrade (Malcolm, 1999; Nation, 2003; Udovički, 2000b; Zwaan and De Graaff, 2005).

On 17 February 2008, after the UN-led negotiations between Kosovo and Serbia on Kosovo's final status had failed to result in an agreement, the Kosovar Albanian members of the Assembly of Kosovo, in the absence of their Kosovar Serb fellow parliamentarians, unanimously voted for Kosovo's independence from Serbia. This move has resulted in a still continuing political and diplomatic struggle over Kosovo's (non-)recognition. The situation with the Serb enclaves in Northern Kosovo has not been resolved yet either (*BBC News*, 17.02.2008; *Novi list*, 16.03.2012; *The Guardian*, 22.10.2010; *Vreme*, 25.06.2009).<sup>102</sup>

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102 In February 2012 the representatives of the Serbian and Kosovar authorities reached a temporary EU-mediated agreement on the way in which Kosovo would be represented and referred to at regional meetings: as 'Kosovo\*'. The asterisk indicates the following footnote which should always accompany Kosovo's mention: 'This designation [Kosovo] is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC [Resolution] 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence' (*European Voice*, 24.02.2012; *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, 25.02.2012). The referred to opinion of the International Court of Justice from July 2010 states that Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence from Serbia did not violate international law (*ICJ Accordance*, 22.07.2010).

## **Introduction of the analysed feminist groups and some of their predecessors**

In the absence of an already existing list which would classify the Belgrade and Zagreb feminist groups in self-declared antinationalist or so-called nationalist clusters, I have compiled one such list by myself. My list does not, however, include all Belgrade and Zagreb feminist groups. I have portrayed only those groups which are commonly mentioned in the elaborations of the war-related feminist activism in Belgrade and Zagreb.

To compile the portrayals of the Belgrade groups I have made grateful use of the edited volume on organised women's activism in Belgrade in the 1990s (Blagojević, 1998a). Due to the absence of a similar publication on the Zagreb groups, during the interviews and the archival search I had to collect more data on them than on the Belgrade ones. These portrayals, thus, bring important novel information to the scholarship on war-related (post-)Yugoslav feminism, but should not be treated as comprehensive since the creation of an extensive historiography was outside the scope of this research. The presented depictions are only a helping tool to better grasp the dynamics between and within the Belgrade and Zagreb feminist groups which were caused by the geographical and temporal proximity of nationalism and (sexual) war violence.

The Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist groups which I will elaborate upon are:<sup>103</sup> Autonomous Women's House Zagreb, B.a.B.e.,<sup>104</sup> Center for Women War Victims, Centre for Women's Studies, Women's Information and Documentation Center (Women's Infoteka) and Women's Lobby Zagreb (sometimes called: Zagreb Women's Lobby). The so-called nationalist feminist cluster consists of the following groups – all of which will be portrayed here: Kareta, Multimedia Women's Centre Nona, Network of Multicultural Help, O-zona, Women's Group Trešnjevka and Women's Help Now.<sup>105</sup>

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103 I list here all groups in alphabetical order, whereas in the text below I follow the chronological order of their creation.

104 The acronym B.a.B.e. stands for 'Be active, Be emancipated' in Croatian and English alike.

105 Next to these two clusters of feminist women's groups, there was one more cluster of women's groups which were active in Zagreb in the 1990s. The groups in this cluster (such as Rampart of Love, Croatian Background Front, Croatian Woman, and We – For Our Guard) were established after the beginning of the war in Croatia or shortly before. Since they did not consider themselves feminist nor used that word in their work, they are outside the scope of this research and I will only say few words about them here. These groups shared the standpoints of the so-called nationalist feminist cluster regarding the

The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist groups which are relevant for this research are: Autonomous Women's Center, Belgrade Women's Lobby (sometimes called: Women's Lobby Belgrade), Women in Black and Women's Studies Center.<sup>106</sup> No feminist group has been classified in Belgrade as nationalist, although internal tensions regarding nationalism have been reported in the SOS Hotline, the Women's Party (ŽEST) and the Women's Studies Center. Due to this, I also include the SOS Hotline and the Women's Party in the elaboration. The four Belgrade feminists who have been described to me as nationalists work or have worked in academic institutions and/or (feminist) groups engaged with the development of women's activism or with providing assistance to refugees and other survivors of violence. Some of these groups are listed earlier in this paragraph, whereas the remaining ones – those which have not been brought into any connection whatsoever with nationalism – will remain unaddressed.<sup>107</sup>

### Zagreb groups before the split

On the eve of the war in Croatia there were three feminist groups in Zagreb: Independent Union of Women, Kareta,<sup>108</sup> and Women's Help Now. Many of the then involved feminists also had the experience of being a member or just attending

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definitions of aggressors and victims in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, but did not speak of women's rights, let alone feminism. Furthermore, and unlike the feminists from the so-called nationalist cluster, these activists had connections to and cooperated with the Catholic Church, were openly religious, praised family values, publicly defined themselves as mothers, sisters or wives of soldiers, and took upon themselves the traditional women's role of nurturer. They provided clothes and food for the soldiers on the battlefield, and visited and took care of the wounded (Slišković, 2005). In this sense, the feminist groups from the so-called nationalist feminist cluster could be seen as situated in the middle ground between the feminist groups from the self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster and the women's groups from the third cluster.

106 The Women's Studies Center has undergone several name changes. I use its current name in English.

107 I am familiar with the existence of only one Belgrade women's group, established in 1993, which was analogous to the Zagreb groups from the third cluster and, therefore, also not in the focus of this research. This was the group Only the Serb Woman Saves the Serb Man – a word game which was derived from the Serb motto 'Only concord saves the Serb man'. Its members paid visits and distributed humanitarian help to the Serb soldiers in hospitals or on the frontline, were declared Serb nationalists, associated themselves with the political right and the Serbian orthodox faith, and supported the traditional gender roles (*Duga*, 27.02.–12.03.1993; *Intervju*, 19.02.1993; *NIN*, 12.03.1993).

108 The group was named after the title of a poem by the Zagreb feminist poet and activist Jelena Zuppa. Kareta is actually the Latin name of the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta* L.).

some of the activities of Woman and Society. This academic feminist initiative was established as a section of the Sociologist Association of Croatia in 1979, one year after the Belgrade feminist conference 'Comrade (m/f) Woman: Women's Question – New Approach'. Lydia Sklevicky (1989:68), one of the founding members, described this group as 'the first alternative women's studies group in post-war [World War II] Yugoslavia.'

Being an academic group, the activities of Woman and Society focused on organising public debates, lectures and seminars, as well as writing and translating academic and non-academic texts. Its goal was to explore the position of women in Yugoslavia and spread feminist ideas (Barilar, 2000; Drakulić Sla., 2005a [1982]; Swaneveld, 1984). Due to this type of work and the high profile of the group's prominent members – established or rising star academics and publicists – some of the less established members started criticising the, in their view, privileged elitist *Salonfähigkeit* of its activities. After leaving the group eventually, these feminists in 1986 formed the grassroots Women's Group Trešnjevka (Dobnikar and Jalušič, 2002; interviews with Zagreb23AN, Zagreb13N, Zagreb14N and Zagreb6N). In the second half of the 1980s the activities of Woman and Society gradually dissolved. Some of its members joined the newly set up SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence in March 1988 and/or formed the Independent Union of Women in April 1990. I will address the creation of these groups in the text below.

### *Women's Group Trešnjevka (later: Women's Help Now)*

Women's Group Trešnjevka was founded in 1986 as a conscientiousness-raising and self-help group, but not formally registered. When its members launched the SOS Hotline in March 1988, they registered it as a programme activity of the district<sup>109</sup> committee of the Union of the Socialist Youth of Croatia and could temporarily use one of the Committee's rooms and phone lines. Due to the insecurity and unsuitability of this arrangement, the group was in search of more appropriate and permanent housing, but in order to be eligible for receiving such space from the city authorities, it needed to be registered as a separate organisation. At the constitutive assembly in November 1989 the group changed its name from Women's Group Trešnjevka into Women's Help Now and in February 1990 became officially registered under the new name (*Lista potraživanja*, n.d.; *Pozivno pismo za osnivačku skupštinu*, n.d.; *Priopćenje o društvenoj organizaciji*, n.d.).

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109 This district of the city of Zagreb is called Trešnjevka. Hence the name of the group.

As all efforts to legally obtain space proved unsuccessful, Women's Help Now squatted two properties. The first squat took place in August/September 1990, after the death of the grandmother of one activist. The group moved into the deceased woman's flat, which was a property of the city of Zagreb, and immediately asked the authorities to allocate the flat to the group.<sup>110</sup> Besides for the SOS Hotline and other programme activities, the flat was also used as an emergency shelter for women and children victims of domestic violence (*Danas*, 28.02.1989; *Molba za dodjelu*, 1991; *Peticija*, November 1990; *Vjesnik*, 22.12.1990; *Zahtjev*, 21.02.1990). Shortly afterwards, in December 1990, Women's Help Now squatted once more. This time it took over some large office premises which had also belonged to the city of Zagreb. Within a few days the first shelter in Eastern Europe for women and children victims of domestic violence was opened. A decade of juridical turmoil later, in December 2000, the shelter was finally legalised (*Freitag*, 23.04.1993; *Kruh & Ruže*, 1993; *Lista potraživanja*, n.d.; *Odgovor na otvoreno pismo O-zone*, 08.03.2001; *Prvi skvoterski dani*, December 1990; *Večernji list*, 27.12.1990).

In order to increase public awareness of violence against women and have more impact on its prevention and treatment, some of the members of Women's Help Now – from both future factions (the self-declared antinationalist and the so-called nationalist) – decided to participate in the first multiparty local and parliamentary elections in Croatia in April/May 1990. They had created a candidate list called 'Women's List', but despite joining a coalition of smaller political parties and other groups, did not win any seats. The election programme of the 'Women's List' revolved around violence against women: 'The problem of the abused woman [is] the reason and the core of our action' (*Ženska lista*, n.d.). Within that programme no attention was given to nationalism, interethnic tensions and the future of Croatia and Yugoslavia. Croatia was only mentioned as one of the two levels (the other one being Zagreb) at which the candidates would demand changes in the area of violence against women: eg legislative changes, changes in the court procedures and establishment of shelters.

I propose that the narrow attention for violence against women was due to the broad theoretical and practical expertise which the involved feminists possessed on this issue (Kodrnja and Vidović, 1988; Singer, 1989; *Start*, 25.11.1989; unknown magazine, 09.07.1990; *Vjesnik*, 26.11.1990). By concentrating on it, they were able to assert themselves as knowers and doers alike and strive to obtain legitimacy and a larger (female) electoral support. The latter was also attempted by correctly presenting

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110 I was unable to find out when exactly the municipality authorities had granted the group's request.

the problem of violence against women as one which concerned women in general regardless of their ethnic affiliation.

In my view, the absence of any references to Yugoslavia was not coincidental either, but resulted from the increasing contextual (including legislative) differences between the Yugoslav republics since the constitution of 1974. For example, while one of the demands of the 'Women's List' in 1990 was criminalisation of marital rape, Slovenia had already criminalised it in 1977.<sup>111</sup> Given that violence against women did not fall under the policies which were decided upon at federal level – defence, foreign affairs and foreign trade – there was no point in advocating any changes at that level.

### *Kareta*

Kareta was established sometime in the spring of 1990 after a disagreement between one of the members of Women's Help Now and the rest of the group regarding her candidacy for the local elections in Zagreb. In view of the approaching elections, Women's Help Now had created a prescription about the passive suffrage of its members. Each activist was free to affiliate with any political party and become its candidate – or an independent one – but only as an individual and not as a member of the group. This was done in order to preserve the group's autonomy and prevent its work from becoming abused by parties for gaining electoral support.

The feminist in question was rebuked by the others for disrespecting this decision and agreeing to appear on the candidate list of SKH-SDP<sup>112</sup> as a representative of Women's Help Now. She interpreted this criticism as an unfair lack of trust in her ability to contribute in that capacity to the improvement of the situation of abused women, but wrote a letter to SKH-SDP asking to remove her name from the list. In addition to this, she left Women's Help Now and with several other women established the Radical Feminist Group Kareta (*Kareta statut*, 18.11.1990; *Kriteriji ponašanja članica ŽPS*, 13.03.1990; interviews with Zagreb8NA, Zagreb1N, Zagreb23AN, Zagreb7AN, Zagreb16N and Zagreb6N). Nonetheless, after the split of the Zagreb feminists in late 1991, early 1992, this future so-called nationalist feminist resumed the cooperation with some of those who had vehemently opposed her dissidence in the spring of 1990.

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111 Croatia criminalised marital rape only 20 years later, in 1997 (*Kazneni zakon Republike Hrvatske*, 1997).

112 League of Communists of Croatia – Party of Democratic Changes; this was the successor party of the League of Communists of Croatia.

Kareta set out to produce the first feminist magazine in Yugoslavia, called *Kareta feministički časopis*. Its first issue appeared in March 1991, but due to the war in Croatia no other issues followed. The group also worked on translating the American feminists Andrea Dworkin, Audre Lorde, Catharine MacKinnon and Adrienne Rich, and in April 1991 organised a celebration of the Walpurgis Night in Zagreb in order to commemorate all women killed as alleged witches (*Globus*, 03.05.1991; *off our backs*, November 1991; *On the Issues*, Winter 1991).

None of the statements made by Kareta's members in those articles, in the first issue of its magazine (*Kareta feministički časopis*, March 1991b) or in *off our backs* (July 1991) revealed any signs of the ethnically-marked positioning which these feminists would start using only several months later, after the beginning of the war in Croatia. The key dichotomy in their pre-war analyses was the one between men as perpetrators and women as victims. No references to ethnic grievances or ethnically-marked perpetrators and victims were made. What was, nevertheless, shared between the war-time positioning of Kareta and its pre-war one – as it had been typically expressed in the American feminist press – was the fervent criticism of communism as an oppressive political arrangement and the laudation of the new democratic system as liberating.

Actually, as I will show in Chapter 4, Kareta's members promoted their opposition to communism to distinguish themselves from the future Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. Their foremost aim thereby was to obtain legitimacy and support for their activities from the Western – American, in particular – (feminist) audiences. This strategy was chosen in spite of the fact that one of Kareta's most prominent members was the same feminist who in the spring of 1990 had been on the candidates list of the successor party of the League of Communists of Croatia.

### *Independent Union of Women*<sup>113</sup>

The Independent Union of Women was founded in April 1990 by some of the former members of Woman and Society. Their ambition was to create a wide pan-Yugoslav umbrella organisation which would struggle for a factual – instead of the merely proclaimed – gender equality in the country. This was to be done by eg advocating women's reproductive rights and equal representation of women in the political bodies and state institutions, as well as by monitoring the legislation from a gender

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113 See the first analysis in Chapter 4, where I address the tensions which accompanied the creation of this group.

lens (*Danas*, 20.03.1990; Dobnikar and Jalušič, 2002; *Osnivači Nezavisnog saveza žena*, n.d.;<sup>114</sup> *Programska deklaracija*, Spring 1990; *Razvoj ženskih grupa u Zagrebu*, n.d.; *Statut Nezavisnog saveza žena*, n.d.; interview with Zagreb11AN). The group's programme declaration criticised the position of women not only in socialism, but also in the newly emerging democracies. Women were once more 'in danger of being manipulated in the name of "higher" goals, such as Nation, State, Freedom or Democracy' (*Programska deklaracija*, Spring 1990). With the exception of this sentence, no other (implicit) references to nationalism and polity were made.

In cooperation with Karet, Union of Women of Croatia,<sup>115</sup> Women's Group Trešnjevka<sup>116</sup> and Women's Help Now, in December 1990 the Independent Union of Women organised the 'Women's Assembly of Croatia'. The group was further one of the founders of the Antiwar Campaign Croatia in July 1991. During that month some of its members also took part in a daily peace vigil in Zagreb and demanded demilitarisation, peace and economic prosperity. The Independent Union of Women did not exist for a long time, though. The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the beginning of the war in Croatia made the development of an all-Yugoslav umbrella organisation unfeasible and the group was disbanded (*Basic information*, February 1992; *Izveštaj sa inicijativnog sastanka*, n.d.; *Vjesnik*, 24.07.1991; *Women War Memory* website; interview with Zagreb7AN). The last mention of this group which I came across was in a statement from December 1992. Together with the other Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist groups, it opposed the use of the women raped in war for propaganda aims and pleaded for a sensitive and women-centred approach in working with them (*Letter of Intentions*, 21.12.1992).

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114 This document appears to list the founders of the Independent Union of Women from different parts of Yugoslavia, but I doubt that it is the final version. At least two of the women who are listed (one from Belgrade and one from Ljubljana) actually opposed the initiative.

115 This was the legal successor of the former state organisation Conference for the Social Position of Woman and Family, whose role was to work on the improvement of the position of women in Croatia. After its disbandment in early 1990 the Union of Women of Croatia was registered as an NGO in March 1990. Its programme declaration demanded a preservation of the women's rights obtained under socialism, their further improvement and better practical realisation (*Kruh & Ruže*, Summer 1998; *Programska deklaracija Saveza žena Hrvatske*, April 1990).

116 This is not the same Women's Group Trešnjevka which I mentioned earlier in this chapter. I will address the second Trešnjevka later in this chapter.

### *The split of Women's Help Now*

After the beginning of the war in Croatia there were increasingly more tensions between the members of Women's Help Now with regard to the group's positioning on the war violence. Although the group was one of the founders of the Antiwar Campaign Croatia, as the war progressed fewer women wanted to remain in an antiwar initiative which advocated non-violent solutions and a continuation of the communication and cooperation with the activists from the other republics (*Basic information*, February 1992; *Izvyještaj sa inicijativnog sastanka*, n.d.; Janković and Mokrović, 2011; *Povelja Antiratne kampanje*, n.d.; interviews with Zagreb9AN, Zagreb7AN and Zagreb19EXT).

The existence of the two factions and positionings within Women's Help Now can be read from the statements which were produced in the first months of the war in Croatia and before the final split of the group, ie between July 1991 and April 1992. As the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist Zagreb9AN pointed out in the interview, it had not been required that all members agree upon a certain text in order to have that statement or letter carry the name of the group. That was why the documents from that initial period could contain opposing positionings. In addition, one could witness one positioning or another depending on which member had been invited to a meeting abroad (*Borba*, 28.11.1991; *Molba za dodjelu*, 1991).

At the last joint meeting of the two factions on 12 April 1992 it was decided to split the group in two. The faction of Women's Help Now which did not want to remain in the Antiwar Campaign Croatia and whose positioning on the war violence resembled that of the Croatian government retained the SOS hotline and the squatted flat. The faction which continued feeling allied with the Antiwar Campaign Croatia and used a more moderate language on perpetrators and victims kept the squatted shelter for victims of domestic violence. In June 1992 the latter faction registered the shelter as a separate group called Autonomous Women's House Zagreb.

In an interview published in 1997, one of the key activists of the shelter described the split as being caused by the 'completely different approaches in work [sic]' (in: Renne, 1997b:188). She did not, however, provide any other information on those approaches, including whether they had been in any way war-related. It seems, nevertheless, that the positioning on the war in Croatia and the participation in the Antiwar Campaign Croatia had not been the only reasons for the divide, although they may have been the most articulated ones. Some respondents of mine – from both factions – stated various (additional) sources of tension. One was over the question whether Croat women should get preferential treatment in the shelter, given that Croatia had been attacked, or whether one's degree of victimisation by domestic violence should be the only criterion for acceptance, regardless of one's ethnicity. Other

reasons included the differences in age, education or world view between the women from the two factions, or their dissimilar work preferences: volunteer vs paid work, public advocacy against violence against women vs direct assistance to survivors, and work on an SOS hotline vs work in a shelter (interviews with Zagreb9AN, Zagreb3AN, Zagreb8NA, Zagreb1N, Zagreb21ANA, Zagreb23AN, Zagreb24AN and Zagreb15N).

### **Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist cluster**

#### *Women's Help Now – SOS Hotline*

After the split, Women's Help Now – SOS Hotline continued running the hotline and the small emergency shelter which was situated in the same flat. In October 1992, together with Kareta, Women's Help Now organised the international women's gathering 'Women in War' in Zagreb. I will analyse this gathering in Chapter 4 because its preparation and realisation were the subject of a great controversy between the so-called nationalist organisers and the activists of the Autonomous Women's House Zagreb, who were supported by some Belgrade and Ljubljana feminists.

In addition to its work against domestic violence, and due to the increasing influx of refugees arriving in Zagreb, Women's Help Now started providing financial, legal, medical and psychosocial help to refugees. In February 1994, in cooperation with the Zagreb Faculty of Medicine, the group began operating a donated mobile gynaecological unit. This unit moved for two years between the refugee camps in and around Zagreb and provided gynaecological and other medical services to refugees. After the war Women's Help Now abandoned the war-related activities and focused again on the hotline and the emergency shelter (*Novi list*, 07.03.1998; *PAŽ letak*, n.d.; *Pomoć ženama žrtvama ratnog nasilja*, 12.07.1993; *Večernji list*, 16.02.1995, 27.12.2000, 22.09.2006; *Vjesnik*, 26.11.1998; interview with Zagreb8NA).

Women's Help Now was the only Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist group which restored the cooperation with the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. The first common action took place in the spring of 1995 – half a year before the end of the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia – when the group joined the pro-choice petition campaign of the other Zagreb cluster. The next joint activity was the 8 March manifestation in 1996, which was also organised by the other cluster. Next to this, Women's Help Now became a member of several initiatives at national level, such as the Women's Ad hoc Coalition for Monitoring and Influencing Elections<sup>117</sup> and

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117 This coalition was set up for the first time for the local elections in 1997.

the Women's Network Croatia.<sup>118</sup> These initiatives gathered (feminist) women's groups from different parts of Croatia, but were to a great extent shaped by the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster. In 2006 Women's Help Now even received an award from the Women's Network Croatia for its 18 years of continuous work on women's human rights and against violence against women (*Arkzin*, 02.06.1995; *Letak 8. Mart 1996*, n.d.; *Peticija Vladi i Saboru*, 1995; *Priznanje*, 21.09.2006; *Večernji list*, 22.09.2006; *Vjesnik*, 09.03.1996; *Women's Ad Hoc Coalition 1999 Members*, n.d.; *Zaposlena*, 1997; *Ženska izborna platforma*, February 1997, 17.04.1999; *Ženska mreža Hrvatske* website).

At the time of data collection Women's Help Now ran the hotline and the emergency shelter and was a member of the Women's Network Croatia. That Women's Help Now had re-established the cooperation with the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists was due to the rapprochement which both sides had made. On the one hand, the activists of Women's Help Now who had spoken most fervently of the Serbs as the aggressors and the non-Serbs as the victims had left the group, whereas the remaining members had been more willing to cooperate with the other cluster. On the other hand, exactly because of this change in the membership, the self-declared antinationalist feminists had agreed – albeit initially with some caution – to work with this group (interviews with Zagreb9AN, Zagreb3AN, Zagreb17ANA, Zagreb23AN, Zagreb18ANA, Zagreb10ANA, Zagreb7AN and Zagreb24AN).

### *Kareta*

When the war in Croatia began Kareta dropped its project of a feminist magazine and started visiting refugee camps to offer psychosocial counselling and distribute humanitarian and other aid. In 1994 it organised the setting up of a donated gynaecological unit – different from the one operated by Women's Help Now – in one refugee camp in Croatia (*Kareta description*, 23.08.1994; *Kareta izvještaj za 1995.*, n.d.; *The Humanist*, March/April 1995; *Tko je feministička grupa Kareta*, 02.04.1993; interviews with Zagreb14N and Zagreb6N).

The group's main focus was the work against the sexual war crimes committed by the Serb forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. In fact, the co-organisation of the gathering 'Women in War' was Kareta's first big advocacy activity on this topic. In addition to this, its activists collected information and testimonies from the women

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118 A network of (feminist) women's groups which was established in 1996 as a platform for joint advocacy activities and exchange of knowledge.

survivors, spoke at conferences and in the media, and otherwise lobbied in Croatia and abroad for the conceptualisation of those war rapes as part of the Serb femicidal and genocidal strategy, as well as for a general recognition of war rape as a war crime<sup>119</sup> (Armanda, 1992; Gattin, 1992; *Emma*, September 1992; *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 12.11.1992; *Mona Lisa*, 15.11.1992; *Preliminary schedule Basel*, 14.03.1993; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 21.12.1992; *Statement of a Bosnian Survivor Group*, 26.05.1993; *Stern*, 26.11.1992; *The Humanist*, March/April 1995).

The largest advocacy effort of Kareta was the participation in the American civil lawsuit against Radovan Karadžić for, inter alia, genocidal acts of rape, forced pregnancy and enforced prostitution. In this, Kareta worked very closely with the American feminist legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon and her American Croatian former student Natalie Nenadic. The lawsuit was brought to court by MacKinnon in 1993 on behalf of 12 raped women of Bosniak and Croat ethnicity. Its foremost goal was to raise public awareness of the war rapes committed by Serb forces against non-Serb women. The juridical process received assistance also from the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist groups Network of Multicultural Help, O-zona and Women's Help Now, as well as from the Zagreb women's groups Rampart of Love, BISER and Women B&H<sup>120</sup> (*Declaration*, March 1999; MacKinnon, 2006; *Rape/Genocide Legal Project leaflet*, 1993; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 18.03.1994; *ZamirZine*, 28.02.2007; interviews with Zagreb14N and Zagreb6N).<sup>121</sup>

Kareta's local activists did not write many articles. Many of the texts where the standpoints of Kareta and its advocacy work are laid out were authored by MacKinnon or Nenadic (*Everywoman*, July/August 1991; Nenadic, 1996, 2010; MacKinnon, 2006; *Ms.*, July/August 1993, *Northwest Ethnic News*, November 1994). However, in the period 1993–1994, when the war rapes were front page news, one form of textual production was often used by Kareta. Its activists – sometimes in cooperation with Nenadic, other so-called nationalist feminist groups and/or women's groups such as Rampart of Love – wrote letters to conference organisers, editors, and authors of books and articles. In these letters they expressed their disagreement with the selection of women who were to represent Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia or the post-Yugoslav region, or criticised

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119 As I mentioned earlier (see footnote 98), the pertinent legal recognition that war rape can be a war crime was incorporated for the first time in the ICC Statute of 1998 and afterwards in the UN Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008).

120 BISER and Women B&H were women's groups which had been set up by refugee women from Bosnia and Herzegovina who resided in Zagreb.

121 In August 2000 Karadžić was found guilty and in absence ordered to pay a damage compensation of 745 million USD to the plaintiffs (*Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 26.04.2011; *Nacional*, 28.07.2008; *The Washington Post*, 11.08.2000).

the portrayal of the wars and the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia (*Appeal by Sarajevo Women's Groups*, 30.05.1994; *Letter to Beverly Allen*, 14.06.1994; *Letter to Julie A. Mertus*, 21.06.1993; *Letter to Ms. Magazine*, 21.12.1993; *Letter to The New York Times*, 29.12.1993; *Letter to Susan Brownmiller*, 15.08.1993; *Reaction to the MADRE tour*, 18.03.1993).

In 1998 Kareta ceased to exist. Its documentation and archives were brought to the Croatian State Archives by one of its members.

### *(The second) Women's Group Trešnjevka*

In the summer of 1992 two activists of the informal Women's Group Trešnjevka which existed between 1986 and 1990 registered a new group under the same name. Even before the registration the two feminists had used the name of Trešnjevka as their affiliation on separate occasions. The one did so when she co-organised the 'Women's Assembly of Croatia' and when she asked the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights to send letters in support of women's reproductive rights in Croatia. The other used Trešnjevka's name to fundraise for her research on domestic violence (*Call for Solidarity*, May 1991; *Opis*, n.d.; *Project proposal*, 18.12.1991). Since the first group Trešnjevka had never been formally registered under that name, there was apparently no legal problem in reusing the name. Moreover, it seems that these two activists did not feel that they were doing something inappropriate. One of them told me that they had been the only successors of the first Trešnjevka because its other activists had established new groups (interview with Zagreb13N).

In their press releases and letters for (financial) support, the two feminists presented their group as continuously working since 1986 (*Letter to Austcare*, 14.07.1993; *Opis*, n.d.; *Project proposal*, 18.12.1991; *Project proposal*, 03.03.1993). It is, thus, very likely that they had chosen the name Trešnjevka in order to be able to claim a continuity and, consequently, legitimacy for their new group. Nonetheless, the second Trešnjevka should be distinguished from the first Trešnjevka. In spite of the proclaimed continuity, there was a huge difference between the two groups in their memberships and positionings, especially since the first one functioned in pre-war Yugoslavia and the second one in war-time Croatia.

The continuity claim is additionally problematic in light of the apparent gap in Trešnjevka's activities between February 1990 (after the first Trešnjevka officially changed its name to Women's Help Now) and September 1992 (the report of the second Trešnjevka on the war rape camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina – *Report*, 28.09.1992). In my analysis of this period I have come across the group's name only in two documents

and one article on the 'Women's Assembly of Croatia' (*Javni apel*, n.d.; *Pozivno pismo za Ženski sabor*, n.d.; *Večernji list*, 28.11.1990), as well as in two other documents written by the already mentioned two activists (*Call for Solidarity*, May 1991; *Project proposal*, 18.12.1991). Furthermore, when I asked my Zagreb respondents about the activities of these two feminists after they had left the first Trešnjevka and before they had appeared as members of the second one, the respondents could only recall one of them and only in connection to the 'Women's Assembly of Croatia'. Finally, one of the two activists indirectly confirmed the existence of a gap: '[W]ith the beginning of the war, we activated the group' (interview with Zagreb13N).

I was unable to find out when and why exactly the first of the two activists had left the first Trešnjevka. She is the only person whom I did not manage to locate, let alone get in touch with during this research. The other activist left the first Trešnjevka most probably in the spring of 1989, after the group had rejected her idea to analyse the data on domestic violence which had been obtained from the calls to the SOS hotline. This means that after the beginning of the war in Croatia this feminist, just like the member of Women's Help Now discussed above, restored the cooperation (within the so-called nationalist feminist cluster) with some of the feminists with whom she had parted ways before the war regarding a non-war-related issue.

Two different members of the first Trešnjevka – Zagreb1N and Zagreb23AN – recalled that the problem between this particular feminist and the others had not been the topic of the proposed research, but her plan to fundraise not only for the research costs but also for a salary. Since everybody in the group had been an unpaid volunteer, this – at the time uncommon – proposal was seen as an attempt to obtain personal gain from feminism and everybody's voluntary work. As Zagreb23AN communicated to me, in view of the later professionalisation of civil society organisations, the rejection of the proposal might have been exaggerated, but it was due to the group's confusion and inexperience regarding those issues at the time.

However, unlike Zagreb1N and Zagreb23AN, Zagreb13N recalled that the group had not only rejected her idea to create job positions. Some of the members had also disagreed with the topic because they had been unable to see the value of applying scientific and statistical methods in working against violence against women – something which she had particularly pushed for as a sociologist (*Pismo volonterkama*, 13.04.1989; interviews with Zagreb1N, Zagreb23AN and Zagreb13N). As I will show in Chapter 6, when this respondent spoke in the interview about her use of inflated war rape figures in the early 1990s, she created the same dichotomy between herself, who had been acquainted with the impact of statistics, and the others, who had not.

The second Trešnjevka gained great publicity with its report on the war rape camps – or ‘concentration camp-bordellos’, as they were named in the report – in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Report*, 28.09.1992). Its activists were the first ones to compile and send around a list of those camps. Their goal was to mobilise the international community to make an end to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the war rapes committed by the Serb forces. After the production of this report, in late 1992 and 1993 the two main activists of the group were often interviewed or invited to speak in Croatia and abroad as experts on the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They also cooperated on this issue with the Bosnian and Herzegovinian war government (*Chronique Fèministe*, 1993; *die tageszeitung*, 11.12.1992; *Einladung Deutcher Bundestag*, 27.11.1992, *Emma*, March/April 1993; Fischer E., 1993; *Globus*, 26.05.1995; *Invitation Women’s Peace Meeting*, n.d.; *Letter to Austcare*, 14.07.1993; *Mona Lisa*, 15.11.1992; Mrkić, 1993; *Let the people speak!*, 1993; *Preliminary schedule Basel*, 14.03.1993; Šeparović, 1993).

Next to this, the group distributed humanitarian aid in refugee camps and offered advice and access to medical services to refugee women. In March 1995, together with Rampart of Love and Women B&H, Trešnjevka unsuccessfully tried to organise a food convoy to several war-affected towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Information from Hunger in Bihać*, n.d.; *Newsletter – Women’s Group Trešnjevka*, 25.10.1993; *Let the people speak!*, 1993; *Letter to Ellen Diederich*, n.d.; *Open letter*, 27.03.1995; interview with Zagreb13N). This convoy was the last activity of Trešnjevka on which I could find more information. Concerning the group’s support to the pro-choice campaign of the self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster in the spring of 1995, I only came across its name on the list of the co-signatories of the pro-choice petition (*Arkzin*, 02.06.1995; *Peticija Vladi i Saboru*, 1995). Since I did not find a single record of its work afterwards and none of the people I had spoken to could recollect any later activity of this group, it seems very likely that after the spring of 1995 the group had ceased to exist.

Even Zagreb13N could not provide more information on Trešnjevka when I interviewed her. Following some disagreements between her and the other main activist, Zagreb13N and a few others left the group in the early summer of 1993. In July that year they established the Zagreb branch of the London-based charity WomenAid International. Within the scope of her work for this charity, Zagreb13N was in charge of distributing (financial) humanitarian aid to raped women of Bosniak and Croat ethnicity. However, due to a conflict between her and her superior regarding the allocation of funds, Zagreb13N left WomenAid International and set up a publishing house (*Globus*, 26.05.1995; *Letter from Nina Kadić*, 11.08.1993; *Letter from WomenAid*

*International*, 29.10.1993; *Letter on the split of Trešnjevka*, 29.07.1993; *Quarterly report*, 19.10.1993; interview with Zagreb13N). In 1995 this publishing house brought out the Croatian translation of Susan Brownmiller's capital work on rape, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (Brownmiller, 1975, 1995). Still, despite this endorsement of the gender-based positioning on war rape, Zagreb13N has never restored the communication with the self-declared antinationalist feminists. After the book's release she withdrew from feminist activism altogether.

### *Network of Multicultural Help*

The Network of Multicultural Help was a spin-off group of Women's Help Now. Initially established in November 1992 as a project of the latter, the two authors of the project registered it in June 1993 as a separate group. This move was a consequence of the different views on how to proceed with the project, as well as of the positive response which the project had received from its target audience – (raped) refugee women who resided in Croatia. As one of the authors explained in the interview, the term 'multicultural' had referred to the exchange of experiences and help between women of urban and rural origin, and not necessarily between women of different ethnicities (*Leaflet Network of Multicultural Help*, n.d.; *Project description*, March 1993; interviews with Zagreb8NA and Zagreb16N).

The group had focused on attending to the 'nonstandard' needs of the refugees, given that 'most of the humanitarian aid did not go beyond clothes, food and accommodation' (Ćupić, in: *Večernji list*, n.d.). In practice, this meant a provision of occupational therapy in the form of eg art and looming workshops and literacy and photography courses. In order to provide a safe space outside the refugee camps and private houses (leased accommodation or at relatives/friends) where these women lived, the activists rented a conveniently located house in Zagreb. The refugees could there attend workshops and classes, make use of the feminist library, receive (legal) advice concerning their refugee status and living, exchange information with one another, or simply relax. Another significant activity of the Network of Multicultural Help was the visit of 150 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina to their relatives who were refugees in Slovenia. This visit in late 1993 involved extensive cooperation with the Croatian and Slovenian state because the refugees did not have the freedom of movement between countries (*Izveštaj za 1995 godinu*, 25.01.1996; *Poziv*, n.d.; *Večernji list*, n.d.; *Vjesnik*, 01.12.1993; interview with Zagreb16N).

After the end of the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia the group primarily conducted advocacy activities against (war) violence against women and

maintained its assistance – in the form of workshops and support groups – to women survivors of (war) violence. The Network of Multicultural Help participated in 1999 and 2000 in MacKinnon's lawsuit against Karadžić and during the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia sent a letter of support to the Kosovar Albanians together with two other so-called nationalist feminist groups (Nona and O-zona). The three signatory groups asked for a ground intervention by NATO to stop the Serb genocide, and for an opening up of the borders of the neighbouring Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro, as well as of those of Croatia to the Kosovar Albanian refugees (*Declaration*, March 1999; *Letak Mreža multikulturalne pomoći*, n.d.; *Priopćenje za javnost*, 02.04.1999; Vidović and Radić, 2000). After 2000 the activities of the group gradually decreased to the largely dormant level observed in 2009.

### *Multimedia Women's Centre Nona*

The Multimedia Women's Centre Nona was established in December 1993 as space 'which encourages, celebrates, and preserves all forms of women's creative expression' (*Grant proposal*, 1995). The accent on the provision of a safe location was also visible in the way in which the members explained the group's name. Nona, ie 'grandmother' in the Dalmatian dialect, signified 'safety, nurturance, and grounding for women in a country still embroiled in the turmoil of war' (ibid). The group's two co-directors<sup>122</sup> were former members of Kareta. Their aim was to provide space for women in general – and refugee women from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, in particular – where they could create and present art and literary works, obtain (legal) advice, make use of a feminist library, attend concerts of female musicians and participate in public lectures and discussions on feminist issues. Furthermore, Nona organised activities for refugee children, as well as a weekly get-together of refugee women from Vukovar (*Arkzin*, 06.05.1994; *Leaflet Nona*, n.d.; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 29.10.1996; *Vjesnik*, 19.12.1993, 03.03.1995; *Windy City Times*, 16.12.1993).

One one-off activity of Nona was the production of a daily planner for 1995. The planner indicated important events in the history of feminism and provided information on the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, as well as on Zagreb feminist and women's groups which worked with female survivors of (war) violence. None of this information, which was compiled by an activist of Kareta, concerned the self-declared antinationalist feminist groups. Nona also published one book of

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122 Since I could not interview either of them (one had died several years earlier and the other declined my interview invitation), my portrayal of Nona is foremostly based on the few written sources on this group which I could access.

poetry and prose and another of photographs authored by refugee and non-refugee women (Jovičić, 1995; Miklaužić, 1994, 1995; *Večernji list*, 31.01.1995; interview with Zagreb14N).

Nona was one of the groups which in May 1996 prepared the demands for fostering the equality of women and men (see in the section on O-zona below) and in April 1999 wrote the support letter to the Kosovar Albanians (see in the section on the Network of Multicultural Help above). After 2000 the group diversified its activities to a great extent. It carried out an analysis of the stereotypes in the Croatian primary school textbooks, worked on raising public awareness of the presence of landmines in Croatia and offered assistance to landmine survivors (*Croatia Landmine Monitor 2003*, n.d.; Jovičić, 2002). The latter was the latest recorded activity of Nona which I came across.

### *O-zona*

O-zona was set up in the spring of 1994 under the name Women's Line. That was a 24/7 crisis hotline for women victims of (war) violence which also provided face-to-face counselling. It was initially one of the projects of Kareta, but after some disagreements, several women who worked as counsellors left Kareta and in 1997 established a separate group under the name O-zona<sup>123</sup> (*Kareta description*, 23.08.1994; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 13.04.1999; *Večernji list*, 09.04.1999; *Vjesnik*, 07.04.1994, 06.06.1995; interviews with Zagreb14N and Zagreb6N).

Next to providing counselling services, O-zona actively advocated for changes in the legislation on violence against women and women's reproductive rights. In May 1996, together with the other groups from the so-called nationalist feminist cluster (Kareta, the Network of Multicultural Help, Nona and Women's Help Now), O-zona submitted a set of demands to the Commission for Equality Issues of the Croatian government. Some of these demands were: a constitutional law on the equality of the sexes, state-supported shelters for battered women, and financial state support and tax relief for the women's groups (*Zahtjevi sa sastanka*, 15.05.1996).

In cooperation with the Network of Multicultural Help, O-zona advocated legislative changes in the realm of violence against women, domestic violence in

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123 Zagreb6N explained in the interview that she had borrowed the term 'O-zona' from the American radical feminist Mary Daly. It signified a zone without patriarchal pollution. In the book in question, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, Daly (1978:11) described the O-Zone as follows: 'Within this anti-pollutant, purifying, moving O-Zone, the aura of gynocentric consciousness, life-loving feminists have the power to affirm the basic Gyn/Ecological principle that everything is connected with everything else.'

particular. In addition to this collaborative effort, the group also lobbied separately, especially against violence against women (*Amandmani*, 2000; *Jutarnji list*, 09.09.2000; *Kruh & Ruže*, 2004; *Prijedlozi izmjena obiteljskog zakona*, 2001; *Večernji list*, 04.06.2001; Vidović and Radić, 2000; *Vjesnik*, 19.09.2004; *Zarez*, 06.07.2000). By 2009 O-zona was close to being inactive due to lack of funding.

### **Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster**

Similarly to the dynamics in the so-called nationalist feminist cluster, a proliferation of groups has also taken place in the self-declared antinationalist cluster, albeit in a slightly different form. Different from what occurred in the former, there was an overlap in the latter cluster between the members of the different groups, meaning that the same women participated in two or three groups. Due to these multiple affiliations, when the available information only contained the names of individual feminists it was often difficult to impossible to pinpoint the exact group which had conducted the activity in question.

#### *Autonomous Women's House Zagreb*

As I explained earlier, the shelter Autonomous Women's House Zagreb was registered as a separate group in June 1992 – after the split of Women's Help Now – by the feminists who wanted to maintain their affiliation with the Antiwar Campaign Croatia. However, the shelter never became a member of the antiwar group, although many activists of the former remained involved with the latter. Two self-declared antinationalist feminist groups which were established later, the Center for Women War Victims (late 1992) and B.a.B.e. (spring of 1994), part of whose staff had previously been or was still active in both above groups, did officially join the Antiwar Campaign Croatia.

Given that this discovery was made after the fieldwork, I can only propose three possible reasons for the absence of an official link between the Autonomous Women's House Zagreb and the Antiwar Campaign Croatia. The first reason could be a wish of the activists of the shelter to protect its vulnerable clients from the potential danger which might result from the group's public declaration of an at the time unfavourable positioning on the war. Second, it is plausible that the activists wanted to keep the shelter accessible to all women survivors of domestic violence, regardless of their political affiliation. Third, given the costs of running such a shelter, it is possible that its activists did not want to ruin all chances of obtaining funds from the city and state authorities.

During the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia the Autonomous Women's House Zagreb continued, thus, to accommodate survivors of domestic violence and to offer to them legal and psychosocial counselling.<sup>124</sup> The group also maintained its advocacy work against violence against women, just like its activities for raising the public awareness of this societal problem. All these efforts still went on in 2009, despite the constant threat of closure due to the lack of regular and sufficient funding from the state and the city of Zagreb – a problem which has followed this group throughout its existence (*Arkzin*, 01.11.1993a, 22.07.1994; *Feral Tribune*, 12.09.1999, 23.01.2004; *Gong*, Autumn/Winter 2000; *Letak AŽKZ*, n.d.; *Novi list*, 14.02.2009, 07.04.2011; *Vjesnik*, 25.09.2006; *Zaposlena*, July 1998).

In addition to the specialised activities in the realm of peacetime violence against women, and in cooperation with other self-declared antinationalist feminist groups, the Autonomous Women's House Zagreb offered eg psychosocial support to war rape survivors, lobbied for the recognition of war rape as a war crime, conducted reproductive rights advocacy, and participated in the monitoring of the elections in Croatia through a gender lens (*Letter of Intentions*, 21.12.1992; Matijević-Vrsaljko, 2000; *Novi list*, 22.12.1998; *Peticija Svjetskoj konferenciji*, 10.12.1992; *Peticija Vladi i Saboru*, 1995; *Rezolucija*, 17.01.1993, *Reakcija na Appeal*, 05.07.1994; *Ženska izborna platforma*, n.d., February 1997, 17.04.1999; *Ženska mreža Hrvatske* website).

### *Women's Lobby Zagreb*

The increasing war violence and the growing number of (raped) refugee women arriving in Zagreb prompted the self-declared antinationalist feminists to commence new types of activities and initiatives, in addition to running the shelter for women and children victims of domestic violence. In November 1992 the Women's Lobby Zagreb was established as an informal body of feminists who were already active in the Antiwar Campaign Croatia, the Autonomous Women's House Zagreb, the Independent Union of Women and/or the newly set up Women's Infoteka. The goal of this political pressure group was to come together ad hoc to produce press releases on burning issues and do advocacy work on women's (reproductive) rights (*Arkzin*,

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124 A refugee woman could also receive accommodation in the shelter, but only if she was a survivor of domestic violence. By preserving the function of the Autonomous Women's House Zagreb as a shelter only for the women and children victims of domestic violence, the feminist activists – next to providing concrete assistance – wanted to make a clear political statement that the peacetime domestic violence did not stop or become less important in times of war (interviews with Zagreb9AN, Zagreb23AN, Zagreb7AN and Zagreb24AN).

01.04.1993a; *Chronique F eministe*, June/July 1993; *Letter of Intentions*, 21.12.1992; *Ve ernji list*, 28.03.1993; *Zagreb Women's Lobby leaflet*, n.d.).

As it would turn out, one part of the activities of the Women's Lobby Zagreb would consist of writing rectifications of articles and statements by Croatian journalists or the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists in which the work and/or the personas of the self-declared antinationalist feminists had been maligned. Some of these were the reactions to the text on the 'five witches' (*Globus*, 11.12.1992),<sup>125</sup> to the article which slandered Dubravka Ugrešić<sup>126</sup> and the Women's Lobby Zagreb because of their critical approach to Croatia (*Ve ernji list*, 02.03.1993), to the attack on the Autonomous Women's House and the Women's Lobby Zagreb due to their positioning on war rape (*Globus*, 22.01.1993), and to the press release of Kareta and BISER (*Appeal by Sarajevo Women's Groups*, 30.05.1994) in which Vesna Kesić<sup>127</sup> was defamed for her allegedly damaging and unethical treatment of the Sarajevo women's groups (*Globus*, 29.01.1993; *Ispravak*, 25.01.1993; *Novi Vjesnik*, 14.12.1992; *Odakle Dunji Ujević*, 09.03.1993; *Protest against the text published in "Globus"*, 12.12.1992; *Reakcija na Appeal*, 05.07.1994; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 13.12.1992; *Ve ernji list*, 15.03.1993).

Although according to the information in Barilar (2000) the Women's Lobby had ceased to exist in 1995, I was able to find only one document which addressed an activity of this group after 1993 – the reaction to the press release on Vesna Kesić's visit to Sarajevo (*Reakcija na Appeal*, 05.07.1994). When I asked Zagreb7AN in the interview about the pro-choice petition campaign of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists in the spring of 1995, she recalled that the Women's Lobby had still existed then. However, since its name was not among the groups which had participated in that campaign (*Arkzin*, 02.06.1995; *Peticija Vladi i Saboru*, 1995), I consider that the Women's Lobby Zagreb had been dissolved somewhere between July 1994 and 1995.

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125 See my short elaboration of this case in Chapter 4, in my analysis of the gathering 'Women in War'.

126 One of the accused five female intellectuals.

127 A Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist and one of the 'five witches'.

### *Center for Women War Victims*

The Center for Women War Victims was launched in November or December<sup>128</sup> 1992 by the activists of Women's Lobby Zagreb with the aim to create a group which would specifically and explicitly cater to the needs of female refugees regardless of their ethnicity. The founding of such an initiative made the Women's Lobby Zagreb the 1993 laureate of the Spanish peace prize 'Josep Vidal i Llecha' (*Arkzin*, 01.11.1993b; *Memorial per la pau* website). Although from the very beginning the activists were aware that some of the female refugees would also have the trauma of war rape, it was decided not to put the terms 'war rape' or 'sexual violence' in the name of the group. Thereby the activists wanted to avoid the potential stigmatisation of those who would receive support. Initially housed at the office premises of the Antiwar Campaign Croatia, after securing sufficient funding from foreign sources, the Center for Women War Victims moved to a larger location in March 1993.

This group would become the biggest feminist group in Zagreb by employing between 30 and 40 women, many of whom were refugees.<sup>129</sup> The provision of employment to refugee women was a conscious political decision in order to foster solidarity between refugee and non-refugee women, empower the refugee activists, as well as obtain easier access to and more trust within the refugee population. The activists of the Center for Women War Victims visited refugee camps to give psychosocial and legal counselling, facilitate (the setting up of) refugee self-help groups, distribute humanitarian and financial aid, as well as help refugees with their migration to third countries. For the female refugees who lived in private housing the group organised activities at its premises (*Arkzin*, 01.04.1993b; Belić, Borić and Kesić, 1994; Kesić, Janković and Bijelić, 2003; *Report on the status of the project*, 03.03.1993; interviews with Zagreb9AN, Zagreb3AN, Zagreb10ANA, Zagreb7AN and Zagreb24AN).

In addition to providing direct assistance to women, the Center for Women War Victims – separately or together with the other self-declared antinationalist feminist groups – lobbied for halting the war rapes and treating them as war crimes. The group stated these demands at diverse locations: eg at a vigil in Zagreb on 10 December 1992 (UN Human Rights Day), during the MADRE speakers tour in the

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128 It is unclear when exactly the foundations of this group were set up. Some documents state November 1992 (Kesić, 2003; *Letter of Intentions*, 21.12.1992; *Pismo namjera* 21.12.1992) and others December 1992 (*CŽŽR Opis*, n.d.; *Interim Report*, 23.08.1993; Kašić, 1994a). Sometimes both November and December are mentioned within a single document (*Interim Report*, September 1994). The group was formally registered in February 1993 (*Report on the status of the project*, 03.03.1993).

129 At one point, 33% of the activists were refugees (*Interim Report*, September 1994).

spring of 1993, and at the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June 1993 (*Interim Report*, 23.08.1993; Kašić, 1994c; *Mother Courage II*, March/April 1993; *Peticija Svjetskoj konferenciji*, 10.12.1992; *Rezolucija*, 17.01.1993; *Statement to the Global Tribunal*, 16.06.1993). At other times, the activists wrote articles, organised petitions, spoke at conferences abroad or gave interviews to foreign journalists (*Arkzin*, 10.02.1994; *Chronique Fèministe*, June/July 1993; Kašić, 1994d; Kesić, 1994; *Kruh & Ruže*, Spring 1994a; *New Directions for Women*, March/April 1993; *Petition Boutros Boutros-Ghali*, n.d.; *Village Voice*, 13.07.1993).

After the end of the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, the work with the remaining refugee population in the Zagreb area was gradually reduced. Due to the departure of refugees and the significant decrease of the foreign funds for such activities, the Center for Women War Victims increasingly started to focus on the position of women in peacetime. The group conducted advocacy work on violence against women and trafficking in women, offered one-on-one counselling to women victims of violence, worked on community and trust building in the parts of Croatia which had been heavily affected by the war, actively participated in the Women's Network Croatia and in the different ad hoc women's coalitions in the country, and gave trainings to women's groups both in Croatia and elsewhere in the post-Yugoslav region.

For the purpose of maintaining the awareness of the position of the (raped) women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Center for Women War Victims cooperated with the American playwright Eve Ensler. This cooperation resulted in the autumn of 1996 in the play *Necessary Targets*, which was based on war rape stories from Bosnia and Herzegovina and staged on Broadway. During the war in Kosovo in 1999 several activists went to Albania to transfer their experiences to some of the local women's groups which worked with the Kosovar Albanian refugees. With the exception of the work with refugees, the other activities of the group still went on in 2009 (*Arkzin*, 11.04.1997; Belamarić and Mamula, 2000; *Centar za žene žrtve rata* website; *EIDHR Newsletter*, Winter 1999; *Final report Pakrac*, August 1997; Mamula and Pamuković, 2003; Mamula and Kolarec, 2001; *Novi list*, 21.04.2000; *Slobodna Bosna*, 27.06.1998; *The New York Times*, 13.10.1996; *The New Yorker*, 11.03.2002; *Večernji list*, 29.07.1998; *Zarez*, 09.07.1999).

### *Women's Information and Documentation Center (Women's Infoteka)*

The Women's Infoteka was founded in November 1992. Its purpose was to gather and produce information about and for the (feminist) women's groups, ie be a resource centre on gender issues (*Zapisnik*, 05.11.1992). Therefore, the group created a database of the women's (feminist) groups in Croatia, started to publish the feminist magazine *Kruh & Ruže*<sup>130</sup> in the autumn of 1993, opened a public feminist library and archive, made monthly press clipping collections on women's issues from the major Croatian dailies, and published local and foreign feminist literature: eg the posthumous collection of Lydia Sklevicky's texts (Sklevicky, 1996) and the classical work of Judith Lewis Herman on trauma (Lewis Herman, 1996). The Women's Infoteka also organised (international) seminars and conferences on different topics, such as: women's and feminist movements in post-socialist countries, class differences in feminism, women and politics, and women in history.

This group played an important role in the first phase of the development of the electronic communication between the women's activists in the post-Yugoslav region through *ZaMir BBS*.<sup>131</sup> The American feminist Kathryn Turnipseed started to work with the Women's Infoteka in 1994 – and later with B.a.B.e. and the Center for Women War Victims – to set up the project 'Electronic Witches'. In the scope of this project she gave computer trainings to women's (feminist) activists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia proper, and helped them obtain computers and modems. After the war years, in addition to its documentation and information activities, the Women's Infoteka participated in the Women's Network Croatia and the different ad hoc coalitions of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster. Finally, the group also produced gender analyses of the programmes of the Croatian political parties, the electoral process and the election results (*Arkzin*, December 1993; Czegledy, 1995; Knežević and Damjanović, 1998; Knežević and Zaborski-Čunović, 2000; *Kruh & Ruže*, 2003; *Lol@ Press*, 2002; Turnipseed, 1996).

The Women's Infoteka still functioned in early 2009, but I could only access its library collection. The archival materials were inaccessible to the public because of the move to a new office space. It turned out later that by then there had already been a serious decline in the group's activities: the only publication produced that year was the 35<sup>th</sup> issue of *Kruh & Ruže*. Somewhere in 2011 the group's website stopped functioning. In an article from January 2012 its former long-standing director wrote that the group had ceased to exist (*H-alter*, 03.03.2011; *Identitet*, 24.01.2012).

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130 *Bread & Roses*, named after the female textile workers' strike in Massachusetts (USA) in 1912.

131 See footnote 89.

*B.a.B.e.*

B.a.B.e. was established in April 1994 by feminists already active in the Women's Lobby Zagreb. The goal of B.a.B.e. was to specialise in legal and advocacy issues aiming at the improvement of the position of women in the society. Before the catchy acronym was invented,<sup>132</sup> the group had signed its documents with 'Zagreb Group for Women's Human Rights'. Afterwards its full name became B.a.B.e. Women's Human Rights Group. The construction 'women's human rights' was a novelty at the time. It had been only in June 1993, at the 'Vienna World Conference of Human Rights', that women's rights had been recognised as 'inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights' (*Vienna Declaration*, 1993, §18).

B.a.B.e. advocated in support of women's reproductive rights and the rights of women refugees in Croatia, as well as against violence against women. The group analysed laws and media contents from a gender perspective, monitored the status of women's human rights in Croatia and protested against their violations, travelled to different parts of the post-Yugoslav region to train women's groups on this topic, and published relevant educational brochures. In 1995 it organised the attendance of the Croatian NGO delegation to the NGO Forum at the 'Fourth UN World Conference on Women' in Beijing (*16 Days of Activism*, January 1998; *Arkzin*, February 1994, 05.08.1994; *Belić*, 2004; *Kruh & Ruže*, Spring 1994b; *Letak B.a.B.e.*, n.d.; Magelssen and Sarnavka, 1998; *Primjedbe na nacrt prijedloga*, 01.09.1995; *Status ženskih prava*, Autumn/Winter 2000; *Večernji list*, 26.05.1995).

During the war in Kosovo and the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia B.a.B.e. produced critical statements on the war rapes in Kosovo, the treatment of the Kosovo refugees, and the NATO bombing. The group accused the international community, UNHCR and Croatia of not doing enough to ensure the safety and the well-being of the refugees, and rebuked Croatia for its generous assistance to NATO. Whereas B.a.B.e. disapproved of any use of military force (including that by NATO), the group expressed the hope that Milošević would be thereby stopped. Moreover, it mentioned the existence of antiwar groups in Belgrade since 1991 and stated to be proud to have cooperated with some of them. Finally, B.a.B.e explicitly contextualised the war rapes in Kosovo as part of the Serb strategy of ethnic cleansing,

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132 In the book published on the occasion of the group's tenth anniversary, Kesić (2004) recalled the brainstorm process which had led to Aida Bagić's invention of the name 'B.a.B.e.'. Her suggestion had been readily embraced since it represented a subversion of the word 'Babe' which in Croatian (and, I would add, in Bosnian and Serbian, too) referred to old women in a derogatory manner and in English to a young and attractive woman. The special added value of the proposal was that as an acronym it denoted the same in both Croatian and English: 'Be active, Be emancipated'.

but added that the Serb soldiers were not the only rapists and that rape was a daily reality for women even in peacetime (*Izjava povodom zračnih napada*, n.d.; *Statement on Treatment of Kosovo Refugees*, 07.05.1999; *Statment [sic] Regarding Mass Rapes*, 29.04.1999).

While B.a.B.e. was one of the initiators of Women's Network Croatia (and the ad hoc coalitions), it left the Network in 2004. This move was caused by a disagreement regarding the support which the coordinator of the network had allegedly offered to the only female candidate at the 2004 Croatian presidential elections. In B.a.B.e.'s view, this support had compromised the independent and neutral positioning of Women's Network Croatia (*Novi list*, 21.10.2004, 31.10.2004; *Vjesnik*, 22.10.2004a, 22.10.2004b).<sup>133</sup>

### *Centre for Women's Studies*

February 1995 saw the launching of the Centre for Women's Studies – three years later than its Belgrade counterpart. This time lag had probably to do with the great demand for psychosocial and humanitarian assistance which the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia had imposed on the Zagreb feminists. The Centre for Women's Studies was a spin-off group of the Women's Infoteka and its aim was to 'approach women's issues from a feminist perspective' (*Women's Studies Project*, n.d.), link theoretical, activist and artistic feminism, and raise public awareness of the position of women.

The realisation of this goal was operationalised by doing research, publishing books and the feminist magazine *Treća*, running a feminist library, as well as organising one-year educational programmes in women's studies,<sup>134</sup> (international) conferences, seminars and workshops. The Center for Women's Studies was, in fact, the first interdisciplinary educational institution in Croatia in the field of women's studies.<sup>135</sup> As Barada et al. (2003) have pointed out, its activities had been based on the work of the Zagreb pre-war academic initiative Woman and Society, the activist work from the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the experience of cooperation and networking with feminists from the other parts of the (post-)Yugoslav region.

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133 This dispute resembles the earlier addressed one in Women's Help Now on the eve of the Croatian local elections in April 1990.

134 I followed this programme in the 1999/2000 academic year.

135 In October 1997 the Centre for Peace Studies from Zagreb started a similar educational programme in peace studies. I attended this programme, too, in the academic year 1999/2000.

The wide range of issues which the Centre for Women's Studies has addressed included violence against women, gender analysis of language, women in politics, women's artistic practices, women in the economy, women in civil initiatives, women in socialism, women and power, and women in philosophy. Besides this, the group participated in the different women's ad hoc coalitions and in 2009 it was still a member of the Women's Network Croatia. Still, despite this broad expertise and the presence of staff and lecturers who held or still hold university positions, the Centre for Women's Studies has been unable to become integrated in the official Croatian educational system and its certificates are still not recognised by the Croatian authorities (*Annual Report 2000*, n.d.; *Arkzin*, 10.02.1995; Barada et al., 2003; Barilar, 2000; Dijanić, 2004; *Centar za ženske studije Zagreb* website).

The presence of prominent self-declared antinationalist feminists among the Centre's main members notwithstanding, the topics 'nationalism' and 'war' appear to have received only limited and not always very explicit attention in the curricula between 1995 and 2000. This can be inferred from the leaflets in which the courses in women's studies were announced. The experimental programme (February–June 1995) stated the themes 'Women, nationalism and war', 'Women and rituals (socialist and nationalist)', and 'Women and abuse: sexual, militarist and societal'. The curriculum for the academic 1996/1997 contained the topic 'Women and abuse: sexual, militarist and societal',<sup>136</sup> the one for 1997/1998 announced the cryptic 'Insights about the recent past', whereas the curriculum for 1999/2000 listed the theme 'Women's war writing and exile' (*Ženski studiji '95*, n.d.; *Ženski studiji 1995–1996*, 05.09.2001; *Ženski studiji 1996–1997*, n.d.; *Ženski studiji 1997–1998*, n.d.; *Ženski studiji 1998–1999*, n.d.; *Ženski studiji 1999–2000*, n.d.).

It is possible that nationalism and war violence were more extensively and overtly addressed during the lectures than what the leaflets suggest. Unfortunately, unlike in the case of the Belgrade Women's Studies Center, I could not explore this seeming absence in more detail since it was one of the post-fieldwork discoveries. I would propose, nevertheless, that the lack of more explicit presence of these two topic in the printed materials (and the lectures) was due to insecurity and inexperience regarding how to refer to the then very recent and sensitive violent past in Croatia.

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136 It is possible that the curriculum for the 1995/1996 academic year, just like the preceding and the successive one, also contained the topic 'Women and abuse: sexual, militarist and societal' as part of the course 'Feminist approach to violence against women'. I do not know for certain because a more detailed list of the topics which were to be addressed in that academic year was unavailable.

## CHAPTER THREE

In October 1996 the Centre for Women's Studies organised the big international conference 'Women and the Politics of Peace' in Zagreb, which was dedicated to the participation of women in war resistance and peacebuilding. Next to participants from other conflict regions in the world, women from other post-Yugoslav countries were present as well. However, none of the speakers belonged to the Zagreb (or Belgrade) so-called nationalist feminist cluster. This exclusion has continued throughout the years. With the exception of two feminists, none of the (guest) lecturers at the Centre would come from or be related to the other Zagreb feminist cluster (*Arkzin*, 08.11.1996; *Centar za ženske studije Zagreb* website; Kašić, 1997; *Program konferencije*, n.d.; *Ženskostudijski spomenar*, n.d.).

The cooperation between the group and one so-called nationalist feminist is not that surprising given that it concerned the feminist who was described by some of my respondents as a bridge between the two clusters and a person who had abandoned her former war-related positionings (interviews with Zagreb22EXT, Zagreb11AN and Belgrade4AN). Much more striking is the collaboration with one Zagreb university professor who had worked during the war years with Rampart of Love and Women's Help Now. The peculiar character of this occurrence becomes more obvious if one considers that in 1993 the Center for Women War Victims – some of whose activists had been also members of the Centre for Women's Studies – had expressed its unwillingness to work with the professor in question. This was due to her criticism of the 'five witches' and her affiliation with Rampart of Love – a group which had participated earlier in the denouncement of the Center for Women War Victims (*Pismo Hrvatskom humanitarnom forumu*, 07.06.1993).

Another in this sense remarkable cooperation is that which the Centre for Women's Studies established in the second half of the 1990s with several scholars from the Zagreb-based state academic institution Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research. In the early war-time publications of some of these academics (see eg in Čale Feldman, Prica and Senjković, 1993) the expressed war-related positionings on perpetrators and victims sometimes resembled those of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. This shows a certain inconsistency in the Centre for Women's Studies' criteria for (re)establishment of collaboration, ie the not per se decisive influence of one's war-time positionings on that choice. I will return to this issue in Chapter 6.

## Belgrade groups

### *Woman and Society*

The establishment of the Zagreb academic initiative Woman and Society in 1979 and the enthusiasm of its members inspired some women in Belgrade to set up a similar initiative with almost the same name – Feminist Group Woman and Society – in 1980. Whereas the Zagreb Woman and Society was more institutionalised by virtue of being a section of the Sociologist Association of Croatia, the Belgrade one was an informal initiative which has never been registered. During the get-togethers, which initially took place in private apartments, feminist literature was discussed and personal experiences were shared. These encounters served, thus, as a platform for consciousness-raising and self-help alike.

A bit later the need was felt to present feminist ideas to a broader audience and in the form of open public debates. The popular Student Cultural Centre was chosen as the location of these debates – the same setting which in 1978 had hosted the international feminist conference ‘Comrade (m/f) Woman’. The covered topics were very diverse: eg women’s writing, images of men and women in the media, family rituals around the first menstruation, sexuality (including sessions on the two groundbreaking American *Hite Reports*), women and crime, the position of women in the system of self-management, women’s health, violence against women, women and art, abortion, and women and the political left. Since the debates were part of the programme of this established cultural institution, they, too, were regularly announced in the main Belgrade daily *Politika*.

Analogous to the Zagreb Woman and Society, wherein some men participated as well, its Belgrade counterpart was initially also open to men. This was to change in the second phase of its existence, after the two initial organisers had withdrawn due to feeling that they had exhausted their personal organisational capacities and the existing format of the debates. In 1986 the organisation of the activities went into the hands of a feminist who was a proponent of women-only activities. It would be in this phase that next to the continuation of the public and private discussions, increasing awareness would be raised of the issues of female homosexuality and (domestic) violence against women, including the setting up in March 1990 of an SOS hotline for women and children victims of violence. This development in the second half of the 1980s belonged to a broader trend in Yugoslav feminism which had earlier led to the establishment of such an SOS hotline in Zagreb in 1988 and in Ljubljana in 1989.

In this period the activists of the Belgrade Woman and Society also started conducting street surveys in order to obtain more information on the position of

women, especially those whom they did not manage to reach through the largely intellectual public debates. Just like the Zagreb feminists in the late 1980s, the Belgrade ones conducted groundbreaking work in exposing the myths about domestic violence and violence against women in general, as well as in raising the public awareness of the existence of those problems in Yugoslavia – contrary to the claims of the state authorities (Benderly, 1994; *Borba*, 10.03.1990; *Conexions*, 1990; *Danas*, 28.02.1989; *Feministkinje protiv nasilja nad ženama*, n.d.; *Praktična žena*, 10.03.1990; *Večernje novosti*, 24.02.1990; Vušković and Trivunac, 1998; interviews with Belgrade15N, Belgrade13AN, Belgrade3AN and Belgrade4AN).

In anticipation of the first multiparty elections in Serbia in December 1990 and the increasing pronatalist discourses in the public sphere, Woman and Society sent out a public appeal. The group warned that in ‘times of social and economic turbulence the inequality of women is constantly hushed up in the name of the “more important” problems’ (*Apel demokratskoj javnosti*, August 1990). Furthermore, the political parties were called upon to pay more attention to the position of women, and women were encouraged to boycott those parties whose programmes did not attend to their needs. Finally, the group demanded that the basic women’s right to decide upon childbirth was to be respected and that ‘none of the so-called interests of the Nation, State, [and] Church should dare endanger this right’ (ibid).

The comparison of this appeal with the declaration of the ‘Women’s Assembly of Croatia’ written several months later (*Declaration*, 16.12.1990) yields a strong resemblance. The similarity of the two texts points to the analogies between the socio-economic and political situations in Croatia and Serbia at the time,<sup>137</sup> the cooperation and exchange which existed between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, and to their shared positioning on the position of women and the right ways to address it. Furthermore, in both documents there is an observable absence of explicit mention of nationalism, avoidance of referring to the secessionist tendencies in Yugoslavia and the calls for restructuring of the federation, and a (strategically useful) conceptualisation of women as a general category of people who suffer due to their gender and regardless of their ethnic and political affiliation.

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137 Ivana Balen – a feminist who was active in both Belgrade and Zagreb – in 1990 drew up a good comparative analysis of the programmes of the then newly established political parties in Croatia and Serbia. She showed that in both Yugoslav republics the majority of the parties had accentuated the ethnic issues and either fully neglected women or spoken about them in the context of contributing to ethnic, demographic and moral restoration (*Nove omladinske novine*, 20.05.1990). Additional information on the ethnic and gender aspects of the political programmes in Serbia – which corroborates Balen’s analysis – can be obtained from the interview with the Belgrade feminists Nadežda Četković and Sonja Drljević (*Intervju*, 23.11.1990).

In late 1990 and early 1991 the members of Woman and Society started establishing or becoming involved in other formal and informal feminist and/or antiwar groups. Consequently, the group would silently – since it had never been registered – cease to exist after 1991. The documents produced by its (former) members, now active in other feminist and/or antiwar groups, would no longer be signed with the name Woman and Society, but with the name(s) of the new groups.

### *SOS Hotline*

The SOS Hotline, set up by activists of Woman and Society, had operated as an informal initiative for almost two years before it was registered as an NGO in November 1992. Similarly to the Zagreb SOS Hotline, which was initially housed in a space allocated to the Union of the Socialist Youth of Croatia, the Belgrade SOS Hotline could work in the beginning in the Home of Youth – an educational and cultural centre belonging to the Union of the Socialist Youth of Serbia. In those times of political turbulence, when the disappearance of the socialist institutions also meant (a temporary) opening up of some previously unimaginable possibilities, the SOS Hotline was allowed to use the office of the director of the Home of Youth after the end of the work day. This situation lasted only for half a year. The need for a more appropriate, permanent and safe housing for the SOS Hotline, which would also include a shelter for women and children victims of violence, made the activists repeatedly write to the city authorities to ask for such a space (*SOS bilten*, August 1990; Četković, 1998b; *Pismo predsedniku Skupštine grada*, 09.08.1990; *SOS telefon Beograd* website).

This need became even more pressing after the activists had to move twice within the Home of Youth, but especially after the hotline's premises were broken into and rummaged through. According to Četković's (1998b) short reference to this incident, this followed a discussion on the domestic violence which the men active in the Serb paramilitary units in Croatia committed upon their return to Serbia. In 1992 the SOS Hotline was given space owned by the City of Belgrade thanks to then vice-president of the city council Nada Popović-Perišić. Despite her academic feminist work and participation in the activities of Woman and Society, some of the activists felt uncomfortable with this deed because of her membership in Milošević's party. The group kept that space eventually, while the uneasiness seems to have been resolved by obtaining additional space from a local council run by the opposition, as well as by insisting on the group's autonomy and freedom from political pressures (Četković, 1998b; Mladenović, 1995; *Report*, January 1994; Zaharijević, 2007; interview with Ljubljana3EXT).

Towards the second half of 1990 it became obvious that the women who worked on the SOS Hotline (the former activists of Woman and Society, plus the newly admitted volunteers) held different views on the worsening political situation in Yugoslavia and the prominence of the discourse of ethnic grievances. These diverse positionings within the group complicated the production of public statements on topics different from the protection of women's rights in general. To solve this problem it was decided that the hotline would only (co-)produce general statements on women's rights and violence against women, without linking them to ethnic issues and the broader political context.

This choice also benefited the hotline's function as a service provider for all women victims of violence regardless of their political affiliation. The feminists who wanted to connect women's issues to other political issues established in June 1990 the informal group Belgrade Women's Lobby.<sup>138</sup> Those who were active in the SOS Hotline and the Women's Lobby alike were to use a different discourse in their public statements depending on which group they represented at the concrete moment (Ćetković, 1998b; Zaharijević, 2007; interviews with Belgrade13AN, Belgrade3AN, Belgrade5AN and Belgrade6AN).

It seems, however, that the tensions in the hotline continued. Without giving any further details, Mladenović and Litričin (1993:117) have described them – and the way they had been dealt with – as follows:

Despite the fact that the SOS group had a deliberately non-nationalist policy from the beginning, some volunteers were unable to keep their nationalist feelings out of their SOS work. Several attempts were made to reconcile the opposing viewpoints; after that some of the women left and some of them stayed and remained silent.

One Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist rejected this suggestion of nationalism-related frictions within the group and spoke of leadership conflicts, but two other respondents from the same cluster recalled the existence of differences in one's awareness of Serbia's foremost responsibility for the wars (interviews with Belgrade3AN, Belgrade5AN and Belgrade14AN). One cannot detect, though, such variations in the group's public reports and co-signed statements which were produced around the same time as the above essay of Mladenović and Litričin (1993). These

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138 Ćetković (1998a) linked the establishment of the Belgrade Women's Lobby to the creation of the Minimal Programme of Women's Demands – the group's programme platform – in September 1990. I have, however, found two documents dated June 1990 which were co-signed by this group (*Peticija povodom donošenja zakona*, June 1990; *Peticija povodom Rezolucije*, June 1990).

documents depict the SOS Hotline as an antiwar group which did not divide women on the basis of ethnicity and worked against nationalism (*Feministkinje Beograda govore*, 26.12.1992; *Niko nas nije pitao!*, 01.03.1993; *Report from December 1992 to December 1993*, January 1994; *SOS Hotline*, 08.03.1993). Belgrade5AN hinted in the interview at this internal presence and external absence of disagreement by saying that some members 'did not have for sure the political clarity and sharpness regarding the war. It [the positioning] was not really homogenised, but the platform was indisputable'.

Next to the provision of phone counselling, the group offered to the women survivors of violence direct support in dealing with the relevant state bodies, such as the police and the medical institutions, and provided humanitarian, psychosocial and other assistance to women and children in refugee camps. Different from their Zagreb counterpart, the Belgrade SOS Hotline did not initially possess any premises where it could shelter the women and children in need. In the most serious cases the activists offered temporary housing either in their own homes or gathered money to put the woman (and her child/ren) in a hotel. From April 1994 onward, thanks to foreign donations, the group started renting private accommodation where it could offer longer term housing and provide better assistance (Ćetković, 1998c; Mladenović, 1995; Mladenović and Matijašević, 1996; Stanojević, 1993).

In December 1992 a special subgroup was formed within the SOS Hotline whose focus was on the women survivors of sexual war violence. The establishment of this subgroup – whose initial name was Group for Women Raped in War – was triggered by the visit of Swiss women's activists in November 1992. They had come to Belgrade to inquire about the position and treatment of raped women in the refugee camps and medical institutions. Due to the observed lack of psychosocial assistance to this specific group of refugees, the Swiss activists agreed to provide financial support and know-how so that the activists of the SOS Hotline could purchase office premises and establish a centre for women who had survived (war-related) sexual violence. This led to the opening of the Autonomous Women's Center Against Sexual Violence on 10 December 1993 – the symbolic Human Rights Day (Ćetković, 1998b; Mladenović, 1995; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 27–28.03.1993; *Politika*, 13.12.1992; *Tages-Anzeiger*, 29.03.1993). Although the Center started as a part of the SOS Hotline, 'by the end of the 1990s' (*SOS telefon Beograd website*)<sup>139</sup> it had become detached from it and registered as a separate group. Given that very soon after its establishment its activists started signing their documents and publications only with the name of the Center (eg

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139 I could not find a more precise temporal indication in the data which I had at my disposal. The various information from the Autonomous Women's Center only state its establishment in December 1993 (*Autonomni ženski centar website*; *Deset godina*, 2003).

Ćetković et al., 1995; *Rad u ratno doba*, May/June 1994), I will elaborate on this group separately in the last section of this chapter.

The SOS Hotline maintained throughout the 1990s (and the 2000s) its assistance to women and children victims of violence through phone and face-to-face counselling, as well as provision of safe accommodation, legal help and support in the communication with the state institutions. In April 1997 it initiated the creation of the Network against Male Violence against Women. This network gathered groups and individuals mostly from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but also some from the neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Non-nationalism was one of the Network's explicitly stated political principles to which all (potential) members were required to subscribe. In addition, the Network accentuated its boundary transgression character by stating that it did not have language or territorial limitations (*Bilten Mreže*, April 1997; Mladenović and Protić, 1995b; Protić, 1999; *Osnivački dokument*, June 1997; *SOS telefon Beograd* website).

### *Belgrade Women's Lobby*

As I mentioned in the preceding section, the Belgrade Women's Lobby was launched in June 1990 out of the need of some members of the SOS Hotline to articulate public positionings which would address the political situation in Yugoslavia. Just like the Women's Lobby Zagreb established two years later, the Belgrade one was an ad hoc informal advocacy group which wrote public statements against different women-unfriendly practices and demanded the setting up of women-friendly ones.

The name Belgrade Women's Lobby appeared for the first time on two petitions co-authored with the Feminist Group Belgrade<sup>140</sup> and some small political parties (*Peticija povodom donošenja zakona*, June 1990; *Peticija povodom Rezolucije*, June 1990). The first petition was against the passing of the law on family planning. The signatories demanded broad access to contraceptives and public campaigns to raise the awareness of the existence of this form of family planning, easier access to abortion for minors, and full state subsidy of the abortion costs. In the second petition the draft resolution for demographic restoration of Serbia was criticised since it discriminated against unmarried people, those without children, and those from the ethnic groups with a higher birth rate (read: Albanians and Roma). According to Milić (1994b), the several tens of thousands collected signatures prevented the passing of the resolution.

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140 There has not been any Belgrade feminist group with this name. I assume, therefore, that this is an instance of *lapsus calami* and that the Belgrade group in question was the Feminist Group Woman and Society.

In September 1990 the Belgrade Women's Lobby produced two documents. The first contained amendments to the draft constitution of Serbia. The group rebuked the proposed constitution for its insufficient democratic character, ie the disregard for women's rights and the treatment of women as second class citizens. The activists' demands included changes ensuring a better treatment of the victims of violence during the court procedures, equality of gays, lesbians, and heterosexual women and men, a stipulation that the freedom of choice regarding child birth was a woman's right instead of a human right, and a guaranteed freedom from violence against women and children.

The second document was the 'Minimal Programme of Women's Demands.' It called on the political parties – which at that time were preparing for the forthcoming elections – to include a gender perspective in their analyses and programmes, as well as a set of demands for improving the situation of women.<sup>141</sup> The adjective 'minimal' notwithstanding, those demands required radical societal changes: an end to gender-based discrimination in the labour market, shortening of the work day so that both men and women could equally share the domestic tasks, change of the patriarchal and sexist educational system and school curricula, full respect for women's right to decide upon childbirth, equal participation of both parents in the process of parenting, making violence against women visible, criminalisation of marital rape, improvement of the health care for women, decriminalisation of sex work, and the setting up of a Ministry for women's issues (Ćetković et al. 1995; Ćetković, 1998d).

Some of the later statements of the Belgrade Women's Lobby were an appeal for a peaceful solution to the Yugoslav crisis (March 1991; together with Woman and Society), a protest against the patriarchal and warmongering messages in the school textbooks in Serbia (August 1991), a reminder of what war crimes are – including their punishable character – and a warning against committing them (October 1991; together with the Women's Parliament),<sup>142</sup> an appeal to the citizens of Serbia for

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141 Although the list of demands was submitted to all political parties, only two smaller ones incorporated it in their programmes (*Intervju*, 23.11.1990).

142 The Women's Parliament was launched on 8 March 1991 by the Belgrade Women's Lobby, the Women's Party and Woman and Society, in reaction to the tiny percentage of elected women in the Serbian parliament. Led by the idea that there was no democratic politics without women's participation, the initiators gathered women active in NGOs, female politicians from various parties, and individual women. The group, which served as a think tank and a monitoring and advocacy body, was dissolved by mid-1993, mainly because of the shift in its work priorities. Due to the increase of the war violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, some members of the Women's Parliament intensified their work in groups such as the Centre for Antiwar Action and Women in Black. Others – members of political parties – left because of the disbandment or restructuring of those parties (Imširović, 1998; *Poziv na osnivački sastanak*, 02.02.1991).

solidarity with the (mostly female) refugee population in the country (March 1994), a letter to Milošević not to sign the new and much more restrictive abortion law (May 1994),<sup>143</sup> a rebuke of the Serbian regime's violence against the Kosovar Albanians (May 1998; together with the Autonomous Women Center and Women in Black) and in August 1998 a protest against the nationalist pro-life campaign for increasing the birth rate in Serbia (Četković, 1998d; Četković et al., 1993a; *Predsedniku Republike Srbije*, May 1994; *Rat na Kosovu – logika patrijarhata*, May 1998; *Žene za mir*, March 1991).

The last text of this group which I came across was published in April 2000 (in: *Republika*, 01–15.04.2000). The Belgrade Women's Lobby had probably ceased to exist sometime that year.

### *Women's Party (ŽEST)*

The Women's Party<sup>144</sup> or ŽEST was officially registered in October 1990, two months before the first multiparty elections in Serbia. As a word, ŽEST meant strength or force, while as an acronym it stood for Žene (Women), Etika (Ethics), Solidarnost (Solidarity) and Tolerancija (Tolerance). According to Milić (1998), the Women's Party was built upon the tradition of the first Women's Party in Serbia, which had been established in 1927 to advocate implementation of female suffrage. This right had been announced in the constitution of the Kingdom of [male] Serbs, [male] Croats and [male] Slovenes<sup>145</sup> from 1920, but never enacted. Whereas the majority of its members were women – some of whom Belgrade feminists – ŽEST had some male membership as well.

The Women's Party eventually did not participate in the local and parliamentary elections in December 1990 because it was unable to create candidate lists in such a short time. By way of experiment it attempted to take part in the presidential elections. However, its proposal was rejected as illegitimate by the court

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143 In Zajović et al. (1994) a retyped version of this letter has been published and attributed to the Women's Parliament. This is probably a mistake since one of the initiators and most active members of the Women's Parliament has stated elsewhere that the group had ceased to exist in 1993 (Imširović, 1998). As to the abortion law in question, Milošević refused to sign it and returned it to the Serbian parliament. It remains unknown to which extent his decision was guided by the letter of the Belgrade feminists. Lilly and Irvine (2002) note the possibility that he might have been persuaded by his wife, Mirjana Marković.

144 In the strict sense, the Women's Party was not a women's group, but I include it in the analysis and refer to it as a group since it has been treated as such by those who have written about it or mentioned it in their writings (Cockburn, 1991; Milić, 1998; Mladenović and Litričin, 1993), as well as by my respondents in their interview narratives.

145 For the explanation of my use of '[male]' in this context, see footnote 64.

in charge since it concerned a shared candidacy of one female and one male party member – a choice made in the spirit of promoting a partnership of women and men in all spheres. The members of the party seem to have been aware that even if they had participated in the elections, their chances of any electoral success would have been quite slim. They had hoped, nevertheless, that their presence in the media would empower women. Next to this, the Women's Party wanted to make the other parties both pay more attention to the position of women and put forth female candidates so that women would become more present and more visible in the official politics. This was indeed the case to a certain extent during the election campaign, but did not have a lasting effect (Cockburn, 1991; Milić, 1998; *Vreme*, 14.01.1991; interview with Belgrade2N).

After the for women catastrophic results of the 1990 parliamentary elections (only 1.6% of the elected parliamentarians were female), the Women's Party – together with the Belgrade Women's Lobby and Woman and Society – submitted to the Serbian parliament a demand for installing a Ministry of Women, and wrote a protest statement after the demand was rejected (*Narodnoj skupštini Republike Srbije*, 21.01.1991, 18.02.1991). In reaction to the increasing prominence of the discourse of interethnic hatred all over Yugoslavia, the party appealed to all citizens not to allow their fear, insecurity, and parental and ethnic feelings be manipulated for warmongering purposes (*Apel*, 31.01.1991).

The later activities of the Women's Party included the action 'A Farewell to Arms'<sup>146</sup> to replace violent toys with non-violent alternatives, the debate for recognition of unpaid female domestic labour, the joint advocacy with the SOS Hotline and the Women's Parliament for changes in the marriage law, and the demand addressed to the parliaments of all Yugoslav republics and to the federal one to end the armed violence by non-violent negotiations which would include women.<sup>147</sup> In July 1991 the party was one of the founders of the Centre for Antiwar Action – the Belgrade counterpart of the Antiwar Campaign Croatia (*Gradskom sekretarijatu za pravosuđe*, 14.06.1991; *Pismo skupštinama*, 05.07.1991; *Poziv na forum*, 10.04.1991; *Poziv na učešće*, n.d.; *Republika*, 01–15.09.1991). The last document of the Women's Party which I found was a letter to the Serbian parliamentarians from October 1991 demanding their recognition of accountability for the war in Yugoslavia and calling on them to stop the war (*Poslanicama Skupštine Srbije*, 31.10.1991).

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146 Probably inspired by the title of Ernest Hemingway's book.

147 The need to involve women in peace negotiations was recognised at the UN level in October 2000 by the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000).

In its Charter of Intentions, next to outlining its determination to work against all forms of discrimination and authoritarian power, and on the democratisation of society and the improvement of the quality of life, the Women's Party outlined its views on the political situation in Yugoslavia. In the section titled 'For peace, tolerance and cooperation between the nations and ethnic groups' the party criticised the fixation on ethnic issues whereby they were conceptualised as detached from all other concerns. Since such a conceptualisation was seen as leading to bloody interethnic clashes and civil wars, the Women's Party was firmly determined to resolve these issues by approaching them as concrete political, economic, social and cultural issues. Next to expressing its protest against 'national-chauvinist madness and hatred' in general, the party appealed to women to unite and mobilise against all activities which would endanger peace and security (*Povelja o namerama*, n.d.).

So, although the Women's Party spoke of partnership of women and men in all areas, when it came to the questions of peace and security, it particularly appealed to women and conceptualised them as more prone to non-violence. Incoherence can be observed also with regard to its antiwar and non-violent orientation. As Adriana Zaharijević (2007) has remarked, the Charter of Intentions in one place contained a positioning which largely resembled one of the two justifications which Milošević had given at the beginning of the 1990s for his politics of violence – the importance of preserving Yugoslavia within its federal borders.<sup>148</sup> The paragraph in question read as follows:

The party will not compromise in opposing and aiming at disclosing each attempt to solve the interethnic relations in a violent and intolerant manner, regardless of who its agents are, and it will in the same way oppose each attempt to attack and breach the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and its republics (*Povelja o namerama*, n.d.).

This leads to the question why the Women's Party froze its work in late 1991.<sup>149</sup> In several co-authored texts Lepa Mladenović has stated – without elaborating further – that the party had been unable to proceed with its activities because of nationalism-related conflicts (Hughes and Mladenović, 1995; Hughes, Mladenović and Mršević, 1995; Mladenović and Hughes, 2000; Mladenović and Litričin, 1993, 1998). However,

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148 The other justification was the protection of Serbs all over Yugoslavia (Vasiljević, 2008; Zaharijević, 2007).

149 It is not fully clear when the disbandment took place exactly. Milić (1998) situated it in the summer of 1991, but I have found a letter written by the Women's Party dated October 1991 (*Poslanicama Skupštine Srbije*, 31.10.1991). Therefore I use 'late 1991' as a temporal indication.

none of my respondents, including the self-declared antinationalist ones who had been members of the Women's Party, could confirm that there had been such conflicts and that nationalism had caused its disbandment. Neither could I find an organisational document or a newspaper article in support of the above claim. When I asked in the interviews the authors of the first text wherein this claim had appeared (Mladenović and Litričin, 1993) to elaborate upon it with concrete examples, they seemed perplexed and could not remember any.

None of the possible reasons for the disbandment of the Women's Party which I came across was war-related: disagreement regarding whether to run for the 1990 elections in coalition with other political parties or independently, insufficient financial means and organisational capacities, lack of willingness to run for the elections, fatigue of the key members, and personal conflicts (Milić, 1996, 1998; interviews with Belgrade16N, Belgrade15N, Belgrade2N, Belgrade3AN and Belgrade4AN). Zaharijević (2007:246) is the only author who has shed some light on this issue by suggesting that the aforementioned paragraph from the Charter of Intentions might have divided the members of the Women's Party: '[I]t is almost certain that not everybody could support [it] easily'. Unfortunately, due to my late discovery of Zaharijević's article and the paragraph in question, I was unable to check whether my respondents would link that positioning of the Women's Party to the alleged nationalism-related conflicts in the group. I suggest, therefore, that the claim that nationalism led to the freezing of its activities be taken with a grain of salt.

### *Women's Studies Center*<sup>150</sup>

In 1991 some members of Woman and Society, two feminists in particular, started working on setting up a women's studies programme. This move, due to the pressing need for knowledge which recognised women as societal actors, had been one of the resolutions of the 'Third Yugoslav Feminist Gathering' in 1990 (*Zaključci*, 01.04.1990). The aim of the Belgrade NGO-based women's studies<sup>151</sup> was to make a bridge between feminist theory and activism by offering education in feminist theory, motivating the students to become feminist activists and, as Duhaček (1998) has summarised, producing knowledge by women, on women and for women.

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150 See also the analysis of this group in Chapter 4.

151 This programme in women's studies was different from the formal academic one (not analysed here because of being beyond the scope of this research) which was set up between 1992 and 1993 at the Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy by feminist scholars who had also participated – inter alia as lecturers – in the work of the NGO-based women's studies. For more information on the academic women's studies, see Blagojević (1998c).

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The initial plan was to launch the experimental programme in the autumn of 1991, but its realisation was postponed due to the war in Croatia, which had begun in the meanwhile. The January 1992 peace accords between the Croat and Serb forces in Croatia, which had led to a cease-fire, gave hope to the organisers that the war violence had come to an end.<sup>152</sup> Consequently, the plan to launch women's studies was re-enacted and 8 March 1992 was chosen as the new start date of the experimental programme. Each feminist who was a lecturer in this first programme was also a student, ie a participant in the lectures given by the others. This was done as a form of self-education and exchange of knowledge since different feminists had different expertise. Unlike the women's studies in Zagreb launched three years later, the Belgrade ones were open to men, but only as students and not as lecturers (Dojčinović-Nešić, 1998; Duhaček, 1998; Mladenović, 2002; interviews with Belgrade15N, Belgrade11AN and Belgrade6AN).

Some of the group's council members and lecturers were also active in Women in Black, which regularly protested, published and sent out press releases on war-related issues. However, the Women's Studies Center was not as a group very outspoken on those matters in the 1990s. Its main political activity was the creation of alternative knowledge. It seems, thus, that the situation in the Women's Studies Center was similar to that at the Belgrade SOS Hotline. The Center was generally positioned against nationalism and the wars, but refrained from producing statements on specific war-related topics in order to provide service (education, in this case) to as large an audience as possible.

The council members differed in their views on the mainstreaming of women's studies and in their preference for theoretical academic work or activist practice. Some advocated the incorporation of women's studies in the Serbian official educational system and others their preservation as an independent grassroots group which would be open to everybody with a high school diploma regardless of whether they were enrolled at a university or not. The group's name prior to the split, Center for Women's Studies, Research and Communication, mirrored this diversity. The words 'studies' and 'research' stressed the theoretical component, whereas the word 'communication' referred to the applied component, ie the transfer of (academic) feminist insights to a wider audience (Dojčinović-Nešić, 1998).

A number of Belgrade respondents mentioned this difference as the reason for the group's split. Others singled out the disagreement between the two initiators in

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152 Unfortunately, this hope proved premature. The cease-fire in Croatia turned out to be only temporary and the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina erupted in April that year.

their positioning on the extent of Serbia's responsibility for the wars and war crimes. This latter divide corresponded to the different preferences of these two feminists regarding the functioning within or outside academia (the academism vs activism difference). One respondent provided a third interpretation: the donor-driven change from the more democratic collective coordination in the form of a council to the more hierarchical single coordination which increased the possibilities for power abuse (interviews with Belgrade16N, Belgrade15N, Belgrade11AN, Belgrade3AN and Belgrade4AN). Dojčinović-Nešić and Popović (2002) have explained the creation of two groups as being a consequence of the branching out of the activities, whereas Duhaček (1998) and Zaharijević (2007) have related the split to the dissimilar war-related positionings on one's country and/or ethnic group. I will return to this in Chapter 4.

After the split in 1998 between the two initiators, the one who was a bigger proponent of activism took the communication component to the newly-established Association for Women's Initiative. This group, which has in the meantime changed its name into Association of Autonomous Women's Initiatives, maintained its grassroots and autonomous character. At the time of data collection it promoted women's cooperatives and small businesses, assisted the self-organisation and networking of women throughout Serbia, published books, and offered low-cost courses in foreign languages.

The other initiator of the Women's Studies Center, whose preference was for theoretical work, added the term 'gender' to the name of the group. The Women's Studies and Gender Research Center, which in 2011 changed its name to Women's Studies Center, has maintained its educational and publishing activities. Since the early 2000s it has been associated as a non-governmental organisation with the Faculty of Political Sciences at the Belgrade University. Many of the women who were active in this group in 2009 were also members of the Center for Gender Studies and Politics, which was an official part of the Faculty of Political Sciences (*Asocijacija autonomnih ženskih inicijativa* website; *Centar za ženske studije Beograd* website; interviews with Belgrade15N and Belgrade11AN).

### *Women in Black*<sup>153</sup>

Women in Black was established in October 1991 by feminists and antiwar activists who were already engaged in the mixed gender group Centre for Antiwar Action. The creation of a separate women's group was caused by the need to make women's antiwar public and private efforts visible. More precisely, although the majority of the members of the Belgrade antiwar initiatives – including the Centre for Antiwar Action – were women, men were usually the ones who got the media and public attention. Even more hidden was women's private resistance to the war, in the form of emotional and financial support to their male family members and friends who hid from the mass mobilisation for the war in Croatia, and acquisition of legal and other advice on their behalf.

The inspiration for this type of group came from the activists of the Italian Women in Black who had travelled to different parts of the (post-)Yugoslav region in the early autumn of 1991 as part of a larger group of Western peace activists. The concept of the Women in Black groups, which had been developed by Israeli women peace activists in 1988, was to conduct silent vigils whereby the message was transferred by the banners held by the protestors, their black clothes, which expressed the mourning for the victims of military violence, and the mere presence of (female) bodies in the public space. This at the time novel form of protest was explained on the leaflet which the Belgrade Women in Black distributed at their first vigil on 9 October 1991. On that leaflet (*Žene u crnom protiv rata*, 09.10.1991) the activists also expressed their opposition to 'the war in Yugoslavia', patriarchy and the political rulers in general, without singling out any ethnic group (*Borba*, 05–06.10.1991, 09.10.1991, 12–13.10.1991; *Danas*, 01.10.1991; Fridman, 2006b; Zajović, 1993b, 1995; interviews with Belgrade3AN, Belgrade4AN and Belgrade14AN).

For the greatest part of the 1990s Women in Black held weekly one-hour silent vigils on a central location in Belgrade (in the late 1990s they were replaced with monthly ones, and in the period of martial law during the NATO bombing in 1999 no vigils were held). Next to these recurring protests, the activists – few of whom were men – regularly produced press releases, supported conscientious objectors and deserters, visited refugee camps to offer psychosocial and other assistance and distribute humanitarian aid, organised yearly international (including the post-Yugoslav region) women's peace and solidarity gatherings, and extensively published books, brochures, leaflets and, from 1995, a magazine on conscientious objection. Starting from 1997 the group began developing the Women in Black Network Serbia

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153 See also the last analysis in Chapter 4.

– a platform for exchange of knowledge and realisation of joint actions by groups and individual activists from all over Serbia.

Women in Black articulated a very broad political agenda: opposition to war, war rapes, ethnic cleansing, militarism, nationalism, fascism and religious fundamentalism (especially those employed by the Serb political, military and clerical authorities), civil disobedience, solidarity with the (Serb) refugees and the women (and men) of the allegedly inimical ethnic groups, support to non-violence and the freedom of choice regarding use of arms and reproduction etc. In addition to this, Women in Black sharply criticised Serbia's repressive politics against the Kosovar Albanians and paid special attention to the expression of support to and the development of cooperation with the Kosovar Albanian feminist and women's activists (Božinović, 1998; *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt*, 07.08.1993; *Hronologija*, February 2002; *Naša borba*, 13.08.1997; *off our backs*, October 1995; Zajović, 1993b, 1996, 1999a; *Žene u crnom*, 21.03.1994; interview with SarajevoTEXT).

Despite its positionings, the group was never banned by the state, but this did not mean that Women in Black could conduct their work smoothly and risk-free. Besides the police obstruction of some of their gatherings and actions, the activists were regularly subjected to threats and verbal attacks, in particular during their vigils. Therefore, they had to use a lot of precaution regarding their personal safety and the preservation of the secret address of the group's office premises.

In August 1995, following the denial of entrance to Serbia to some Western feminists who travelled to the women's peace and solidarity gathering, two activists of Women in Black were subjected to police interrogation for several hours. One of the problematic points was the invitation of allegedly Croat women to the gathering at the time when Croatia was ethnically cleansing the Croatian Serbs. In September 1998, half a year before the NATO bombing, the then vice-president of the Serbian government Vojislav Šešelj accused, inter alia, the Women in Black activists for being traitors in the Serbian parliament and threatened them should NATO attack Serbia. Still, the greatest recorded security risks which this group experienced occurred in the late spring and the summer of 2000 – the last months of Milošević's rule. Women in Black was among the groups whose activities and finances were scrutinised by the Serbian authorities. This included confiscation of materials and hard disks, raids of activists' homes, long interrogations and issuing of arrest warrants for two activists. A third activist was detained for one day by the state security service. During the interrogation verbal and physical violence was used and he was forced to produce statements about being involved in espionage against Serbia (*Amnesty International statement*, 18.08.2000; *Hronologija*, February 2002; Mladenović and Matijašević, 1996;

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*Women in Black statement*, 09.06.2000; Zajović, 2007; interviews with Sarajevo1EXT and Belgrade5AN).

In 2009 the group was still very active in the form of organisation of vigils and gatherings, and production of books and press releases, but this work had undergone some changes in line with the altered socio-political contexts of Serbia and the Yugoslav successor states. For example, there were only occasional vigils to commemorate events which Women in Black considered to be of utmost importance for Serbia, such as the Serb genocide of the Bosniaks in Srebrenica. Also, the members had started paying regular commemorative visits to places which had been particularly affected by the wars, and were actively involved in the Women's Peace Coalition (set up in 2006 by the Women in Black Network Serbia and the Kosova Women's Network). Finally, Women in Black was a vital participant in the coalition for dealing with the past, called Initiative for RECOM,<sup>154</sup> which had been established in 2008 (Zajović, 2009a, 2009b; *Žene u crnom* website; interview with Sarajevo2EXT).

### *Autonomous Women's Center*

The Autonomous Women's Center (whose first name was Autonomous Women's Center Against Sexual Violence) was set up in December 1993 by members of the SOS Hotline. The initial presence of the term 'sexual violence' in the name was intended to increase the visibility of this peace and wartime phenomenon and empower the women survivors not to be silent about it. The need to raise awareness of this issue became even more pressing in light of the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the intensification of the domestic sexual violence committed by Serb soldiers on home leave.

The group developed a broad range of activities. It offered face-to-face counselling, self-help groups and legal advice for women victims of any form of male violence (thus, not necessarily war-related and/or sexual), set up an SOS hotline which was specialised in sexual violence, distributed humanitarian aid to (Serb) refugee women and children in refugee camps and private accommodation, organised psychosocial therapy for (Serb) refugee women, and during the Serb siege of Sarajevo collected and sent via humanitarian organisations food packages, letters and money to its inhabitants regardless of ethnicity. In addition, as part of its advocacy efforts to combat (sexual) violence against women and improve women's health, the Center

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154 RECOM stands for 'Regional Commission Tasked with Establishing the Facts about All Victims of War Crimes and Other Serious Human Rights Violations Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia in the period from 1991–2001' (*Inicijativa za REKOM* website).

organised educational activities for the women's groups in Serbia and published books and leaflets on these topics, and on women's human rights and feminism in general (*Announcement*, n.d.; *Brief report*, n.d.; Ćetković et al., 1995, 1997; *Deset godina*, 2003; Mladenović, 1998; Mladenović and Matijašević, 1996; Mršević, 1994; *Rad u ratno doba*, May/June 1994; *TV Novosti*, 15.12.1993; Žarkov, 2005).

Similarly to Women in Black, the Autonomous Women's Center was very involved in establishing and maintaining personal and professional links with the Kosovar Albanian feminist and women's activists, as well as in articulating its strong disagreement with the politics of the Serbian state regarding Kosovo and the Kosovar Albanians. For example, in May 1998, together with the Belgrade Women's Lobby and Women in Black, the Center condemned the growing violence and politics of apartheid by the Serbian state against the Kosovar Albanians. The signatory groups called for civil disobedience – including conscientious objection – vis-à-vis the Serb regime, and clearly expressed their support to the women's and peace groups in both Kosovo and Serbia which advocated non-violence.

During the NATO bombing and the war and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo the Center's activists expanded their counselling services also to include the fear of the bombing and the war violence. They prepared a list of phone numbers of their contacts from all over the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (including Kosovar Albanian women) and throughout the whole three-month period, despite the often non-functioning phone lines, repeatedly called these women to talk to them and support them. Hereby the activists were also able to obtain information about the situation outside Belgrade. This was particularly important in view of the media censorship due to the proclaimed state of war. Another type of support was running errands for the women in Belgrade who did not dare to leave their homes due to fear (*Activity report*, n.d.; *Deset godina*, 2003; Mladenović, 1998; *off our backs*, May 1999; *Rat na Kosovu – logika patrijarhata*, May 1998; Žarkov, 2005).

The Autonomous Women's Center was fully operational in 2009. Next to maintaining the provision of legal, psychological and other assistance to women survivors of violence, it has developed into an important advocacy, research and expertise body in the field of violence against women. As such, it did not only provide trainings to women's groups in Serbia, but also to different state institutions, and served as a consultative body for some international organisations (*Autonomni ženski centar* website; *Izveštaj o radu u 2009.*, n.d.).

**In lieu of a conclusion**

The portrayal of the Autonomous Women's Center from Belgrade concluded this historical overview. Chapter 4 will provide extensive insight into the creation and development of the war-related positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, the processes in which the war-related designations came to be ascribed to one cluster or another, as well as the reasons behind that ascription.

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### War-related positionings and the processes of (self-)ascription of designations

In this chapter I present and analyse nine historical episodes. I selected them based on their importance for understanding the differences and similarities among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in their war-related positionings, the changes which occurred in some of these positionings as a result of new information and/or new developments in the wars, as well as the forging and breaking of allegiances among the feminists. Eight episodes are concrete events (four gatherings, two speakers tours, one proposal for an umbrella group, and the war in Serbia), whereas one is a Belgrade group which was special in the 1990s because it gathered both self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists. The episodes are: the proposal for setting up a Yugoslav feminist umbrella group (spring of 1990), a speakers tour in Germany (November 1991), a meeting in Venice (February 1992), the international gathering 'Women in War' in Zagreb (October 1992), the 'International Women's Solidarity' meeting in Zagreb (February 1993), the MADRE speakers tour in North America (spring of 1993), a meeting in Medulin (March 1995), the Belgrade Women's Studies Center (throughout the 1990s, including the split of the group sometime in 1998), and the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the intensified war in Kosovo (spring of 1999).

#### The proposal for a Yugoslav feminist umbrella group (spring of 1990)

The proposal of several Zagreb feminists for setting-up the Yugoslav feminist umbrella group Independent Union of Women stirred up the first recorded conflict among the Yugoslav feminists which has been interpreted as being caused by nationalism.<sup>155</sup> There was no consensus in the scholarship and among my respondents, though, on whether this had indeed been the case, and if so to what extent. Some feminists (also) pointed at other sources of tension which were unrelated to nationalism: the suggested type of organisational structure and the dynamics between the established and newcomer feminists. Another plurality of recollections existed regarding which feminists had supported and which had opposed the umbrella.

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155 This is the reason why I include this event although, strictly speaking, it does not belong here since it took place roughly a year before the intensification of the armed clashes in Croatia.

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The 'Third Yugoslav Feminist Gathering' which took place in Belgrade between 30 March and 1 April 1990 appears to be the first occasion where the proposal for a Yugoslav umbrella caused a conflict. The contention continued at the constitutive assembly of the umbrella held in Zagreb on 16 April that year.<sup>156</sup> To my knowledge, the article by Benderly (in: *New Directions for Women*, September/October 1990) is the only text which has addressed the conflict over the umbrella shortly after it had occurred and before the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia. I indicate this because of the quite probable influence of this historical occurrence – and the related splits between the feminists – on the post-1991 interpretations of the conflict. The bias which the (much) later perceptions give to my analysis becomes even clearer if one keeps in mind that I have not come across any minutes of the above two meetings. The conclusions of the 'Third Yugoslav Feminist Gathering' did not contain anything on the proposal for a Yugoslav umbrella and the umbrella's programme declaration did not give even the slightest indication of the disagreements which had surrounded its creation (*Programska deklaracija*, Spring 1990; *Zaključci*, 01.04.1990). This means that, with the exception of Benderly's short observation, the post-1991 written and oral accounts have been my only source of information on the conflict.

Benderly described the objections which had been uttered at the constitutive assembly of the umbrella as addressing the exclusion of some feminists from the 'earlier planning stages' and 'the hierarchical structure and elitism of the founding group' (*New Directions for Women*, September/October 1990). Unlike her, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist Belgrade11AN (1993:136) portrayed the conflict as involving nationalism and being one of the occasions when the Yugoslav feminists had 'walked into the nationalist trap':

The feminists from Ljubljana absolutely refused to form any kind of movement at the Yugoslav level – it was out of the question, not even a loose umbrella organization, if it was under a 'Yu' sign. The feminists from Zagreb did not agree among themselves whether or not to join. The feminists from Belgrade would have been consistent in their antinationalist position if they had labelled any nationalism as such. However, they were only critical of their own [nationalism] and refused to react to nationalism in other feminist groups.

By saying that the Ljubljana feminists had not been interested in any pan-Yugoslav organisational format and by naming this nationalism, Belgrade11AN implicitly criticised all Ljubljana (and one part of the Zagreb) participants at the

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<sup>156</sup> See the description of Independent Union of Women in Chapter 3.

‘Third Yugoslav Feminist Gathering’ for supporting the secession of Slovenia and/or Croatia from Yugoslavia. In other words, in this author’s view at the time, the lack of support and interest for Yugoslavia equalled nationalism. The Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist Belgrade2N also rebuked the feminists from Croatia and Slovenia for not being interested in Yugoslavia and saw their dissent as being responsible for the limited strength of the Yugoslav feminist movement. The importance which she had attached to the preservation of Yugoslavia is also to be inferred from the fact that she was the only one who had recollected the conflict as not concerning the umbrella, but the creation of a common declaration on the future of Yugoslavia:

By the time of Yugoslavia’s disintegration, many differences had appeared among the feminists of the different republics, pointing to the coming breakdown of the state...Feminists from Slovenia and Croatia rejected the common declaration; feminists from Serbia insisted that such a declaration was needed not only because the country’s future was at stake but also to ensure the influence and power of the feminist movement. The Congress ended without any public declaration (Belgrade2N, 1996:179).

The link between the secessionist tendencies of Slovenia and Croatia and the opposition to the umbrella by the feminists coming from these two republics was also (implicitly) made by the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist Belgrade3AN. In the interview with me, Belgrade3AN contrasted these feminists’ positioning with the pro-umbrella one of at least some feminists from Serbia: ‘It was already clear that separate states would be formed and there was resistance towards it [the umbrella], and a person from Serbia was not supposed to insist too much on it’.

This perception of the lack of support for the initiative as a lack of support for Yugoslavia was most probably based on the (private) discussions at the ‘Third Yugoslav Feminist Gathering’ and the constitutive assembly of Independent Union of Women. The programme declaration of the umbrella did not bring the envisioned pan-Yugoslav structure in connection with the preservation of Yugoslavia in any way. In fact, the latter was not mentioned at all. The Yugoslav format was presented as needed because of the subordinated position of women all over the country – the regional variations notwithstanding – as well as the importance for women of mobilising based on their gender instead of party or ethnic affiliation. Put differently, broad membership was required in order to ensure an effective struggle for women’s rights (*Programska deklaracija*, Spring 1990; see also *Danas*, 20.03.1990).

Belgrade3AN’s comment that ‘a person from Serbia was not supposed to insist too much’ on the creation of a Yugoslav initiative indicated another significant

component of the dynamics between the feminists from the three cities. Some Belgrade feminists felt misunderstood by those from Ljubljana and Zagreb because of the latter's accusations that the former's comments and initiatives advocated – just like Serbia's mainstream political and media discourse – a centralised and Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. Although I will return to this issue in my analysis of the meeting in Venice, at this point I will address the directly related comments which Zagreb7AN (a Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist) and Ljubljana3EXT (an external Ljubljana respondent) made in answering my questions on the umbrella. Both comments conveyed criticism of the hegemonic position of the Serbs in Yugoslavia – attitude which was sometimes reproduced by the Belgrade feminists, too.

Whereas Ljubljana3EXT could not say anything specific about the umbrella since she had not attended any discussions about it, she disapproved in general of the 'slight colonial arrogance' of the Belgrade feminists. As members of the largest ethnic group in Yugoslavia (the Serb one), they had been unwilling to understand the specific problems of the others, such as the risk of rebuking one's ethnic group in a geopolitical setting – such as Slovenia or Kosovo – which was much smaller than Serbia. Zagreb7AN was also generally critical of the Belgrade feminists for not taking into account their privileged position in Yugoslavia. She reproved of their unwillingness to learn Slovenian, at least at the passive level, due to their comfortable position as native speakers of the numerically dominant language and the *lingua franca* in Yugoslavia. The greater geographic and linguistic distance between Belgrade and Ljubljana (as opposed to that between Zagreb and Ljubljana) further contributed to their limited understanding of Slovenian. Not being able to follow the information produced by the other side, the Belgrade feminists had become in the late 1980s more susceptible to the Serbian propaganda about Slovenian anti-Yugoslav and separatist tendencies (interviews with Zagreb7AN and Ljubljana3EXT).

Belgrade11AN's accusation of the Ljubljana feminists of nationalism was strongly criticised by two of those to whom it had been addressed. In a joint interview, two Ljubljana feminists (Ljubljana1EXT and Jalušič, 2002) rejected this perception and qualified it as itself resembling nationalism. They have not explained why they considered it so, but it is possible that they perceived it as advocating a unitarist Yugoslavia and thereby negating the right to secession of the constitutive units. Jalušič saw Belgrade11AN's accusation as additionally malicious because it had not been communicated to the Ljubljana feminists in person, but published in an American book. This lack of direct and person-to-person communication between the (post-) Yugoslav feminists regarding each other's alleged nationalism, as well as their internal struggle for legitimacy when interacting with foreign (feminist) audiences, are very

important for understanding the war-related dynamics between and among the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists.

The intensity of Ljubljana1EXT and Jalušič's disapproval can be read from the space they have dedicated to it in the mentioned joint interview and from their explanations stated elsewhere (Ljubljana1EXT, 2000; Jalušič, 1999, 2002b). In those texts they described their opposition as having to do only with the top-down inegalitarian organisational format of the intended umbrella. For example:

[That] the representatives of the Lilit group [a Ljubljana feminist group] did not support the idea of an umbrella organization with the name Yugoslav Women's Alliance [the initial name of the initiative] is no proof of their nationalism but rather the result of the anti-power monopolization sentiment and grassroots consciousness of the new feminist groups within socialism (Jalušič, 1999:117).

In addition to designating the organisational format as being the contested issue, Ljubljana1EXT (2000) further rejected Belgrade11AN's interpretation of the conflict by perceiving it not as one between feminists from different republics, but between theoreticians and activists. In Ljubljana1EXT's (2000:367) words, the 'Third Yugoslav Feminist Gathering'

was attended by a group of theoreticians who put forward an initiative to found an umbrella Yugoslav feminist organisation which would unite feminist groups and individuals. We activists opposed this idea, claiming that co-ordination and co-operation among feminist groups and individuals already existed and that an umbrella organisation would not make sense...However, some years later, a certain theoretician interpreted this refusal in a foreign publication<sup>157</sup> as nationalism on the part of the feminists from Slovenia and Croatia. Another disregard – the author of this interpretation obviously did not know that the initiative was also refused by feminists from Serbia, but above all, she missed the point of why the initiative was refused.

Ljubljana1EXT repeated the same criticism of the organisational format in the interview with me and added that the proposed centralised umbrella resembled the state women's organisations in Yugoslavia. To establish a similar organisation in times of political decentralisation and formation of autonomous women's groups was, according to the opponents of the initiative, a reactionary move (see also Jalušič, 2002b).

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157 Belgrade11AN (1993). Full reference given in a footnote at this location in the original text.

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Zagreb7AN's portrayal of the positioning of the Ljubljana feminists backed the view of Ljubljana1EXT and Jalušič. Zagreb7AN disagreed explicitly with the explanation that secessionist or nationalist tendencies had caused the dissent of the Ljubljana feminists. These feminists – just like Zagreb7AN herself and the other members of the Zagreb group Women's Help Now – had not endorsed the umbrella because of its hierarchical, thus unequal, structure. They had argued instead for a horizontal grassroots network at the Yugoslav level.

Contrary to this, the recollection of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist Zagreb11AN approximated the published ones of Belgrade11AN and Belgrade2N. Zagreb11AN's impression was that the Ljubljana feminists had been more opposed to something carrying the prefix 'Yugoslav' than to the proposed organisational structure. This was corroborated by Ljubljana3EXT's general criticism of the positionings of the Ljubljana feminists around that time. She rebuked their conformity with the widely present political stance in Slovenia which advocated its independence from Yugoslavia and opposed anything 'Yugoslav'. Ljubljana3EXT acknowledged, however, that this compliance might have been at least partially caused by the Slovenian context at the time, in which one's use of a pro-Yugoslav discourse had meant committing political suicide (interviews with Zagreb11AN, Zagreb7AN and Ljubljana3EXT).

Belgrade11AN's (1993) view that the Zagreb participants had been divided on the creation of the umbrella was recalled by Jalušič as well (in: Ljubljana1EXT and Jalušič, 2002). Unlike Belgrade11AN, who did not give any other details on her observation, Jalušič depicted this division as largely corresponding to an earlier one among the Zagreb feminists. Some of them had been established professionals (eg journalists, scholars and writers) and older in terms of age and involvement in organised feminism. Others had been younger feminists (mostly students), newer to feminism and not yet established. Jalušič saw the Zagreb criticism of the umbrella as having the same cause as the departure of the younger feminists from the academic group Woman and Society and their subsequent creation of the activist group Women's Group Trešnjevka (later Women's Help Now).<sup>158</sup> Such a categorisation of academics (theoreticians) and activists could be read also from the earlier quoted fragment from Ljubljana1EXT (2000). The absence of any geographical indications in that quotation implied its relevance for all participants at the 'Third Yugoslav Feminist Gathering'. I have not found any other written or spoken suggestion of a similar conflict in Belgrade or Ljubljana around that time, but even if that conflict was not endemic to Zagreb, it was in any case present in that city.

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158 See Chapter 3.

The analysis of Ljubljana1EXT and Jalušič on Zagreb was implicitly corroborated by Zagreb11AN in the interview. She said to have disapproved of the umbrella because the initiators had bypassed the feminists who had worked very hard at a grassroots level against violence against women (mostly feminists from the younger generation). At the same time, Zagreb11AN's own positioning on the umbrella showed the absence of a full overlap between the categories 'established (academic) feminists' and 'supporters of the umbrella', as well as between the categories 'new(coming) activist feminists' and 'opponents of the umbrella'. She resisted the umbrella, while being an established journalist and a member of the academic Woman and Society (Ljubljana1EXT and Jalušič, 2002; interview with Zagreb11AN).

That the division between the Zagreb supporters and opponents of the initiative had, nonetheless, partially to do with the power differences between the established and newcomer feminists could be further inferred from my interviews with Zagreb7AN and Zagreb21ANA. As I mentioned, Zagreb7AN recalled that the activists of Women's Help Now had pleaded for a network of equal members. Zagreb21ANA was even firmer. In her view, all Zagreb feminists had opposed the umbrella since its structure collided with one of the basic feminist principles: equality of all. Her account of a homogenous Zagreb positioning against the umbrella is at first glance confusing if one considers that some of its initiators (Slavenka Drakulić, Rada Iveković and Đurđa Knežević) were Zagreb feminists. I presume, therefore, that the phrase 'all of us' which Zagreb21ANA used referred to the younger generation of Zagreb feminists to which Zagreb21ANA belonged, unlike the above three established professionals.

What about the positioning(s) of the Belgrade participants? Belgrade11AN (1993) reproached them for applying double standards in their criticism of nationalism: being silent about the anti-Yugoslav nationalism of the Ljubljana and Zagreb participants and only speaking out against the nationalism among themselves.<sup>159</sup> She did not specify there, though, what the alleged nationalism of the Belgrade participants had consisted of, how exactly they had positioned themselves on the umbrella, and what her own positioning on the umbrella and on nationalism had been. Nevertheless, her criticisms suggest that she not only supported the creation of the umbrella but also the preservation of Yugoslavia.

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159 Belgrade11AN's criticism then largely overlapped with that which the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists started expressing later. They reprimanded the other Belgrade cluster's exclusive scrutiny of Serb nationalism, but never of that of the other ethnic groups. In fact, it was exactly this criticism of Belgrade11AN which the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist Belgrade12N approvingly quoted in the interview.

Unable to remember during the interview the details based on which she had made those claims in her essay, Belgrade11AN only recollected that there had been passionate discussions at the 'Third Yugoslav Feminist Gathering' and that the ethnic identities had begun setting in. Some women had allowed themselves to be seduced by and to reproduce the mainstream political discourse and, consequently, set aside the joint work or interests as women. She also explained that she had not at the time been all that involved yet. In light of her later criticism of Serb nationalism and accentuation of the Serb responsibility, I would argue that this was another way of saying that she had not properly understood back then what had been going on and that her previous analysis of the conflict had, therefore, been uninformed and perhaps incorrect (Belgrade11AN, 1993; *Učesnice*, n.d.; interview with Belgrade11AN).

Unlike Belgrade11AN, who suggested the existence of a single positioning among the Belgrade feminists, Ljubljana1EXT (2000:367) alluded to the presence of diverse views: 'the initiative was also refused by feminists from Serbia'. She conveyed the same notion in the interview: 'We from Slovenia for sure, and for sure some from Zagreb and Belgrade, were against the founding of such an organisation'. Based on these statements of Ljubljana1EXT and the earlier quoted ones of Belgrade11AN, Belgrade2N and Belgrade3AN, one could conclude that at least some Belgrade feminists had endorsed the establishment of the umbrella. This was contradicted by the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist Belgrade15N – an outspoken advocate of non-hierarchical organisational structures. She explained in the interview that all Belgrade participants, herself included, had been against and had seconded Ljubljana1EXT's plea for grassroots cooperation.

So, similar to the Zagreb situation, where not all established feminists had supported the creation of the umbrella, not all Belgrade feminists who would later be named nationalists perceived the rejection as an indication of the anti-Yugoslavism or separatism of the Ljubljana and Zagreb feminists. Moreover, the latter perception was shared at the time by some Belgrade feminists who would later declare themselves antinationalists. This heterogeneity warns against the creation of simplified dichotomies and reminds the scholars to always ask what one's alleged nationalism or antinationalism actually entailed and in which context the positioning in question was produced.

## The speakers tour in Germany (November 1991)

The speakers tour in November 1991 was a three-week series of public discussions throughout Germany. Three Belgrade and three Zagreb peace activists (two of the speakers from each city happened to be self-declared antinationalist feminists, too) presented their activities and views on the situation in Croatia and Serbia, in particular with regard to the war in Croatia, which had commenced a few months earlier. Next to offering to the German public the perspective of the directly involved peace activists, the tour was meant to raise funds for these activists' peace work. The idea for the tour had come from a German peace activist who had befriended one of the Zagreb participants before the war. After being invited to Germany the Zagreb activists contacted one of the Belgrade feminists asking if there were any Belgrade activists interested in joining the tour. In the following description of this episode, I will pay special attention to the constitutive power of violence, as well as the role which the audience and the larger setting in which the discussions come about can play in the struggle for legitimacy.

The speakers tour took place at a time when the Yugoslav People's Army and the Serb paramilitaries had for slightly less than three months been intensively shelling the besieged town of Vukovar in eastern Croatia, demanding the surrender of the much less numerous and much worse equipped Croat forces. It would be during the tour, on 18 November 1991, that the completely devastated town would fall into Serb hands, leading to the execution of more than 200 (wounded) Croat soldiers and male civilians, and the expulsion of the town's non-Serb population.<sup>160</sup> On the other side of the border, in Serbia, there was no war violence, but the situation was not peaceful either. The Yugoslav People's Army was conducting a mass mobilisation of young men for the purpose of the – never officially declared – war in Croatia, and the Army's heavy artillery was passing through Serbia (including Belgrade) on its way to Vukovar. In November 1991 the Croatian electronic and printed media could no longer reach Serbia and vice versa. The phone lines and postal services were down and all bus, train and plane connections between the two republics discontinued.

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160 Some authors suggest that Croatia's president Tuđman was partially responsible for the tragedy of Vukovar by not allowing the deployment of additional Croat troops and the dispatch of more weaponry. Tuđman has allegedly done this in order to use Vukovar's tragedy to obtain a faster international recognition of Croatia's independent status, as well as to militarily secure the creation of Herzeg-Bosna – a Croat entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina which was officially established on the same day Vukovar fell (see eg *E-novine*, 22.11.2011; Greverus, 2009 [1995]; *Novi list*, 19.11.2009, 24.11.2011).

So, starting from August 1991 the gradual disappearance of the means of communication and information exchange between the two republics and the increasing intensification of the war violence led to a progressive widening of the gap between the Belgrade and Zagreb peace (and/or feminist) activists in terms of the information which was available to them. The augmentation of the biased reporting in the media (the majority of which was either state-controlled or supportive of the state politics) further contributed to the differences in perception between the activists despite their critical attitude towards their states' politics and awareness of the existence and influence of warmongering propaganda. One of the Zagreb participants recollected that in the three weeks in which she had been absent from Croatia the intensity of biased information in the media had tremendously increased. Upon her return, she was additionally thunderstruck by the significant narrowing down of the perception of the peace activists who had remained in Croatia and were not exposed to insights from 'the other side', ie Serbia. Having had this exposure at the beginning of the war strongly influenced her subsequent views on (the) war and (the) media reporting (interview with Zagreb20EXT).

Thus, not only did the Belgrade and Zagreb participants set off for Germany from already different contexts, but while they were absent the two republics were rapidly becoming even more dissimilar and alienated from one another. During the tour Germany's fervent support of Croatia's independence and international recognition caused uneasiness among the Belgrade participants who spoke about the preservation of Yugoslavia. Furthermore, they were unpleasantly surprised and felt stigmatised by the anti-Serb propaganda in the German media. The Zagreb participants, for their part, expressed the right of each republic to peacefully secede from Yugoslavia. They felt, therefore, misunderstood by the leftist voices in the audience which idealised Yugoslavia as the promised socialist and self-managing land<sup>161</sup> and made them feel as

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161 The same comment about the lack of understanding from Western leftist audiences which the activists from Croatia experienced in the first months of the war on its territory was conveyed to me by another Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist. During the interview, in discussing a meeting with Italian activists, Zagreb23AN observed that unlike the activists from Serbia who had defended Yugoslavia, the activists from Croatia who had not mourned the disintegration of Yugoslavia and had supported Croatia's independence were suspected of secessionist nationalism. A Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist spoke about feeling pressured by a leftist pro-Yugoslav German funder to cooperate with the Belgrade feminists and being named 'nationalist' after she had refused such cooperation (interview with Zagreb13N). See in Cigar, Magaš and Žanić (2001), *Oklobdžija* (1993) and Secor (1999) on the perceptions of Yugoslavia as a leftist utopia – an issue which a Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist also touched upon in the interview. She told me how difficult it had been in the beginning to communicate their anti-Milošević positioning to the Italian leftist activists, who had perceived his discourse of preserving Yugoslavia as a

if they were nationalists. In short, the Belgrade and Zagreb participants alike felt that those from the other city were better treated and that their message was obtaining a more favourable reception, ie considered more legitimate.

The long duration and the laden contents of the tour added to the discomfort of and the tensions between the participants. They were exhausted by being on the road for three weeks and having to recurrently participate (and perform) in the same kind of painful and frustrating discussions. The audience wanted unambiguous explanations of and positionings on a situation which was everything but unambiguous. Moreover, the events at home were completely novel to all six speakers who belonged, just like the majority of the feminist and/or peace activists in Yugoslavia, to the post-World War II generations which were raised with the idea that such violent destruction and disintegration of the country were inconceivable. The fall of Vukovar, which was extensively reported upon in the German media and illustrated with photographs of the ruined town, refugee streams and Serb militaries wearing Chetnik<sup>162</sup> insignia, increased the participants' feelings of anger, fear, guilt and pain, thereby further contributing to the discomfort and the tensions among them (interviews with Zagreb9AN, Zagreb20EXT, Belgrade3AN and Belgrade4AN).

Interestingly, I did not discover any mention of these tensions in the German newspaper reports of the tour. It is possible that the frictions were not publicly expressed during the discussions and/or were too subtle to be noticed by outsiders. The journalists portrayed the Belgrade and Zagreb participants as quite like-minded activists working in their respective countries against nationalism and war, assisting draft resisters and deserters, trying to spread less biased information and analyses, and in the case of the Belgrade activists – organising street protests (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13.11.1991, 16.11.1991; *Berliner Morgenpost*, 23.11.1991; *Der Tagesspiegel*, 23.11.1991; *Freitag*, 29.11.1991; *Mainzer Rhein-Zeitung*, 12.11.1991; *Münstersche Zeitung*, 11.11.1991).

I came across only two non-journalist publications – a scholarly article (Bilić, 2011a) and a biography (Ćetković, 2000) – in which this event is addressed, but neither of them features an extensive description and analysis of it. Instead, the tour is very shortly presented to illustrate the broader dynamics between the female antiwar activists from Croatia and Serbia in the 1990s. In Ćetković (2000), the prominent Serbian politician and peace activist Vesna Pešić explicitly praised the performance

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manifestation of his commitment to protect the dream of a socialist world (interview with Belgrade14AN).

162 See footnote 81.

of the Belgrade activists during the tour and criticised that of the Zagreb ones.<sup>163</sup> According to her, the Belgrade participants

were on principle against violence and war, [and] for a non-violent conflict resolution, but did not hide behind that generalised and comfortable positioning. We criticised very clearly Milošević's war politics and Serb nationalism, but did not wear sackcloth and ashes as if we, the peace activists, were guilty of something only because we were Serbs. We rejected the idea of collective guilt which was imposed upon us at each step as the only just and most radical peace standpoint (in: Četković, 2000:141).

There are two issues in the above quotation which I find very important. The first issue is the implied notion that while the Belgrade participants – and the other Belgrade peace activists – did not refrain from rebuking their own politicians and the nationalism of their own ethnic collective, the Zagreb ones did. This criticism is more explicitly stated several sentences later, when Pešić said that '[f]or a while, at the gatherings, the colleagues from Croatia insisted on the premise that the Croats were only victims' (in: Četković, 2000:142). Pešić illustrated this with the confrontation she had had with an activist of the women's group Rampart of Love<sup>164</sup> which she explicitly named nationalist. She failed to explain, however, that the three Zagreb participants in the speakers tour did not belong to this group. Moreover, they clashed with it later on the issue of war rape, given that Rampart of Love employed the same positioning as the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. By not distinguishing between Rampart of Love and the Zagreb participants, Pešić, thus, implied that the latter were nationalists, too.

The second issue is the recurrent theme among and concerning the Belgrade feminist and peace activists: how justifiable is the assumption of Serb collective responsibility for the war crimes committed in the name of all Serbs?<sup>165</sup> Pešić portrayed the Belgrade participants as rejecting this collective responsibility which had been apparently demanded from them in November 1991 also by the Zagreb participants in a – further not explicated – very aggressive manner. She did not mention, though, that two of the Belgrade participants were also members of Women in Black which seven months after the tour would call on the citizens of Serbia to assume their responsibility

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163 Pešić did not participate in the tour but attended the meeting afterwards, at which the Belgrade participants shared their impressions with their fellow activists from the Belgrade peace group Centre for Antiwar Action (interview with Belgrade3AN).

164 See footnote 105.

165 An analysis of the notion of collective responsibility is beyond the scope of this research. Nonetheless, I present and reflect upon the places where it was addressed in the interviews, texts and organisational documents.

and protest against the deeds of the Serbian regime (*Poziv*, 10.06.1992). By being silent about this, Pešić created the impression that all Belgrade peace activists shared a unanimous stand on the issue of Serb collective responsibility which, moreover, differed greatly from that of the Zagreb activists (whom she homogenised equally erroneously).

The two Zagreb participants whom I interviewed did not appreciate Pešić's criticism, but unlike Ljubljana1EXT and Jalušič, who had published their rebuttal of Belgrade11AN (see the preceding analysis), the Zagreb participants only planned to do so. The Belgrade participants also did not publish anything on this event. Furthermore, the six of them never came together again to discuss the disagreements which had occurred at the tour. This reluctance to (jointly) reassess the interactions and positionings from the warring 1990s is characteristic for most of the historical episodes which I analyse in this chapter and illustrates how traumatic and sensitive this topic is, particularly for the directly involved activists.

One of the Zagreb participants explains in Bilić (2011a) that the Belgrade participants could not really grasp what it meant to live in a context in which the war violence, or the threat of it, was a daily reality. She recollects an example – which she also mentioned in the interview with me – of those painful and frustrating situations during the tour. Her comment that her grandmother was unable to leave her village in Dalmatia because of its occupation by the Serb forces was understood by one of the Belgrade participants as a lamentation over territories. Similar disapproval of the lack of empathy which the Belgrade participants had sometimes shown regarding the situation in Croatia, and of their claim about the equal responsibility and victimisation of all sides, was conveyed to me by the second Zagreb participant as well.

The Zagreb activists felt that their fear of air-raid sirens was downplayed by the Belgrade ones with comments that the sirens were there only to install fear so that people would approve more of Tuđman's warmongering politics.<sup>166</sup> The dissatisfaction of the Zagreb participants with the manner in which their experiences were received by the Belgrade activists was possibly amplified by the effort which the former had put in in early October 1991 to send the letter inviting the latter to join the tour. Not only were the postal and telegraph services barely functioning, but the accomplishment of

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166 The comment about the absence of significant danger from air raids in Zagreb in 1991 would eventually prove correct. An aircraft of the Yugoslav People's Army hit the TV tower on the mountain near Zagreb on 16 September 1991, and on 7 October 1991 the seat of the Croatian government. The other two assaults on Zagreb took place on 2 and 3 May 1995 and were caused by mortar grenades fired from the Croatian Serbs' positions. At the beginning of the war there were also warnings in the Croatian media about Serb sharpshooters on the roofs in Zagreb, but they turned to be a hoax.

every errand in Zagreb was hampered by the frequent going off air-raid sirens (*Pismo*, 04.10.1991).

A different Zagreb respondent, a so-called nationalist feminist who had not taken part in the speakers tour, communicated to me the same disapproval of a different instance of such waving off of the fear of air raids. In her case, it had been her friend, a Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist, who had played down her fear. I was also told of a Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist who had trivialised the air-raid sirens in Ljubljana at the time of the negotiations for a withdrawal of the Yugoslav People's Army from Slovenia (*Ja, ti, one*, n.d.; interviews with Ljubljana1EXT, Zagreb1N and Zagreb6N; see also *Danas*, 23–24.02.2002). There were, thus, both Belgrade so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists who trivialised the situation in Zagreb at the time, and both Zagreb so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists who strongly rebuked that stance.

This indicates that one's perception of the air-raid sirens (the danger) was greatly influenced by one's geographic location, ie was to a large extent a result of the presence or absence of violence. During the first days of these sirens in Zagreb Slobodan Šnajder – a well-known Croatian playwright and critic of Tuđman's politics and Croat nationalism – wrote an open letter to his friends in Serbia. In the letter, which was published by the Serbian daily *Borba*, he addressed the constitutive power of violence: '[n]othing homogenises a dejected community as much as the feeling of a common peril' (*Borba*, 02.10.1991).<sup>167</sup> Adapted to this episode, the (threat of) anti-Croat war violence made the Zagreb activists feel much more like members of a collective than what they had felt like before. At the same time, the absence of air-raids sirens in Belgrade and of intensive anti-Serb war violence within the borders of Serbia made the Belgrade activists sceptical about the gravity of the danger and fear which their Zagreb colleagues experienced.

Another issue the two Zagreb participants were annoyed about was that, unlike the Belgrade participants, they could not talk about any public antiwar protests

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167 A similar notion was expressed by Vesna Pusić (1995:50) – a Croatian sociologist and politician, as well as member of the pre-war Zagreb feminist group *Woman and Society*: 'For many, this moment of empirical sense of danger with the outbreak of war on the Croatian territory was the first time they really faced their collective national identity. The destruction of Vukovar, the shelling of Dubrovnik, Sibenik and, [sic] Osijek and the occupation of a part of Croatia caused the Croatian nationalism to expand faster, more effectively and to a greater extent than any speakers foaming at the mouth, references to glorious past and aggressive expressions of Croatian nationalism by politicians. Political opportunism, sycophancy, and flag-switching came later. But, when the war in Croatia was at its worst, few failed to feel that they belonged to this collective identity, that this identity is valuable and that they wanted to join somehow in its defence and preservation.'

they had been involved in. As they explained, this difference was due to the dissimilar contexts. The public space in Zagreb was dominated at the time by the antiwar protests of conservative groups, such as Rampart of Love, which were supportive of Tuđman's politics. Their message of peace diverged from the one of the Antiwar Campaign Croatia in which the Zagreb participants were active. Due to this unavailability of public space, the constant danger of air raids, as well as the fighting and shelling elsewhere in Croatia, they felt that their call to communicate with and not demonise the other side could not reach the public through protests. Instead, they were publishing an antiwar magazine, planning activities for reconciling the Croat and Serb villages in Croatia, and working on the implementation of the right to conscientious objection regarding the conscription.<sup>168</sup> However, in their view, for the Western audiences these activities did not have the flair of great resistance deeds to the same extent as the actions of their Belgrade counterparts.

On the other hand, the Belgrade participants felt that they were misled, ie that their presence in Germany and their open criticism of Milošević and Serb nationalism was used – also by some of the Zagreb participants – for the purpose of supporting Croatia's independence. They were furthermore irritated by the mainstream German black-and-white understanding of the war and Yugoslavia's disintegration which entailed that Serbia and the Serbs were the only guilty side. In this conceptualisation, there was no mention of the perpetrating deeds of the Croat militaries, such as the besieging of the caserns of the Yugoslav People's Army in Croatia – which were full of young recruits from all over Yugoslavia – and the cutting off of their electricity, food and water supply.

Such a conceptualisation did not leave space either for the anti-Milošević antiwar voices in Serbia. One of the Belgrade participants spoke about the lack

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168 The right to conscientious objection regarding the military service did not exist in Yugoslavia. The Croatian constitution of 1990 granted this right to objection on religious or moral grounds, thanks to the proposal which was submitted by the informal Zagreb group Svarun (one of the predecessors of the Antiwar Campaign Croatia; Svarun's broad activist work addressed environmental, peace, women's and spiritual issues) during the process of collecting input from the Croatian public on the draft of the new constitution. Such a right was, however, absent from the Serbian constitution of 1990 which was passed without being open to a public debate (Janković and Mokračić, 2011; *Kulturpunkt.hr*, 14.02.2010; *Ustav Republike Hrvatske*, 22.12.1990; *Ustav Republike Srbije*, 28.09.1990; interview with Zagreb19EXT; personal communication, name withheld). That is why the activists who assisted the draft evaders in Croatia worked on informing the public about the newly obtained right and its actual implementation, whereas the corresponding activists in Serbia helped the draft evaders – with advice or otherwise – to leave the country or in other ways avoid being found by the military police which sought them for not responding promptly to the draft notice.

of understanding she had experienced from one of the Zagreb feminists who had remarked that the war was not being waged in her vicinity (read: Serbia). This disturbed the Belgrade respondent since Vukovar was geographically closer to Belgrade than to Zagreb and she saw the whole territory of Yugoslavia as her space. Therefore, the war felt to her as real as to those living in Zagreb (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16.11.1991; *Borba*, 28.11.1991; *Mainzer Rhein-Zeitung*, 12.11.1991; interviews with Zagreb9AN, Zagreb20EXT and Belgrade4AN).

Obviously, the Belgrade and Zagreb participants alike felt that their experiences and emotions were to some extent invalidated by the participants from the other city. The fact that they were expected to speak in Germany as activists who understood each other and worked on bridging to one another only increased the (unarticulated) tensions between them. By disagreeing among themselves on the war and the possible ways for resolving the crisis, the participants appeared to have felt that they were losing the legitimacy as peace activists due to which they had been invited to Germany in the first place. This very likely only aggravated the tense atmosphere between them.

### **The meeting in Venice (21–23 February 1992)**

The meeting in Venice, organised by the Italian group Women in Black (Donne in Nero), was imagined as a space where (feminist) peace activists from all (post-) Yugoslav republics would come together to exchange their personal experiences of the country's disintegration and the wars in Croatia and Slovenia. Among the participants there were also Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists and soon-to-be-called nationalist feminists from Zagreb – the only two groupings of participants I focus on in my analysis.

Although conceived as a place for listening to one another and sharing solidarity and support, the Venice gathering would end up in anger, disbelief, disappointment and pain, as well as in cessation of the friendships between some of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists. At the same time, this outcome would inspire the creation of other networks and friendships. Due to the great impact of the meeting on the participants, the activists of Women in Black from Belgrade and Pančevo (Vojvodina) would decide to organise an international women's peace and solidarity gathering in summer of the same year. The gathering would prove so successful that it would end up being organised throughout the 1990s.

As I will elaborate below, based on the information published by Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists and the interview narratives, the meeting in Venice unexpectedly but clearly confronted the participants with the different realities they had come from and the great distance between their positionings which had come into existence in the meantime. In a publication by Women in Black (Zajović, 1993b), which is actually a collection of photocopied original statements, the meeting was introduced as follows:

[F]or many of us, it [the meeting] was not just a new experience, but a painful one as well. Something totally unexpected, especially for feminists, arose. The relation towards the homeland and the nation [ethnic group] became contested. Some of the women showed solidarity and identified themselves with their ethnic collective; they experienced it as [being] a victim. A deep gap emerged between the women from Serbia and Croatia. The threads of women's solidarity were not woven as we had expected (*Skup ženske solidarnosti*, n.d.).

In another publication, the same Belgrade group addressed the new allegiances which some feminists felt due to the constitutive power of war violence: 'We realised that the war had changed the relationships between women: that for some feminists the identification with the nation was the primary one whereas that with the female sex suppressed' (*Žene u crnom – Beograd*, n.d.). Finally, Zajović (1995:50) recollected:

I was very shocked when I realized that there were nationalist feminists, that not all feminists are pacifists. This painful recognition became especially clear at the women's meeting held in February (in Venice, Italy). Some feminists from Zagreb erected a wall between us, dividing us: we women from the aggressor state, and they from the attacked state.

Based on the sometimes very fragmentary information gathered from additional sources, it seems that the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists insisted on explicitly naming the perpetrators and victims, and created a clear dichotomy between these two categories. They named the war in Croatia aggression, Croatia was the attacked country or the victim, and Serbia the aggressor or aggressor's country and the sole actor responsible for the crisis in the (post-)Yugoslav region. These feminists were also very articulate about the fact that the war was waged on the territory of Croatia and that those who were conducting the aggression were coming from Serbia (Ćupić, 1993; *Emma*, September 1992; Korać, 1998; Lipparini, 2005; *New Directions for*

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*Women*, March/April 1993; *Oblaci i plavetnilo*, n.d.; *Rasprava*, 22.02.1992; *Razgovor*, n.d.; Zajović, 1993c; *Žene za mir*, 05.07.1991).

Put differently, for the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists the general categories of 'women' and 'men' were no longer applicable as such in the war context, but had to be supplemented with an ethnic marker. In addition to this, these feminists subordinated the gender marker to the ethnic one, meaning that they treated the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists as co-responsible for the Serb-inflicted war violence in Croatia. This can be observed from the way in which one of these Zagreb feminists, who had not been present in Venice, described the conflict between the Belgrade and Zagreb participants: '[T]he Serb women did not want to believe that their fathers, brothers and husbands did this [war rapes] to the Croat women who were till just recently their neighbours and friends' (*Emma*, September 1992; see also *New Directions for Women*, March/April 1993; interview with Belgrade10AN).

The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists spoke in Venice about their antiwar activities and against the war in general terms, pointed to the war-related increase of domestic violence against women, and expressed their affiliation with the disappearing Yugoslav space and Yugoslavia as a country. In the essay she read at the meeting, Zajović (1993c) critically spoke out against the nationalism in all Yugoslav republics and against nationalism in general. Her rebuttal was particularly concerned with the role which nationalism assigned to women, as well as the ways in which it manipulated and divided them on the basis of ethnicity. I am not aware that during the meeting the three Belgrade feminists singled out the responsibility of Serbia and Serb nationalism for the war in Croatia. Moreover, it seems that at that time the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists were not yet taking their position into account when creating their positioning. In other words, they had not yet started – as they would later – as a matter of principle to firstly and foremostly position themselves vis-à-vis Serb nationalism and the Serb war crimes because they were citizens of Serbia and usually of (partially) Serb ethnicity. The only instance where they applied this principle already then was when discussing the situation in Kosovo and Serbia's discrimination of the Kosovar Albanians.

The example of Kosovo is very suitable for observing the difference in the positioning on the war in Croatia between the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist and the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists in Venice. One of the premises which were presented at that meeting by a Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist read as follows: 'We deem that...the displacement of the crisis hotbeds in Kosovo, Slovenia and Croatia...basically supposes the same agent of aggression' (*Žene za mir*, 05.07.1991).

Although the authors did not explicitly define the agent in question, it was obvious that they referred to Serbia and/or the Serbs.<sup>169</sup>

That the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists used ethnic markers at that time only when addressing the situation in Kosovo indicates that they acknowledged the differences in power between the (Kosovar) Serbs and the Kosovar Albanians and found it essential to explicitly state that the former were oppressing the latter. However, regarding the war in Croatia they did not single out at that time any ethnic group or country as more (or less) responsible, meaning that they treated all sides as equally responsible for and equally victimised by the war. For example, the essay which Zajović (1993c:47) read in Venice featured this sentence: ‘In a war such as this one, there is no difference between the “defenders of the fatherland, home thresholds and hearths” [Croats] and those who are named aggressors [Serbs]’.<sup>170</sup>

Another indicative example of the different views on the situation in Kosovo and that in Croatia comes from the same essay:

I have always been very suspicious of the plausibility of a man’s or woman’s claim about being ethnically endangered in a state in which ‘their ethnic group’ is dominant. The endangerment of a woman (and a man) from the minority ethnic collectives is a completely different thing given that in ethno-fundamentalist states they are exposed to oppression (Zajović, 1993c:46).

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169 I would argue that the fact that Serbia and/or the Serbs were not explicitly referred to indicates how difficult and sensitive the creation of a heretical positioning was in the beginning for some Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. This becomes even more visible if the opening sentence of this premise is considered: ‘The peace movements name as a rule the agent of aggression’ (*Žene za mir*, 05.07.1991). Thus, although the authors of the premise had opened it with a general normative claim on the importance of naming, when it came to naming the concrete actor they could not move beyond producing an implicit indication. The use of the more indirect construction ‘agent of aggression’ instead of the direct term ‘aggressor’ is an additional case in point.

170 In the English version of this publication (Zajović, 1993d), this sentence has been quite erroneously translated as ‘In [a] war such as this [one], I fail to see the difference between the “*defenders of the fatherland*” and those who qualify as “*aggressors*” (Zajović, 1993e:43, emphasis in the original). Particularly problematic is the part ‘those who qualify as “*aggressors*”’ because it can be interpreted as Zajović’s implicit way of stating that the Serbs were the aggressors in the war in Croatia. This does not, however, seem to be the positioning she would have employed then (see eg her letter to Alexander Langer in *il manifesto*, 12.01.1992). The translation suggests, in fact, that Zajović shared at that time the positioning of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. Because of this fallacy, as well as the wanting quality of the few other translations which I compared, I recommend the use of the publication in Serbian (Zajović, 1993b).

To use this sentence for addressing the position of the Albanians (as a numeric minority) and that of the Serbs (as a numeric majority) in Serbia is not necessarily peculiar. Neither is its use if speaking only about Kosovo where the Kosovar Albanians were numerically – but not in terms of factual power – dominant, which was the case with the Kosovar Serbs (the numeric minority there). Nonetheless, this sentence becomes very problematic if it is read to an audience which partially consists of people from Croatia, three months after the fall of Vukovar. By formulating the matter in such a black-and-white manner, Zajvoić glossed over the fact that although the Croats were the dominant ethnic group in Croatia, they were nevertheless in some areas targeted by the Croatian Serbs. Albeit less numerous as an ethnic group, the latter were actually the dominant ones at the time due to the support in weapons and militaries they were receiving from the Yugoslav People's Army and the paramilitary units from Serbia.

Since no Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists was present in Venice,<sup>171</sup> I cannot say for certain what their reaction(s) to these two quotations would have been. Still, in view of the constitutive power of violence which I already addressed in my previous analysis, it is quite likely that they, too, would have criticised those utterances. Actually, if the speakers tour in Germany and the meeting in Venice are compared, a partial overlap is visible between the positionings of the Zagreb so-called nationalist and the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. Members of each of the two nascent Zagreb clusters accentuated that the war which was waged at the time was taking place in Croatia, not in Serbia, and that not all sides were equally responsible and equally victimised.

This shared view opposed the positioning of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists at the time, in which the contexts of Croatia and Serbia were not usually explicitly distinguished from one another regarding the intensity and type of war violence, and in which Serbia was not presented as the more responsible party. Still, as I indicated, the overlap between the two Zagreb clusters was not total. The positioning of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists was more accusatory in tone towards everything and everybody coming from Serbia, including the Belgrade self-

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171 Belgrade14AN, a Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist, told me in the interview that these feminists had not been invited by the local Zagreb organiser who was a so-called nationalist feminist. This is quite plausible. Although at that time – February 1992 – the Zagreb feminists had not split yet, the clustering and clashes among them had already begun. One of the first instances where the existence of different positionings on the war in Croatia had become visible was in late July 1991, during the meeting with an Italian women's peace delegation (*Danas*, 30.07.1991; *Žene za mir*, 05.07.1991; interview with Zagreb16N). The clustering-in-progress was probably also the reason why there were no Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists at the speakers tour in Germany in November 1991.

declared antinationalist feminists. The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists seemed not to always differentiate between those who created, endorsed and carried out Serbia's politics and those who – like Women in Black – publicly protested against those politics. Moreover, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists seem to have approached the Belgrade participants with distrust. For example, after hearing from a Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist about the estimated number of draft resisters in Belgrade, a Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist insisted to hear the figures for the rest of Serbia (*Rasprava*, 22.02.1992).

Mirjana Ćupić (1993; *Razgovor*, n.d.) offers important information for understanding why the meeting in Venice was so emotional, and why it started with joy and laughter but ended with pain and anger. At the first session, during the introductory round, she shared how touched, pleased and proud she had been to receive, at the time when the tanks had been heading to Vukovar, the telegram of 'empathy and support' (Ćupić, 1993:44) from her friend – a Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist who was present in Venice. In a response to it, she had written a letter while sitting in a basement because of the danger of air raids (on the first of the two occasions in 1991 when the warnings proved justified). A different Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist, who was also present in Venice, told me in the interview how important Ćupić's letter had been for her. She had always carried a photocopy of it and it helped her to cope with what was taking place in Vukovar (interview with Belgrade10AN; see also *New Directions for Women*, March/April 1993).

The meeting in Venice was the first occasion after the exchange of correspondence when this Zagreb feminist and the Belgrade one who had sent the telegram met again. Actually, that gathering was the first time after the beginning of the war in Croatia that all three Belgrade self-declared antinationalist and all three Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists came together. The atmosphere was made even more pregnant by the presence of a Zagreb-based Croat refugee woman from Vukovar who told her story about fleeing from Vukovar and not having any news from her husband, who had been taken as a prisoner of war to a concentration camp in Serbia. So, very soon after its joyful start, the meeting took another turn. Ćupić (1993:44) describes this change of direction as follows:

I met the women from Belgrade...Joy of seeing [each other]. Laughter. I want to talk, hear them and tell them everything. Talk till the morning. On the first day, instead of a conversation, I heard essays, reports on actions, theses... I listen to them and wonder where my friends are. I want to hear them like I clearly heard in the telegram last year the message directed to me and all women

of Croatia. I felt their fear of the war which they had intuitively felt would happen to me. ----- It is hard to think about our further conversations; when will they take place and where. Our further conversations (at this moment) could resemble cockfights in an arena. The audience would be pleased trying to confront the two sides which are to fight. The audience senses the call of fresh blood and flesh...They [the audience and the organisers] are aware that the show will be excellent if I enter right now. That will be a real fight with a lot of blood. That is a real arena, a real life show.

What happened, thus, was that at least some of the participants expected that the meeting would be an emphatic and supportive get-together of (befriended) fellow feminists and other activists. However, once the existence of different positionings and experiences became clear, the meeting turned into a field in which a struggle for legitimacy was taking place, foremostly between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists.

The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists struggled for legitimacy of their (broad) definition of aggressors and victims, their distress, the affiliation which some of them had with Yugoslavia, and their – and other people’s – antiwar resistance deeds in Serbia.<sup>172</sup> The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists wanted to obtain recognition of their (narrow) definition of aggressor and victim, their and their country-people’s war-induced suffering, and the intensity of the war destruction in Croatia. Few not war-related but nonetheless legitimacy-related issues added to the latter feminists’ displeasure: the larger number of participants from Serbia (their varied ethnic origin notwithstanding) than from Croatia, the greater inclination of the Italian organisers to share the positioning of the Belgrade feminists, and the unequally distributed task division in which one of the Belgrade feminists was able to exercise more control over the discussions than the other participants by being in charge of the facilitation and the interpretation between Croatian/Serbian and Italian (interviews with Belgrade10AN, Zagreb7AN, Zagreb16N and Belgrade14AN).

Apparently, no grouping could provide to the other one the wanted legitimacy because that would have implied agreement with a quite contrasting positioning. This conflict is visible from the following interview fragment with one of the participating Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. Zagreb16N explained why she had been particularly upset with Zajović’s conceptualisation of all politicians as acting in the same manner and being members of the same masculine fraternity:

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172 In late March 1999 one of the Belgrade participants linked the non-recognition of her pain which she had experienced in Venice in 1992 to the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: ‘Maybe after the suffering in destroyed Belgrade my pain will also gain legitimacy?’ (Četković, 1999:12).

I did not think that Tuđman and Milošević had made a deal since it was Tuđman's land which was destroyed...while there [in Serbia] no house was destroyed...[T]o me that did not look like a normal agreement between two politicians; that they had agreed that the one would destroy...one fourth of the houses of the other and make one fifth of the population homeless.

Nadežda Ćetković, one of the Belgrade feminist participants, recounted another part of the same struggle for legitimacy as follows:

I felt that the discussion was, in a way, the imposition of guilt upon us [the Belgrade feminists]. We had already been protesting on the street here [in Belgrade], and had been exposing our bodies against the regime. That wasn't naive, because we were approached by people who were spitting at us, pushing us, pulling our hair out, shouting that we are traitors; however, all that somehow hadn't been recognised as sufficient, and I couldn't figure out what we were supposed to do – to go to Zagreb and to let the bombs fall onto our heads?! The frustration was enormous, and I did try to understand, but my feelings were hurt (in: Korać, 1998:36).

Ćetković indicated here how much the initial positioning of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists clashed with the mainstream one in Serbia in the 1990s. While the former positioning entailed equal responsibility and victimisation of all sides, the latter conceptualised the Serbs only as the victims of the war violence. As the historian Dubravka Stojanović has observed, to speak in Serbia in 1991 – and, I would add, early 1992 when the meeting in Venice took place – about all victims was to commit 'the maximal act of rebellion' (*Peščanik*, 23.03.2012).<sup>173</sup>

This initial positioning was publicly manifested in eg the four month long daily silent vigils in front of the Presidency of Serbia, where candles were lit for all victims of the war in Yugoslavia (*Borba*, 23–24.11.1991; *Vreme*, 28.10.1991, 23.12.1991). However, in spite of this deviation from Serbia's political mainstream, this positioning was criticised by the Zagreb feminists from both clusters. They considered it as not doing justice to the war situation in Croatia to which they were exposed. This insufficient understanding for and recognition of each other's (difficult) experiences resulted in tensions both between the self-declared antinationalist feminists from the two cities, and between the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist and the Zagreb so-

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173 This clash would become even more pronounced when the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists would change their initial positioning of equal responsibility and victimisation into one which foremostly accentuated the Serb responsibility for the suffering of non-Serbs.

called nationalist feminists, but it did not bring closer the Zagreb feminists from the two clusters.

Another important issue which Ćetković addressed above is the (imposed) feeling of guilt among the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists in reaction to Serbia's politics and the Serb war crimes. Unlike the feminists from the remaining three clusters, these Belgrade feminists were the only ones who regularly engaged with this feeling of guilt either by expressing it or rejecting it. This issue became even more pertinent with the outburst of the war and war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Deklaracija žena iz Beograda*, 04.02.1993; *die tageszeitung*, 05.11.1992; Fridman, 2006b; *Letter to the women's meeting*, 25.02.1993; Mladenović, 1994; Mladenović and Litričin, 1993; *off our backs*, February 1993a). I will return to this in my analysis of the 'International Women's Solidarity' meeting in Zagreb. Here I will only mention one of the instances in Venice when the Belgrade feminists' feeling of guilt was evoked. It concerned the affiliation with Yugoslavia.

During the introduction one of them said: '[I] was 100% Yugoslav, now I have lost my country, I feel like a person who does not belong anywhere' (Vera, in: *Razgovor*, n.d.). Another pointed to the miscellaneous parts of Yugoslavia where she had resided: 'I was born in Zagreb, lived in Slovenia,...in one Serbian village, [and] two years in Mostar [Bosnia and Herzegovina]' (Nadežda, in: *Razgovor*, n.d.). The next day, the refugee woman from Vukovar rebuked these statements: 'You women from Serbia declare yourselves as Yugoslavs. When one of you said something like that yesterday, I saw that all of you were crying. But today, when we were listening to the women from Kosovo while they were talking about their great suffering, I did not see tears' (Melita, in: *Rasprava*, 22.02.1992).

I did not find any record that the Kosovar Albanian women accused the Belgrade participants in any way at the meeting, although they were very explicit and critical about the everyday consequences of Serbia's politics for the lives of the Kosovar Albanians. On the contrary, before Melita would voice her criticism, one of the Kosovar Albanians had explicitly expressed her gratitude to the women from Belgrade for their support to the Albanian women in Kosovo (*Rasprava*, 22.02.1992). It is quite imaginable, though, that the gravity of the accounts of the two Kosovar Albanian participants had nonetheless contributed to the feeling of guilt of (some of) the Belgrade participants.

The experience in Venice obviously made at least some of the Belgrade participants more cautious about expressing their affiliation with Yugoslavia in public. In a later meeting, the same Vera as above recollected the scene in Venice: 'At one gathering with women from Zagreb held in Venice I said that I felt Yugoslav,

maybe because I felt sadness because of Yugoslavia. But then I realised that it was not legitimate to say that you were Yugoslav' (in: Lipparini, 2005:30, Croatian half of the book). Another Belgrade feminist participant remembered a different part of the criticism of the woman from Vukovar, or maybe remembered the same criticism, but differently from the way in which it was published in Zajović (1993b). Belgrade3AN recalled in the interview that the woman from Vukovar had said: 'A few days ago I left the cellar in which I had spent two months with the children. My husband is in Serb captivity, I have no idea what has happened to him. I have no need or energy to cry for the state which had done this to me'. Upon hearing this Belgrade3AN said to have reacted as follows:

After that I have never shared my Yugoslav story again. I felt guilty for defending that whole [Yugoslav] space as my space. I did feel it as my own, intimate [space], not as a state. But then I saw that that offended some people. That some women had a different feeling of belonging. That that feeling [of mine] was linked to a state which was their enemy and that they experienced that Yugoslavia as an inimical construction, whereas their national state felt safe to them. I stopped with that because I felt that when you were from Serbia, you had a great burden on your shoulders and you could not have any claims to Yugoslavia...[T]hat's a position in which your hands are tied.<sup>174</sup>

The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists' affiliation with Yugoslavia was not only criticised by those with a stronger attachment to their nation state or ethnic group. It was also criticised by the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist

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174 The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists were not the only ones who were aware that the continuous perception of the post-Yugoslav region as a united whole could be tricky when uttered by somebody from Belgrade. For example, to a journalist's question in 2009 to what extent she perceived the existence of a border between Belgrade and Sarajevo (read: between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Belgrade dramaturge and peace activist Borka Pavičević responded: 'I could not care less that that border exists! I do not see that border to the extent that I consider my statement inappropriate because I am afraid that somebody in Sarajevo might understand it as Belgrade's [politics of] unitarisation' (*Dani Sarajeva 2009 bilten*, May 2009). Another example is the Belgrade-born playwright Dušan Jovanović. In a text first published in 1996 in Slovenian he speaks of the difficulties faced by people like him who want to continue describing themselves as 'Yugoslavs' due to their staggeringly mixed ethnic background as well as chosen life-style and world view. One of the difficulties in question is the positioning which this designation connotes: 'Of course, you cannot be a citizen of a state which does not exist! But if you, nonetheless, insist on the Yugoslavism, that means that you consciously take the side of this term's political option and oppose the independence and statehood of your own republic' (Jovanović D., 2007:18).

feminists. As I indicated in Chapter 2, Knežević (1994) implied that these Belgrade feminists were Yugoslav nationalists. Several other Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists also disapproved of this affiliation with Yugoslavia, as eg the following recollection shows: ‘You realise in time that that mourning of Yugoslavia slowly starts to irritate you. Now we have this situation and it is over, you cannot go on with crying. Even Yugoslavia was not the best one possible, just think of Kosovo’ (interview with Zagreb23AN).

The irritation of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists was additionally (and maybe even more significantly) triggered by their Belgrade counterparts’ nostalgia for the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea – the maritime nostalgia, as I chose to name it. The latter’s use of the pre-war denomination ‘our sea’ when referring to the Adriatic,<sup>175</sup> even in the context of recollecting one’s pre-war summer holidays, school trips and love stories, was experienced by some Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists as particularly adding fuel to the fire (interviews with Zagreb9AN, Zagreb22EXT, Zagreb12AN, Zagreb11AN, Belgrade10AN, Zagreb23AN, Belgrade13AN, Zagreb7AN, Belgrade3AN, Belgrade5AN and Belgrade4AN).

The feeling of loss which the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists expressed in relation to the impossibility of going to the Croatian coast during the war in Croatia, was seen by some Zagreb feminists from the corresponding cluster as resembling the Serb expansionist tendencies regarding the creation of Great Serbia or a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia<sup>176</sup> or, at least, as the Belgrade feminists’ inability to accept the new geopolitical reality. Their annoyance would be strengthened by the fact that during the war some parts of the coast were not easily accessible to the Zagreb feminists either, due to the Croatian Serbs’ blockade of the direct transportation routes from Zagreb. For many of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists it was

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175 It is important to note that the construction ‘our sea’ was not only employed by people from Serbia. While I have not explored this issue in detail, I know that at least some people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia have used this reference, too. Another, historically much more distant usage of ‘our sea’ was the Roman one: for them, ‘Mare nostrum’ denoted the Mediterranean Sea.

176 Jansen (2005:225) correctly observes that the Yugonostalgia, ie the nostalgia for Yugoslavia, should not be per se seen as an act of antinationalist resistance to the regime, given that in Serbia ‘the hegemonic Yugoslavism and nationalism formed a bizarre team’. More concretely, one of the rationales which Milošević gave for his politics was the preservation of the Yugoslav federation against all secessionist forces (Vasiljević, 2008; Zaharijević, 2007). A telling difference in this context between the Belgrade feminists is that three so-called nationalist feminists have stated that the Yugoslav entities which had striven to secede from Yugoslavia were far from being better-off as independent states. I have not come across such a comment from any Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist (Belgrade2N, 1999; interviews with Belgrade16N and Belgrade15N).

very difficult to encounter such reactions. One of them formulated these dynamics as follows: ‘There has been and there still is a feeling here...of being treated unfairly because of the perception that everything pro-Yugoslav is actually pro-Great-Serbian, a domination’ (interview with Belgrade4AN).

Similarly to the expression of equal responsibility and victimisation of all sides, which was for the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists an act of rebellion against the Serbian official politics and for their Zagreb counterparts a denial of the real character of the war in Croatia, the expression of one’s affiliation with Yugoslavia (and the Adriatic Sea) appears to have been one of the common misunderstandings between these two clusters. In an informal conversation and the interview alike, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist Zagreb11AN told me how irritated she had been in the early 1990s by the Belgrade feminists’ statements on how much they loved Dubrovnik<sup>177</sup> or about their perception of Dubrovnik as part of their homeland.

Although such a pro-Yugoslav orientation could have indeed indicated support of Milošević’s politics, sometimes it signalled exactly the opposite. A good recorded example of such an act of resistance, albeit not undertaken by a Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist, is the letter of Mirjana Miočinović. In October 1991 this professor at the Belgrade Faculty of Dramatic Arts, in protest of her employer’s lack of a formal reaction against the war and the destruction of Dubrovnik, decided to first freeze her work and then, should the war not end within a month, resign. She began the explanation of her decision by saying: ‘Faced with the terrible destruction of the country which I still consider my homeland’ (Miočinović, 1997:10; see also Biserko, 2006). I will return to this issue in my analysis of the meeting in Medulin.

### **The international gathering ‘Women in War’ in Zagreb (2–4 October 1992)**

The international feminist gathering ‘Women in War’ was the first international event where the existence of war rapes in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina was discussed. Still, its foremost relevance for my research topic is that it was during its preparatory phase and at the gathering itself that the split between the Zagreb feminists started becoming publicly known both in Croatia and internationally (foremostly in Europe).

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177 A historical and tourist centre on the Adriatic coast which was heavily damaged in the shelling (from air, ground and sea) by the Yugoslav People’s Army in the autumn of 1991, during the first months of the war in Croatia.

## CHAPTER FOUR

As I explained in Chapter 3, although the different war-related positionings and the related tensions among the members of Women's Help Now had started manifesting already from July 1991, the final split of the group – which had to do also with several not war-related reasons – took place at the meeting on 12 April 1992. The self-declared antinationalist feminists' faction registered as a separate group called Autonomous Women's House Zagreb. Those who remained as Women's Help Now were the so-called nationalist feminists. At the time of the 'Women in War' gathering, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were members of the Autonomous Women's House Zagreb, whereas the so-called nationalist feminists were active in Kareta, Women's Help Now or Trešnjevka – a group for which I could not establish whether it had participated in this gathering.

The gathering was financially supported by the German funder FrauenAnstiftung. The money was allocated to Women's Help Now already before the split, for the purpose of organising what would have been the 'Fifth Yugoslav Feminist Gathering'. At the first preparatory session on 23 February 1992 the members of Women's Help Now decided to call the gathering 'International Feminist Gathering' since Yugoslavia did not exist anymore. It was also decided that the topic would be 'Women in War'. The idea of convening feminists from all parts of the former country was to be maintained. However, after the split in April 1992 the feminists who had left could no longer exert any influence on the format which the meeting would eventually receive. The preparations ended up in the hands of Women's Help Now, given that the main contact person for the correspondence with FrauenAnstiftung was one of the feminists who had remained in this group. Kareta became the co-organiser of the gathering. Three of the women organisers were the so-called nationalist feminists who had participated in the meeting in Venice in February that year (*Ja, ti, one*, n.d.; *Organizacija fem. skupa*, 23.02.1992; *Zašto smo odlučile*, n.d.; interviews with Zagreb9AN, Zagreb7AN, Zagreb16N and Zagreb6N).

Already before the gathering had taken place it became a subject of a great controversy because of the organisers' exclusion of the Belgrade feminists. In addition, during the meeting several other conflicts were created, too. I will elaborate upon them briefly. Soon before its start, in an internal dispatch, Heidi Burmeister and Olga Prunk from FrauenAnstiftung declared not to be happy with the organisers' decision not to invite any of the Belgrade feminists. Despite this, they decided not to withdraw the financial support, as this was to be the first meeting of its kind in 'the former Yugoslavia' and, moreover, a way to mobilise more international feminists for engaging with the war in the region and its consequences for women. Nonetheless, in its report on the gathering, FrauenAnstiftung criticised its contents and the behaviour

of the organisers who had made a dead letter out of the call for women's dialogue and solidarity stated in the invitation. In conclusion, the funding agency declared that it would not support the two organising groups anymore and work only with groups which have committed themselves to peace work, such as the Autonomous Women's House Zagreb (*Sachbericht*, n.d.; *Zur Tagung "Frauen im Krieg"*, 30.09.1992).

I have not come across any document written by the organisers in which they explicitly state, let alone elaborate, their decision to bypass the Belgrade feminists. Their critical positioning vis-à-vis them and the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists can nevertheless be inferred from the following part of one of the handouts which accompanied the invitation letter:

[T]he war in Croatia...has divided once solidair [sic] organizations and individuals into those from the countries which are victims of aggression (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo), those from the countries-aggressors (Serbia and Monte Negro [sic]) and those from the countries-observers (Slovenia and Macedonia)...It has become evident that feminism was caught red-handed by the war and aggression on Croatia. Once leading feminists have not yet presented a relevant feminist picture and analysis of the war, while some of them got lost in inarticulate peace initiatives not daring to take up the position and express their attitude (*Who are we? Where are we?*, 10.07.1992).

The texts written by third parties around the time of the gathering stated that the Zagreb organisers had justified their choice for not inviting the Belgrade feminists in two ways. First, in the former's view, the latter had failed to sufficiently unambiguously distance themselves from the official Serbian politics and recognise that Serbia was the main aggressor. Second, the organisers wanted to respect the UN Security Council sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia<sup>178</sup> (*Ja, ti, one*, n.d.; *Sachbericht*, n.d.; *Scheherazade*, September 1992).

However, none of these issues was given as the reason for the non-invitation by the four Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists who addressed this gathering in the

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178 The paragraph 8c of the UN Security Council Resolution 757 (1992) stated that all States shall '[s]uspend scientific and technical cooperation and cultural exchanges and visits involving persons or groups officially sponsored by or representing the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)'. However, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists were neither sponsored nor formally representing the state whose citizens they were, but regularly publicly protesting against its politics. Other convenors have been aware of this since it was exactly in this capacity of explicit opponents of Milošević's politics that these feminists were invited throughout the 1990s to participate in conferences and gatherings around the world.

## CHAPTER FOUR

interview with me – all of whom had participated in its organisation. The first reason which Zagreb16N mentioned was that there was actually no question whether to invite the Belgrade feminists or not, since they would not have been allowed to enter Croatia anyway. This was how an employee of the Croatian Ministry of Interior had answered her inquiry about the entry of women from Serbia. The second reason, which was also evoked by the three other respondents, was the attendance of (raped) refugee women victims of Serb atrocities in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The organisers' idea had been to give these women space at the gathering to speak about their war experiences and suffering in front of an international audience. According to the organisers, had the Belgrade feminists (read: Serbs) been present at the gathering, the safe space for the refugee women to testify about the Serb atrocities would have been endangered and the purpose of the meeting – to have women publicly speak about their war experiences – sabotaged. The refugee women had insisted on the absence of people from Serbia, ie had agreed on sharing their stories on the condition that nobody from Serbia would attend. The exclusion of Serb women from an event where victims of Serb war crimes would testify was for the organisers analogous to and a continuation of the practice of not allowing men at the Zagreb SOS Hotline for women and children victims of male violence. Just like the SOS Hotline, this gathering had been intended to give space to the victims which would be free from the perpetrator's presence (interviews with Zagreb1N, Zagreb16N, Zagreb14N and Zagreb6N).

Regardless of the reason(s) which the Zagreb so-called nationalist organisers might have had for not inviting the Belgrade feminists, it remains a fact that the former did not communicate to the latter why they were not inviting them. The invitation letter and the accompanying two handouts which were sent out in July 1992 did not mention at all the organisers' decision to depart from the agenda which had been agreed upon at the 'Fourth Yugoslav Feminist Gathering' in Ljubljana in May 1991 and confirmed at the first preparatory meeting in February 1992. More precisely, the invitation did not state that a survivors' speak-out would take place at the gathering and that an exclusive invitation policy was employed (*Einladung*, 10.07.1992; *Ja, ti, one*, n.d.; *Why International Feminist Meeting*, 10.07.1992; *Who are we? Where are we?*, 10.07.1992; *Zašto smo odlučile*, n.d.). One of the handouts did state, however, the organisers' goal to inform European women about what was actually taking place in the region and mobilise them to undertake action:

We particularly want to describe the war to the women of Europe who should and must come face to face with the fact that it is the first occupatory [sic] war to be waged on our continent after World War 2. We want to inspire [the] European and world public [by] presenting

them our experience, observations and problems being convinced that each war is fought against each woman, that each bombarded town is the women's town [sic]...According to our knowledge woman has become [sic] a 'war target' or 'war aim'; its [sic] sex has become not only the area for demonstration of military superiority but the area and territory of occupation. We want to present our story, the story of women from an attacked country hoping that we are going to stimulate women[']s organizations and feminists to take more active part on international level in preventing wars generally (*Why International Feminist Meeting*, 10.07.1992).

The Zagreb organisers had, thus, decided not to use the obtained funds for their original purpose: a continuation of the cooperation and exchange between the (post-)Yugoslav feminists undeterred by the war violence and the newly erected state and ethnic boundaries. Instead, they secretly chose another priority: have women war victims testify in order to mobilise international feminists to act in favour of putting end to the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, as well as to the mass war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina disclosed a few months earlier.<sup>179</sup> This change of plan actually meant that the organisers had decided to break the internal agreement and the positioning of the Yugoslav feminists not to allow themselves to be divided on the grounds of ethnicity (eg *Klic k razumu*, November 1987; *Zaključci*, 01.04.1990). The organisers hereby ceased their endorsement of the orthodox feminist positioning and adopted a new, heretical one.

It was exactly this (not communicated) abandonment of the previously agreed upon goal and conceptualisation of solidarity among the Yugoslav feminists that led to the two critical statements which were read at the gathering. The first statement was authored by Mojca Dobnikar, one of the Ljubljana participants, and the second had 14 signatories: nine Ljubljana feminists, four Zagreb self-declared antinationalist ones and one Belgrade/Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist. The latter signed it as a representative of the Belgrade SOS Hotline and Women in Black, but she actually lived and worked both in Belgrade and Zagreb and could, due to her half-Croat ethnic origin, enter Croatia with a Croatian passport.

The statements did not disapprove of the organisers' endeavour to publicise the existence of war rapes and advocate for their cessation and criminalisation.

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179 The American journalist Roy Gutman is considered to be the first person to break the news about the occurrence of (Serb-inflicted) war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina in August 1992 (*Newsday*, 23.08.1992; *The Gazette*, 09.08.1992; *The Guardian*, 05.08.1992). In September 1992 the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist group Trešnjevka prepared and distributed widely a report on the Serb-held war rape camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Report*, 28.09.1992).

Nonetheless, they criticised the covert change of the purpose of the gathering, the exclusion of the Belgrade feminists despite their anti-Milošević positioning, and the betrayal of the previously made agreement about the continuation of the cooperation. Furthermore, they rebuked the organisers' choice not to allow anybody who had not been invited to attend the gathering and, consequently, invite only four Ljubljana feminists. At the same time, the authors asked for a restoration of the cooperation, dialogue and gender-based solidarity between the post-Yugoslav feminists (*Ja, ti, one*, n.d.; *Zašto smo odlučile*, n.d.; interviews with Ljubljana1EXT and Ljubljana2EXT).

So, actually, next to the Belgrade feminists, the other Zagreb cluster was almost fully excluded as well, while the number of (potentially) dissenting voices from Ljubljana was strictly limited. It seems, therefore, that the Zagreb organisers used a threefold strategy in their efforts to, on the one hand, stop the wars and war rapes in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and, on the other, obtain a broad legitimacy for their definition of these wars and war rapes. They drastically reduced the chances of dissent, invited war victims whose testimonies supported their own positioning, and increased the number of seats available to feminists from abroad.

When the legitimacy of the organisers' positioning was challenged by the Belgrade/Zagreb feminist who, albeit not invited, had entered the conference room and got the chance to speak about the peace activities in Belgrade (thanks to a German participant who had deliberately passed her the word), the organisers reacted with an uproar. In the interviews three of them explicitly scolded this act for being insensitive and harmful towards the (raped) refugee women<sup>180</sup> and thereby implicitly portrayed themselves as the only sincere advocates of these women's interests and well-being (interviews with Zagreb16N, Zagreb14N and Zagreb6N; personal communication, name withheld).

The two statements which were read at the meeting not only criticised the choices which the organisers had made, but also proposed strategies on how to repair the mistake and proceed together. Dobnikar's suggestion was to have the organisers convene a session on the possibilities for future cooperation among the post-Yugoslav feminists after the end of the official programme or, should the organisers not do this, have all interested participants gather anyway to discuss the same issue (*Ja, ti*,

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180 However, not all refugee women seemed to object to the presence of somebody (partially) from Belgrade. A Ljubljana feminist recalled in the interview that one of these women had confided to her that she was pleased with the joint statement which criticised the absence of Belgrade feminists, whereas the uninvited Belgrade/Zagreb feminist told me that she had afterwards been approached by women from Vukovar who were eager to talk to her in private (Dobnikar, 2000; interview with Ljubljana1EXT; personal communication, name withheld).

one, n.d.). The other statement proposed that all participants of the gathering send a joint letter to the Belgrade feminists apologising for their exclusion and explaining the reasons for it, as well as expressing the hope to meet the following year as usual. It also suggested that the organisers send an apology to all uninvited feminists. In an addendum to the letter, the four officially invited Ljubljana feminists refrained from having their hotel and travel costs reimbursed by the organisers and asked them to give this money to the Autonomous Women's House Zagreb, which was in a financial crisis (*Zašto smo odlučile*, n.d.).

The organisers' choice not to respond to these suggestions seems to have created the war-related demarcation line which would divide them from the other Zagreb feminists and those from Belgrade and Ljubljana, and remain largely intact throughout the 1990s and up to present. The Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists – and, to a smaller extent, some from Ljubljana<sup>181</sup> – would continue cooperating with each other. They would also keep (underlining) their pre-war positioning of gender-based solidarity between women, although in reality this solidarity would not extend to the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists.

As two Zagreb respondents (one self-declared antinationalist feminist and one external) explained in the interviews, the cooperation between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists had not indicated an absence of tensions and disagreements, but a presence of a sufficient overlap between their positionings. Zagreb11AN spoke of these feminists as 'de facto thinking the same, even when we have at times a different perception, which is legitimate'. In a similar vein, Zagreb22EXT saw the common choice for sisterhood and disloyalty to the government to be 'more important than the differences which had come into existence, but [which] were not catastrophic. What was shared between them was much larger than that which was not'.

### Related developments after the gathering

Another significant issue related to the 'Women in War' gathering is the acclamation – and, even more so, its framing – which the organisers and their positioning on the war rapes acquired from the popular Croatian pro-state tabloid *Globus*. The article in question (*Globus*, 11.12.1992)<sup>182</sup> has received world-wide (scholarly) attention, but

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181 See footnote 24.

182 This article is sometimes – in journalist and scholarly texts alike – wrongly dated to 10 December 1992. This mistake is most likely due to the incorrect date information in the English-language press release which the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists

not because of its support for the gathering. The attention was due to the defamatory statements and insults which it addressed to five prominent Croatian female intellectuals: the journalists Vesna Kesić and Jelena Lovrić, the philosopher Rada Iveković, and the writers Slavenka Drakulić and Dubravka Ugrešić. These five women, whom the tabloid named ‘witches’, were severely attacked because of their separate claims that women and not ethnically specific women were raped.

To make the accusation even more explicit, the article was titled ‘Croatian feminists rape Croatia!’, whereby the indication ‘feminists’ in the title did not refer to the organisers of the October 1992 gathering, but to the five attacked women.<sup>183</sup> In addition to this, (manipulated) parts of their biographies were published in order to underline their alleged absence of loyalty towards the new Croatian state and its war suffering, as well as their supposed privileged life during socialist Yugoslavia – something which had the status of a serious crime in Croatia in the early 1990s (Drakulić Sla., 1999; *Globus*, 11.12.1992; Iveković R., 1994; Kesić, 1993; *Protest against the text published in “Globus”*, 12.12.1992; Ugrešić, 1996; *Večernji list*, 05.12.1992, 02.03.1993).<sup>184</sup>

These five intellectuals’ positioning on the war rapes was contrasted with that of the organisers of the gathering. Women’s Help Now and Kareta were praised for arranging an international feminist gathering at which the war rapes were discussed ‘for the first time openly and publicly’. Furthermore, the organisers were commended for creating space for the victims’ testimonies and assisting them in their efforts to raise international awareness of this issue, ie make these sexual crimes ‘the international feminist problem number one’ (*Globus*, 11.12.1992). Contrary to this, the five accused women were rebuked for not using their alleged access to international media and political institutions to draw attention to the suffering of the Bosniak and Croat

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had sent to their foreign contacts in order to inform them about the article (*Protest against the text published in “Globus”*, 12.12.1992).

183 Although the article stated that all five women were feminists, only Slavenka Drakulić, Rada Iveković and Vesna Kesić had declared themselves as such.

184 When the article in *Globus* was published, it was not signed with the author’s name but with the anonymous ‘Globusov investigativni team’ (‘Globus’ investigatory team’). Later it was revealed that it had been written by Slaven Letica – a Croatian sociologist and former advisor of Croatia’s president Tuđman. I would argue that it was not coincidental that such an inflammatory article talking about witches who raped Croatia and were therefore a national enemy was written by a sociologist acquainted with labelling theory. In a post-war academic article on labelling theory (Letica, 1997), he analysed the labels used by politicians and media with regard to the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. He did not mention at all, though, the labels he had himself employed in the article on the ‘five witches’ from December 1992.

women, but speaking instead about the suffering of all women in male wars. So, in fact, the praise which was given to the organisers did not so much mean an approval of their work, but rather functioned as an additional argument against the five women and an expression of disapproval of their positioning. In an ironic twist, thus, the same members of *Kareta* who had in April 1991 commemorated all women burned as witches throughout the centuries<sup>185</sup> were used in December 1992 to fan the flames against the ‘five witches’.

None of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist groups reacted to this article, although it was full of misogynous comments and other types of hate speech directed at the five women. For example, ‘The few of them who could, despite their theoretical standpoint [read: feminism] and physical looks, find a partner or a spouse, did it in accordance with the Yugoslav quality norm [read: chose Serbs in order to foster the principle of brotherhood and unity]’ (*Globus*, 11.12.1992). The Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists did react immediately. They sent out a press release to their contacts abroad and to the Croatian media, but not to the tabloid in question because of being – as they stated in the reaction – ‘fully aware of the fact that addressing this protest to the editors of “*Globus*” would be of no avail’ (*Protest against the text published in “Globus”*, 12.12.1992). The press release was signed with Women’s Lobby Zagreb – the informal pressure group of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists which had been established just the month before. Vesna Kesić, one of the five intellectuals, was also active there.

The group forcefully rejected the contents of the article, but refrained from criticising the ‘Women in War’ gathering or the two so-called nationalist feminist groups which had organised it. In fact, neither the gathering nor its organisers were mentioned in the reaction. Since the attack on the five women had included the claim that the Serb soldiers were the only ones committing rapes, the Women’s Lobby Zagreb used this opportunity also to announce its positioning on the war rapes. The press release was published – in slightly shortened versions – by two Croatian dailies (*Novi Vjesnik*, 14.12.1992; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 13.12.1992), but no Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist group ever reacted to it.

In this press release, the Women’s Lobby Zagreb formulated its positioning on the war rapes in the following way:

[A]re we really incapable to imagine (even if there didn’t exist the relevant reports which confirm that fact and which, like

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185 See Chapter 3.

the Mazowiecki [sic] report,<sup>186</sup> can even be found in our daily newspapers) that WOMEN of other nationalities are getting raped as well and that this is also the doing of the Cro-army [Croatian army] soldiers...The assessments, even before serious investigations on these horrifying crimes are conducted, make clear that [the] rapes of women are a psychological strategy of [the] Serbian and Montenegrin army, that these rapes occur more often and are more systematical. However, it is the matter of personal and national honor to accept the deplorable fact that 'our boys' are also doing it. 'Our boys' which we should renounce of if we want to be just in this unjust war (*Protest against the text published in "Globus"*, 12.12.1992, emphasis in the original).

So, on the one hand, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists accentuated the gender component of the war rapes. On the other hand, they underlined that there had also been war rapes committed by the Croat forces and that Croatia should recognise their existence. Hereby they diverged greatly from the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists who have never publicly positioned themselves in relation to the Croat rapes (an issue I will return to a bit later in this section). At the same time, the Women's Lobby Zagreb cautiously suggested in the above press release a difference in intensity and character between the war rapes committed by the army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and those committed by the Croatian army.

A similar strategy of cautiously singling out the Serb rapes, while denying their alleged disentanglement from the omnipresent war (and peacetime) male violence against women regardless of ethnicity, had already been used by this group in its first press release. However, the rapes by the Croat soldiers were suggested there only implicitly:

In each war soldiers rape regardless of the side they belong to. The news which circulates around the world today says that the Serb military and paramilitary forces on the occupied territories of Bosnia run women's camps in which rape and violence against women are a regular practice. That is only the tip of the iceberg of the violence which continues in peacetime as well (*Silovanje kao oružje*, 05.12.1992).

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186 The Women's Lobby Zagreb probably refers here to the third report of Tadeusz Mazowiecki – the Special Rapporteur to the UN Commission on Human Rights – which contained inter alia information on rapes which had been committed by members of the Croat military units in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Mazowiecki report*, November 1992).

The difference in the conceptualisation of perpetrators and victims of war rape notwithstanding, the positioning which the Women's Lobby Zagreb expressed in this first announcement partially overlapped with the one of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. Both clusters demanded the treatment of war rape as a war crime and a weapon of war, the closing down of all war camps where women were sexually violated, and the establishment of centres where the survivors would receive the needed support (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 12.11.1992; *Mona Lisa*, 15.11.1992; *Los Angeles Times*, 30.11.1992; Mrkić, 1993; *Protest*, 24.11.1992).

In its mission statement (letter of intentions) from 21 December 1992, the Women's Lobby Zagreb moved much further away from the other Zagreb cluster. Equally important is that the positioning on the war rapes which was articulated in this document did not fully resemble the ones which had been featured in the two statements from earlier that month. In its mission statement, the group did not single out the Serb responsibility for the war rapes at all, but used a gender-based positioning: 'Women are potential victims of war violence firstly because they are women, [and] only afterwards because they are Croat, Muslim or Serb' (*Pismo namjera*, 21.12.1992).<sup>187</sup>

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187 This press release can be used to illustrate one of the problems which I encountered in this research, but nowhere in the scholarship on the (post-)Yugoslav feminism: the existence of different versions of the apparently same document. I can only point to the problem with this press release, but not explore it further due to its late discovery. The two edited volumes on the work of the Center for Women War Victims (Belić, Borić and Kesić, 1994; Kesić, 2003, Croatian half of the book) contain the same retyped – not facsimiled – Croatian version of this press release dated 21 December 1992. However, in the English half of Kesić (2003), the featured English version of this press release is shorter. This shortened version, which is the same as an old printout which I have come across in the archives (*Letter of Intentions*, 21.12.1992), does not contain the quotation presented above. The missing quotation is significant since it is the only sentence in the whole press release which contains ethnic markers; the rest of the text generally speaks about support to women victims of war rape from Bosnia and Herzegovina. In other words, the whole press release expresses the primacy of gender over ethnicity in these feminists' conceptualisation of war rape, but the omitted quotation additionally makes it clear and underlines it. There are a few more discrepancies, also previously unreported in the scholarship, between the different versions of this press release. In the archives I found printouts of two other Croatian versions: one dated 14 January 1993 and the other 15 January 1993. Besides the difference in date, these two printouts differ in title from the Croatian version in Belić, Borić and Kesić (1994) and Kesić (2003). The printouts are titled 'Pismo o namjerama' ('Letter on the Intentions'), whereas the published version is titled 'Pismo namjera' ('Letter of Intentions'). The dissimilar dates and titles are not all that significant, but one other difference could be. The version from 15 January 1993 contains a paragraph which is absent from the other Croatian versions and from the English version. This paragraph reads: '[I]t is needed from the beginning to ensure international exchange of experiences and a creation of a network between the institutions and groups (especially women's) which offer help to raped women, *in particular between the states on the territory of the former Yugoslavia so that the help would be as effective and as adequate as*

Once more, the war rapes by the Croat soldiers were only implicitly present in the text.

I have been unable to track down such shifts of accent in the official statements of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist groups. In fact – I need to make a time jump here for the sake of argumentation – their public positioning on aggressors and victims remained unaltered even after the shift in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the spring of 1993. They kept singling out the Serbs as the only aggressors even though the Bosnian Croat militaries, supported by Croatia's government, had initiated the Bosniak-Croat war and started to ethnically cleanse the Bosniak civil population. These feminists' cooperation with and assistance to (raped) Bosniak refugee women who had fled to Croatia earlier, driven away by the violence of the Bosnian Serb forces, was not affected either.

In addressing this continuity of the so-called nationalist feminists' positioning on perpetrators and victims, Obradović-Dragišić (2004:43) has aptly observed that the 'enemy was already constructed and it was all Serbs'. This fixation on the Serbs as the only aggressor and on the Bosniaks and the Croats as the only victims meant that these feminists never publicly spoke of the Bosniaks or the Croats as being perpetrators, not even during the Bosniak-Croat war. A case in point is their absence of reaction to the threats which Vladimir Šeks, the then vice prime minister of Croatia, directed at the Bosniak refugees in June 1993. In an interview on Croatian national television, Šeks said that given the genocide of the Bosniak forces against the Bosnian Croat population, the Croatian government was about to re-examine its policy on the Bosniak refugees residing on its territory, and added:

The Croatian government is in a very difficult position [in trying] to defend them [the Bosniak refugees] from the justified rage of the Croat people. It will have to seriously re-examine their further survival [sic] and their future treatment because it is unimaginable that the [Bosniak] soldiers fight and commit pogroms and genocides...against the Croat people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, whereas Croatia provides for and accommodates their families in Croatia (*Slika na sliku*, June 1993).

As I previously mentioned, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists never spoke out against this proclamation, which had supposedly been uttered in the name

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*possible*' (*Pismo o namjerama*, 15.01.1993, emphasis added). Being unable to explore this issue further here, I would only suggest that this paragraph could have been strategically omitted (or added) because of the quite politically laden character of the emphasised part. It advocated cooperation between the post-Yugoslav states at a moment when some of those states, including the one the authors of the press release were based in, were at war.

of all Croats and in the interest of the whole of Croatia. However, neither did they ever publicly express their agreement with it or with the similar warmongering and discriminating statements against the Bosniaks which were present in the Croatian media and politics during the Bosniak-Croat war. They also seem not to have produced any statements in which they would speak of the victimisation of Croats by the Bosniak militaries or civilian refugee population.

The activists of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist group Center for Women War Victims reacted to Šeks' television appearance by sending out a protest letter to the Croatian government and the Croatia media. The letter denounced his statements as 'a classical example of hate speech and discrimination which in... [the] current political situation can be understood as an invitation for persecution', and asked the Croatian government to distance itself from his words and bring him to account (*Prosvjed u povodu istupa Vladimira Šeksa*, 10.06.1993). Besides this, in a journalist text Biljana Kašić from the Women's Lobby Zagreb criticised Šeks and the rest of the Croatian government for treating the ethnic groups as homogenous entities. By classifying them either as 'the aggressor' or 'the victim', these politicians were installing fear and uncertainty among the Bosniak refugees in Croatia (*Scheherazade*, July 1993).

My interviews with Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists additionally confirmed the aforementioned conclusion of Obradović-Dragišić that for these feminists the construction of the enemy had been a *fait accompli*. None of the five so-called nationalist respondents whom I managed to ask about their group's positioning on the war rapes by the Croat forces denied or approved of them; some were even very critical of them and the other Croat war crimes. But, although I posed a neutral and open question, ie did not ask why their groups had not publicly positioned themselves on these rapes, my question was apparently understood in exactly this way. The respondents reacted by implicitly justifying their silence. Some distinguished the Croat war crimes from those of the Serb forces. They portrayed the former as incidental, sporadic and intrinsic to each war, unlike the latter, which had been premeditated and conducted on a large scale for the purpose of ethnic cleansing or genocide. The other reasons which were communicated to me were: not knowing about the Croat war crimes, not having the resources to extend one's activities, being focused on seeking legal redress for the victims of the Serb war crimes, and not having contacts with the victims of the Croat crimes since those people would not flee to Croatia<sup>188</sup> (interviews with Zagreb4N, Zagreb13N, Zagreb16N, Zagreb14N and Zagreb6N).

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188 Another issue played a role as well. Starting from the summer of 1992 Croatia impeded the entrance of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to this, during the Bosniak-Croat war its borders remained closed to the Bosniak refugees.

I would argue that this non-adjustment to the restructuring of the battlefield was, in fact, predominantly a result of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists' wish to avoid risking their legitimacy and possibly undermining their advocacy efforts on the criminalisation of the Serb-inflicted war rapes. Being the heretical challengers in the Zagreb feminist field and the majority of the Western (academic) feminist fields, they had invested a great amount of capital and effort in trying to establish themselves as legitimate victims of and experts on the (sexual) violence by the Serb forces. Any modification of their conceptualisation of Serbs as the only aggressor – which they exploited in the struggle for legitimacy – carried the risk of losing the already gained symbolic capital, such as the one in Croatia's political field. Moreover, a readjustment of their positioning required a readjustment of their future advocacy strategies and efforts for obtaining legitimacy. This was not, apparently, something these feminists wanted to engage in either.

This lack of public attention for the war crimes of the Croat – and Bosniak – forces has also been noted by Kesić (1994) in her sharp criticism of MacKinnon's article in *Ms.* (July/August 1993). MacKinnon's silence on the non-Serb war crimes was by no means coincidental. As I explained in Chapter 3, she advocated the ethnicity-based positioning of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists and closely worked with some of them on the American civil lawsuit against Radovan Karadžić for genocidal rapes. Kesić's elaboration is further significant for her reprimand of Croatia's war involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the war crimes of the Croat forces there, as well as of the concealment of these war crimes by the Croatian media. In addition to this, Kesić (1994:277–278) explicitly pointed out that the Bosniak forces, too, were guilty of (sexual) war crimes:

The quick development of events and the war's complexity have invalidated some of MacKinnon's theories and discredited the version of the 'truth' that she promotes...The war policy of Croatia in Bosnia-Herzegovina and some Muslim war activities have to date included all the activities that MacKinnon denied: a policy of territorial expansion, of extermination, and of violating women. During the Muslim-Croat war, Croatian officials and the media reported ethnic cleansing and death/rape camps by the Muslim army. However, they never properly reported the massacre in the Muslim village Ahmići in which the United Nations Special Rapporteur reported that at least one gang rape had occurred...Many other similar war crimes in Central Bosnia performed by [the] Croatian Army were ignored here. In mid-1994...the U.S. Ambassador to Croatia, Peter W. Galbraith, stated on Croatian television that there are credible reports of Croats raping Muslim women. Croatia has

had an equivocal territorial policy toward Bosnia and Herzegovina which was announced along with the elections in 1990...Thus, actual events in the war have contradicted MacKinnon's evaluation of who the real victims are. No side could stay innocent in this war. Muslims also committed war crimes and brutalized Serbian and Croatian women.

I have found only two exceptions to the silence of the so-called nationalist feminists regarding the Croat war crimes. These exceptions witness the disturbance of the previously held positioning, but neither of them represents an official organisational statement. The first one was a brief comment in one American documentary filmed in June 1993. Speaking about their work in a refugee camp near Zagreb, Žana Stanzl, an activist of Trešnjevkica, said:

Now it's really a big mess. Till this time, when there were only Muslims and Croats together, against Serbians, it was...easier. Now you don't know anymore...It is a very difficult situation now... You don't know now who kills whom and why, in the name of what? (in: *Let the people speak!*, 1993).

The second exception concerns Zagreb13N's publication of the Croatian translation of Susan Brownmiller's seminal work *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (Brownmiller, 1975, 1995). It is very important to note, though, that Zagreb13N published this book only after she had withdrawn from Trešnjevkica and organised feminist activism altogether and, thereby, left the former struggle for legitimacy behind to a great extent. In the interview, she spoke of being driven by the wish to educate the broader public in Croatia about the historical repetitions of the gender-based patterns of war rape in which armed men, regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds, raped women of other backgrounds. The great impact of the Bosniak-Croat war on her, which was partially due to her partner's Bosniak ethnic background, manifested itself also in her new, gender-based positioning on war rapes: 'When the conflict between the Croats and the Muslims took place, I definitely decided...[that] there were no guilty and righteous ones, just men and victims. That is very important – it is actually the key of this whole story' (interview with Zagreb13N).

This publishing endeavour is a striking exception foremostly because of Brownmiller's conceptualisation of war rape, in which gender has primacy over ethnicity. She later employed the same conceptualisation in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and was, therefore, heavily criticised by MacKinnon (MacKinnon, 1994; *Newsweek*, 04.01.1993; Rejali, 1996). Zagreb13N's foreword to the Croatian edition

contributes to the exceptional character of this move even though she does not openly depart there from her previous positioning. She speaks of 'the Serb aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina' (Zagreb13N, 1995:i), but does not say anything about the Croat one. Furthermore, the possibility that the (Bosnian) Croat – and Bosniak – forces might also have committed war rapes is suggested only implicitly: 'This book shows us that there exists no victorious army which would not rape. Often, unfortunately, the attacked one rapes as well, as was the case with the Red Army soldiers during their conquest of Germany' (Zagreb13N, 1995:iii).

Another point of difference between the Zagreb clusters concerned the figures on the prevalence of the (sexual) war crimes. The self-declared antinationalist feminists were generally suspicious towards any information on these crimes which came from the (pro-)state media and the politicians. They were reluctant to use any estimates and expressed their fiercest criticism of the manipulation and use of unverified data for the purpose of spreading hate, interethnic hostilities and war propaganda (*Pismo namjera*, 21.12.1992; *Rezolucija*, 17.01.1993; *Silovanje kao oružje*, 05.12.1992). This criticism was not specifically addressed to the so-called nationalist feminists, but it implicitly concerned them as well, since they have never publicly questioned the veracity of the figures they operated with.

Zagreb13N, one of the two Zagreb so-called nationalist respondents who addressed this issue in the interview, claimed not to find the use of exaggerated figures objectionable although she had been criticised for it. Being aware of the power of large figures to set things in motion, she declared to have used them deliberately in order to mobilise the international community to stop the war rapes and the war. Zagreb6N, the other respondent, did not find this practice problematic at all either. Moreover, she disapproved of the – further unspecified – media and groups which had unjustly criticised the Croatian and the Bosnian and Herzegovinian state as well as Zagreb13N for manipulating those figures: 'If you have several thousands or tens of thousands of reported rapes, should you be silent only to avoid having it [your figures] called propaganda?'

When slightly more reliable estimations of the number of raped women appeared (*Amnesty International*, January 1993; *Bassiouni report*, May 1994; *Mazowiecki report*, November 1992, February 1993; *The Independent*, 06.01.1993; *Warburton report*, February 1993), it turned out that both Zagreb clusters were partially right. The so-called nationalist feminists were correct to point from the beginning to the by far largest extent of the Serb-committed war rapes against non-Serb women, whereas the self-declared antinationalist feminists rightfully maintained that the Croat and

Bosniak forces were also raping women of Serb and, respectively, Bosniak and Croat ethnicity. These reports did not, however, stop the struggle for legitimacy between the clusters.

### **The 'International Women's Solidarity' meeting in Zagreb (7 February 1993)**

The 'International Women's Solidarity' meeting – whose initial name was the 'International Women's Tribunal' – was a one-day meeting which further elucidated the positionings on the wars and war rapes held by the Zagreb so-called nationalist and the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. The German group Perspective Berlin summoned female politicians and feminist activists (foremostly from Western Europe and a few from the United States) for the purpose of writing a joint resolution. The document was to be used afterwards to exercise political pressure to stop the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, change the international jurisprudence so that war rape would become criminalised as a crime of war, and establish an international war crimes tribunal. The point of having the meeting at local coordinates was not to ensure the participation of local women (from any post-Yugoslav country), since the organiser saw their participation as potentially creating tensions. Zagreb's proximity to the war zones where the rapes were carried out was considered beneficial to the political and media visibility of the meeting, while at the same time the location was safe enough for the participants.

The intention not to invite any women from Croatia was objected to by the then vice prime minister of Croatia, Mate Granić, with whom Perspective Berlin discussed the terms of the organisation of the meeting. Instead of fulfilling his wish to have only members of Rampart of Love represent the (raped) women of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the organiser negotiated a compromise solution. At the end and with last minute invitations, other women's groups attended the meeting as well, including the self-declared antinationalist Women's Lobby Zagreb and the so-called nationalist Karet, Trešnjevka and Women's Help Now. Actually, the Women's Lobby Zagreb was the initial local organising partner. However, the group withdrew from the organisation due to its disagreement with the plan not to invite women from the post-Yugoslav region and involve politicians of Croatia's ruling party in the preparation of the event (ANP, 07.02.1993; *Balkan trail of tears revisited*, 1993; Pollmann et al., 1993; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 08.02.1993, 11.02.1993; *Statement to the meeting*, 07.02.1993; interviews with Zagreb11AN and Zagreb7AN).

Already during the preparatory phase in Germany the meeting was surrounded by many controversies. One of them broke out over the choice not to organise it on neutral soil which women from Serbia would also have access to, but in one of the countries at war. That choice was, furthermore, vulnerable to the accusation of siding with one of the warring parties. Another emerged over the ethics of convening such a laden and sensitive meeting in a rushed atmosphere. The tight agenda would not leave much time to discuss and vote on the end resolution before the German organisers would need to catch their return flights the same day (*die tageszeitung*, 25.01.1993a, 25.01.1993b, 28.01.1993; Pollmann et al., 1993; *Presseerklärung*, 30.01.1993; *The ACTivist*, March 1993). I will, however, only elaborate upon the issues which directly involved the two Zagreb feminist clusters and the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist one.

Similarly to the incident at the 'Women in War' gathering, the unexpected presence and address of somebody (partially) from Serbia caused a tumult in one part of the audience at this meeting as well. This time it concerned Vesna Božić, who worked with the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists and could enter Croatia as an American citizen. Having been given the word by one of the British participants, Božić read out the declaration to the meeting written by the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. Immediately after she had begun to speak, the participants from Rampart of Love and the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist cluster left the meeting space, and returned only afterwards when one of the Dutch representatives was about to speak (*de Volkskrant*, 08.02.1993; Pollmann et al., 1993; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 11.02.1993, 15.02.1993; *The ACTivist*, March 1993; personal communication, name withheld).

The declaration of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists made evident both the (imposed) feeling of guilt which they were dealing with and their need to underline their distance from Serbia's official politics:

Some of us feel guilty because of belonging to the aggressor's nation, which might be a repetition of the old and familiar women's feeling of guilt, even when it [the guilt] is not ours...*Having a Serb name does not entail agreement with Serbia's politics, just as having a Croat name does not entail support to Croatia's politics...*In any case, for those who still suspect, *we want to repeat that there is a small but strong women's opposition in Belgrade already since the first military interventions of the Yugoslav People's Army in Slovenia (Deklaracija žena iz Beograda, 04.02.1993, emphasis in the original).*<sup>189</sup>

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189 A rather extreme example of the distrust in the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists' factual opposition to Milošević is given by Nadežda Radović (2002). She

According to one of the media reports, after having left the conference room in protest, the activists of Rampart of Love said that those ‘whose husbands and brothers kindle, rape and bomb’ had no right to speak in Zagreb – a reaction which, as the above quotation shows, had been already anticipated and responded to by the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. Informed afterwards about the contents of the declaration which they had chosen not to hear, the women from Rampart of Love stated that leaving the meeting had been a matter of principle (*Slobodna Dalmacija*, 11.02.1993).

It is possible that the above statement of Rampart of Love reached the Belgrade feminists. In their letter to the international meeting against the sexual violence against women in the former Yugoslavia, which was held in Amsterdam in March 1993, they explicitly refused to be perceived in that manner. Although I am not familiar with the reasons for writing this letter, it seems that its much harsher and more determined tone, compared to that of the earlier declaration, was at least partially caused by the way in which Božić’s address had been received by Rampart of Love and the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists in early February 1993:

[W]e refuse to be seen as sisters, wives and daughters of men who rape and kill in this war. We have faught [sic] toghether [sic] with many feminists around the world for years to be seen as autonomous individuals and not as properties of men, therefore our political views are only ours and each woman is responsible for herself. We refuse to be seen as prisoners of our names, [and] national origin (*Letter to the women’s meeting*, 25.02.1993).

Next to witnessing the feeling of guilt, the declaration which Božić read out is additionally significant because of the positioning which it contained. The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist groups Women in Black, Belgrade Women’s Lobby and Group for Women Raped in War (later: Autonomous Women’s Center) acknowledged that Serbia’s regime had started the war with the goal of ethnic cleansing, rape and abuse of women’s bodies and reproductive functions. Furthermore, they asserted that the Bosniak women were the gravest and most numerous victims, even though there

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recalls her interaction with Catharine MacKinnon at the ‘UN World Conference on Human Rights’ in Vienna in June 1993. After having listened to MacKinnon’s address, in which she had called for a military intervention against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Radović approached her to give her a copy of a publication of the Women in Black and inform her that there were also feminists and pacifists in Belgrade who opposed the military regime. MacKinnon reacted by asking: ‘Where did you get the money for this [the publication] from, and if it was against the war, how come that Milošević has not killed you yet?’ (Radović, 2002:71; see also *off our backs*, January 1994).

had been also Croat and Serb women, as well as women of other ethnicities, among the victims. Whom these women were victimised by was left open despite the earlier acknowledgement of the general responsibility of Serbia's regime. The perpetrator was only implied also elsewhere in the text: 'We know very well that women and men were not abused nor was Croatia's natural and cultural-historical heritage destroyed by the Croats themselves' (*Deklaracija žena iz Beograda*, 04.02.1993).

This presence of both a general acknowledgement of the responsibility of Serbia's regime and a reluctance to state its responsibility for the concrete acts of violence witnesses the gradual process of creation of what came to be the Belgrade orthodox feminist positioning on the (sexual) war violence. In February 1993 the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists had not yet begun to explicitly point to the foremost responsibility of the Serb politicians and militaries, but no longer used a strict gender-based positioning on the war rapes and did not speak of equal victimisation and responsibility. The progressive change – which resulted from the appearance of more trustworthy reports on the war rapes, as well as from these Belgrade feminists' interactions with the Zagreb feminists from both clusters – becomes additionally clear if two other texts of the former are compared: one which had been written before and one which was written after the above declaration from February 1993.

The leaflet which the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists had written in late December 1992 and handed out at the February 1993 meeting contained their general criticism of the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the politicians' instrumentalisation of the war rapes and raped women for spreading hate, inciting violence and advocating armed intervention. At the same time, they spoke about war rape as a military strategy which all armies used, and demanded that war rape be recognised globally as a war crime for which all perpetrators would be convicted regardless of the army they belonged to (*Feministkinje Beograda govore*, 26.12.1992).

This positioning overlapped, thus, to a great extent with that of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists which was expressed in the press release 'Rape as a Weapon' from 5 December 1992 (see the previous analysis). But differently from their Zagreb counterparts, who had cautiously indicated that the Serb militaries were possibly employing war rape more extensively, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists did not single out the Serb forces. Instead, they asked the

international community and public to put pressure on and make responsible the regimes of Slobodan Milošević, Radovan Karadžić, Alija Izetbegović, Mate Boban [the president of the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosna] and Franjo Tuđman so that they would disband all concentration camps, private jails, military brothels and other

institutions in which the women's sexual slavery is legitimised  
(*Feministkinje Beograda govore*, 26.12.1992).

In a later text on war rape as a war crime, which was published in early March 1993 as part of a larger publication (Zajović, 1993b), the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists articulated unambiguously the greatest responsibility of the Bosnian Serb forces. Nevertheless, they had no doubts that women of other ethnicities were raped as well. That the gender-based positioning was not abandoned, but only supplemented with ethnic markers, was also visible from the opening paragraph. War rape was described there as a gender-based historical occurrence which was detrimental for women, but did not bring any legal and societal repercussions to the men who had committed it. The afterwards expressed nuanced positioning read as follows:

The feminists of Belgrade and Serbia do not agree with the premise about the symmetry between the executioners and victims of all warring sides in Bosnia. They are aware that Karadžić's more powerful and better armed military and political forces in Bosnia (the Army of Republika Srpska) have on their conscience the largest number of rapes...The above average number of raped Muslim women in the war in Bosnia is not a reason to forget the raped women of other ethnicities, other faiths, as well as the ethnically undeclared atheists. The feminists will advocate help to all women victims of rape, regardless of ethnicity and faith, as well as the bringing to a war crimes tribunal of all rapists and those who have given them the order (in: Zajović, 1993b:90a).

When after the February 1993 meeting Dafinka Večerina from Women's Help Now criticised the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists in a newspaper interview, she did that because of the contents of the leaflet which they had handed out at that meeting. She disapproved of their lumping together of the Bosniak, (Bosnian) Croat and (Bosnian) Serb leaders, whereby their equal responsibility for the war rapes was suggested. By stating not to want to show hospitality to the Belgrade feminists, Večerina possibly also hinted at the choice of her group and Kareta not to invite these feminists to the gathering in October 1992:

I think that the women from Serbia do what they can, oppose the regime. But, I cannot accept, as it has been done in a recently published leaflet, that they equate the victim and the aggressor...I cannot show solidarity with them on that. That equating was the reason why we could not listen to the woman from Serbia [this is

most probably a reference to Vesna Božić and the February 1993 meeting]...As long as the war lasts, I do not want to hear what somebody from the aggressor country has to say. I can privately talk to them, but I cannot reconcile with being their host and showing hospitality by listening to them saying, as they wrote in the leaflet, that Milošević, Karadžić, Izetbegović and Tuđman should be put on trial. I claim that these rapes are rapes against Croat and Muslim women and that they are raped foremostly because of that [their ethnicity]. That is a big humiliation for the two nations (*Nedjeljna Dalmacija*, 03.03.1993; see also *Oslobođenje*, 26.03.–01.04.1993; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 15.02.1993).

Unlike this criticism, the rebuke which the activists of Trešnjevka had uttered at the 'International Women's Solidarity' meeting in February 1993 only concerned the presence of somebody from the inimical ethnic group. These so-called nationalist feminists declared that it was unacceptable to have a person from Serbia as one of the speakers (Pollmann et al., 1993). Still, the letter which they wrote afterwards to their German partner organisation makes it clear that the ethnicity of the speaker had not been the (only) contested issue, but that the struggle for legitimacy had played a role (as well). That they had been invited to participate in the gathering only the night before had apparently indicated to them that they were perceived as less legitimate speakers than the Belgrade activist. The letter also contained their ethnicity-based positioning on perpetrators and victims:

It is impossible to describe our feelings when we saw...that one of the first spikers [sic] after [the] introduction part were Serbian woman [sic] from Chicago...She spoke in the name of 15 serbs Women in black from Beograd [sic]. That was so much...In my country, victim of Serbian aggression too, [sic] where European women came to support women raped in Serbs [sic] rape/death camps, they [sic] can talk without any problem. And we must wait for favour...After [sic] this humiliation we had no nothing [sic] to do there (*Letter to Internationales Frauenfriedensarchiv*, n.d.).

The 'International Women's Solidarity' meeting was also characterised by the disturbance which the gender-based positioning on the war rapes caused in the form of a banner – albeit not one produced by the Belgrade or Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. An Austrian radical feminist and lesbian group hung up a banner in the conference space which read: 'Rape is not a question of nationality, but a worldwide war of men against women'. It caused a strong disapproval among the representatives of Rampart of Love, a few of whom have immediately rushed to pull

it down, leading to great commotion among the participants (*Politika*, n.d.; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 11.02.1993; interviews with Zagreb11AN, Zagreb7AN and Zagreb16N).

The gender-based positioning was also criticised by a journalist of the Croatian pro-state weekly *Danas* even before the gathering. In an article which announced it, the journalist rebuked the German organisers and the groups gathered in the Women's Lobby Zagreb for not naming the perpetrator and the victim, but speaking about wars in an abstract manner and women as eternal victims. Contrary to this, the activists of Rampart of Love, Kareta, Trešnjevka and Women's Help Now were overtly praised for their patriotic positioning which did not consider all warring sides as equally guilty, ie did not deny either the Serb aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, or the Serb organised practice of war rape for the purpose of ethnic cleansing (*Danas*, 29.01.1993).<sup>190</sup>

The reproof of the gender-based positioning as not corresponding to the real context, which was repetitively articulated by the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists and the non-feminist women's groups they cooperated with, was also mentioned by two of these feminists in the interview. When I asked about this meeting and the contents of the banner, Zagreb1N disagreed with this – in her words 'international' or 'supranational' – positioning because of being inapplicable to the concrete situation. She acknowledged, nevertheless, that the positioning which contextualised the war rapes and which she approved of was also employed in the official Croatian politics. According to Zagreb16N, the gender-based positioning was a peacetime universal one. It was used by people who lived in peace, as had been the case with those who had hung up the banner, and who were unaware that, unlike in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, there was no war destruction in Serbia at the time.<sup>191</sup>

After this explicit delegitimisation of the foreign participants, Zagreb16N implicitly delegitimised the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. Since she could not dismiss them as coming from a peacetime context, she did that by suggesting their lack of expertise in working with actual victims. Unlike her, these activists had distanced themselves from the real situation by sitting behind their desks and travelling abroad to conferences. This manner of delegitimising the Zagreb

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190 See the similar but less elaborated criticism in the Croatian pro-state daily *Večernji list* (15.02.1993).

191 However, and quite to the contrary, the adjective 'universal' was also used by local activists. Lepa Mladenović and Vesna Kesić – self-declared antinationalist feminists from Belgrade and Zagreb, respectively – employed it in their separate discussions of war rape in order to underline that soldiers raped in all wars, ie that the war rapes were committed by the 'universal soldier' (*off our backs*, March 1993 [1992], January 1994; see also Kesić, 1994).

self-declared antinationalist feminists by the Zagreb so-called nationalist ones was particularly strongly articulated during the following event – the MADRE speakers tour.

### **The MADRE speakers tour in North America (24 March – 8 April 1993)**

The previous two episodes, the ‘Women in War’ gathering and the ‘International Women’s Solidarity’ meeting, intensified the split among the Zagreb feminists and made it known abroad as well, primarily among the European feminists. The MADRE speakers tour (mostly in the United States, with one stop in Canada) and its echoes, besides further exacerbating the conflict, transported it to the North American continent, causing divisions also among the feminists there. The tour, whose official name was ‘Mother Courage II’,<sup>192</sup> was organised by the New York-based women’s human rights group MADRE. Its purpose was to inform on the wars and war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia (ie the former Yugoslavia, as the information package stated), address the world-wide use of rape as a weapon of war and advocate its criminalisation, as well as demand increased attention for women’s human rights at the forthcoming ‘UN World Conference on Human Rights’ in Vienna in June that year. To this end, the tour also included speakers from other countries, such as Nicaragua and South Africa.

In addition to this, the speakers tour was intended to serve as an opportunity for raising funds for the Belgrade and Zagreb groups supported by MADRE. As the information package stated, these were the non-nationalist women’s groups ‘the Autonomous Women’s House, the Independent Alliance of Women, the Information and Documentation Women’s Center [Women’s Infoteka], the Antiwar Campaign, Women in Black and the SOS Hotline’ (*Information package*, March/April 1993). In line with this clear political choice, only Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were invited, ie given legitimacy. Vivian Stromberg, MADRE’s executive director, explained the exclusion of the so-called nationalist feminists as follows:

We invited people who were interested in addressing the issue of rape from a non-nationalist perspective...You can’t have a nationalist perspective and then invite people from 10 other countries. It doesn’t make sense unless what you want to do is fight (*off our backs*, May 1993a).

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192 The ‘Mother Courage I’ tour had taken place in 1991 and called for an end of the Gulf War. The title ‘Mother Courage’ was borrowed from the name of Bertolt Brecht’s antiwar play ‘Mother Courage and Her Children’.

However, as I will show below, this exclusionary invitation policy did not prevent serious disagreements from emerging. It only displaced them from the conference spaces during the tour to the arena of letters, letters to the editor, press releases, and journalist and academic articles. The choice of speakers from Bosnia and Herzegovina caused controversies as well (Helms, 1998; *off our backs*, May 1993a, May 1993b; *Village Voice*, 13.07.1993, n.d.), but with regard to the focus of my research I will elaborate only upon the issues which were raised by the selection of the four Belgrade and Zagreb feminists.

A few days before the speakers tour would begin Natalie Nenadic – who had already begun to work with Kareta intensively – sent to the MADRE office and the tour's stops the protest statement of four Zagreb women's groups: Kareta, BISER, Women B&H and Rampart of Love.<sup>193</sup> Earlier that year, these groups and Women's Help Now had started working with MacKinnon on the civil lawsuit against Karadžić (MacKinnon, 2006; *off our backs*, February 1993b; *Village Voice*, 13.07.1993; *ZamirZine*, 28.02.2007). Despite this cooperation, Women's Help Now was not one of the signatories of the protest statement to MADRE – a curiosity I was unable to shed more light upon.

The four signatory groups – among which only Kareta was a feminist one – criticised MADRE on three accounts: for excluding them from the tour, for giving legitimacy to exactly those two Zagreb women and the groups they were active in, and for treating the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia only as a weapon of war. These issues were announced already in the two opening paragraphs of the protest statement:

As representatives of Bosnian and Croatian women's groups and some of us survivors ourselves who have been working with victims of genocidal rape since November 1991 and therefore have the most experience with this particular genocidal war crime, we write to express our concerns about the national tour being sponsored by MADRE... We are troubled that MADRE has not consulted Bosnian and Croatian women's groups, which through long and dedicated work with survivors and some members being survivors are the most knowledgeable about and representative of this issue. Most of our members and members of these other groups literally work 17 hour days, too completely immersed in horror, to perhaps have the same access to Western women's groups which wish to assist survivors as do women's groups which were formed and empowered

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193 Given that the alphabetical order was not followed when the signatory groups were listed on the letter, Kareta's first place suggests this group's greatest share in its creation.

during the communist regime and which have only begun dealing in some way with this issue in the aftermath of the media attention our groups worked for over one year to get and the international funding becoming available to apparently assist survivors. We are very concerned about the intentions of these groups. However, given that MADRE is going through the effort of sponsoring some women from Croatia and [the Federal Republic of] Yugoslavia, we believe that it should have researched genocidal rape more thoroughly here and in a manner more representative of and accountable to victims and to the political context in which these rapes are occurring (*Reaction to the MADRE tour*, 18.03.1993).

The signatory groups stated, in fact, that to invite them and fundraise for them would have been the legitimate choice. They were the ones who had worked for the longest time and for the longest hours with the direct survivors of the war rapes and had, moreover, survivors among their members. By saying that the other groups had started to do some work with the war rape survivors only after the issue had received media attention and money had become available, the signatories presented these groups as working in bad faith and not benefitting the survivors. At the same time, they implied that their own (advocacy) work was authentically inspired by the wish to help these women, and was focused on supporting them and being accountable to them. The legitimacy which MADRE had given to the other Zagreb feminist cluster was further challenged by the signatories' claim that instead of working with survivors, its members had spent their time building their Western networks and thereby enlarging the privileged position which they had been enjoying since socialism.

In the remainder of the letter, the other Zagreb cluster and MADRE were reprimanded for their positioning on the war rapes, ie for not calling them by their real name. These rapes were not to be simply considered a universal weapon of war, but a historically unprecedented Serb weapon of genocide against the Croat and Bosniak ethnic groups, which also included the strategy of forcible impregnation. Those who employed the former conceptualisation not only silenced the victims but also equalised perpetrators and victims, thereby obstructing a more determined international intervention. According to the letter's authors, this strategy of 'obfuscation and confusion' which the other Zagreb feminists and MADRE were using – the latter unknowingly – resembled and assisted the strategy of the Serb aggressor.

The signatory groups in the same vein rebuked the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists' gender-based conceptualisation of the war rapes. Similarly to the earlier quoted statement by Večerina from Women's Help Now, this criticism also implicitly explained why the organisers of the 'Women in War' gathering had not put much effort in securing the presence of the Belgrade feminists:

Because of this lack of acknowledgment of genocidal rapes and the silencing over of our most painful experiences and because Muslim and Croatian (and Albanian) women are continuously violated in public forums by Serbian women's position on this (as by that of the very unrepresentative women you have selected to speak for Croatian women), we feel we cannot engage in such forums until Serbian women's position becomes accountable to the genocide (which includes rape) Serbia is perpetrating against us. Moreover, given the types of genocidal atrocities that non-Serbian women have gone through, at this point in time, many survivors are afraid of Serbs, whose position on the issue does nothing to attenuate these fears, which will take time to overcome...[T]o place Muslim and Croatian women in forums which force on them women of the group committing the genocide...might be something like forcing Jewish women to 'debate' with German women while the Holocaust were still going on – and German women who don't even want to acknowledge that a genocide is happening – and then simply calling the whole thing a war. By making this analogy, however, we in no way wish to deny the historical uniqueness of the Holocaust (*Reaction to the MADRE tour*, 18.03.1993).

The use of the particularly laden reference to the Holocaust was not unique to this document. Kareta, including MacKinnon and Nenadic as its close associates, and Trešnjevka regularly made such an analogy between the Shoah or the Nazi ideology and the treatment of the non-Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia by the Serb forces. But, unlike Trešnjevka, those around Kareta extended this parallel to the Zagreb (and Belgrade) self-declared antinationalist feminists, as well as to anybody else who would not name the Serb war rapes 'genocidal'. These activists were accused of collaboration with the Serb aggressors, cover-up of the rapes, and genocide revisionism. Sometimes, concrete feminists were put in the pillory, as was the case with Slavenka Drakulić, Vesna Kesić and Đurđa Knežević (*Appeal by Sarajevo Women's Groups*, 30.05.1994; *die tageszeitung*, 05.02.1993; Kadić, 1993; *Letter to Ms. Magazine*, 21.12.1993; *Letter to The New York Times*, 29.12.1993; *Letter to Susan Brownmiller*, 15.08.1993; MacKinnon, 2006; Nenadic, 1996, 2010; *Northwest Ethnic News*, November 1994; *Reaction to the MADRE tour*, 18.03.1993; *Report*, 28.09.1992; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 18.03.1994; *Witness Protection Program leaflet*, April 1994).

The protest statement to the MADRE tour was one of the occasions when Vesna Kesić and Đurđa Knežević were explicitly blamed for being silent about the real character of the Serb war rapes. In addition to this, the signatories also questioned the self-declared feminism of these two women. The manner in which Kesić and Knežević were portrayed as working against the interests of women, rape survivors in particular,

resembled to a great extent Nenadić's criticism in *off our backs* (November 1991; see Chapter 2) and the aforementioned defamatory article in *Globus*. For example: 'They had privileges in a totalitarian system at the brutal expense of others' (*Reaction to the MADRE tour*, 18.03.1993), or: 'In our experience victims are simply distrustful of and do not wish to work with women who were so deeply implicated in the regime which is destroying them and with those who actively participated in the sexual abuse of women through pornography' (ibid).

The four groups referred hereby to Knežević's former post as the 'director of the Museum of the Communist Revolution which was essentially a weapons warehouse in the middle of Zagreb' (ibid) and Kesić's previous employment as 'a writer and occasional editor of the Yugoslav pornography magazine Start' (ibid, underline in the original). The signatories, thus, implicitly made two suggestions regarding the presumed collaboration of the two feminists with the Serb perpetrators. The first was that the weapons which had been exhibited in the museum were used by the Serb forces in the wars against Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. The second suggestion was that the allegedly pornographic magazine had inspired the war rapes committed by the Serb forces. The latter suggestion – including the claim about the complicity of some women – would be presented a few months later by MacKinnon in her infamous article 'Turning Rape Into Pornography: Postmodern Genocide' (in: *Ms.*, July/August 1993; see also MacKinnon, 2006).

So, the authors of the protest statement criticised not only the positioning of Kesić and Knežević on the war rapes, but also the cultural, economic and social capital which they had apparently accumulated in the previous system and were further increasing thanks to their interaction with Western women's groups. However, no criticism was articulated about the capital or the privileges of the Belgrade speakers at the tour (or the other Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists). Although the MADRE tour was one of the Western (academic) feminist fields in which the Belgrade feminists participated as well, the so-called nationalist feminists from Karetá did not compete that much with them. The more important struggle was the one to be perceived as the legitimate Zagreb or Croatian (feminist) experts on war rape. This struggle in the 1990s was partially rooted in the tensions in Zagreb in the 1980s between the feminists who were already professionally established and those who were still students.<sup>194</sup>

In their reaction to the protest statement, Kesić and Knežević rebuked its defamatory discourse – which was 'a clear study of labeling people politically' (*Answer*

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194 See the first analysis in this chapter.

to the letter, 21.04.1993)<sup>195</sup> – and the four groups’ self-representation as the only legitimate speakers on the issue of war rape. They did not comment, though, on the claims about the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists nor the analogy with the Holocaust. The two feminists acknowledged the efforts of ‘Kareta & Others’ (as they put it) to publicise the existence of the war rapes, but criticised their recurrent use of both inflated figures ‘as propaganda to create the picture of [a] “satanic enemy”’ and the reference to mass rapes in Croatia although ‘such (massive genocidal) rapes have not been confirmed by independent monitors’ (ibid). Thereby Kesić and Knežević also reacted to the accusation of silence and suggested the signatories’ agreement with the official Croatian politics:

We are happy that such crimes didn’t happen during the war in Croatia. Is that our sin? Obviously, some facts and interpretations are not welcome in Croatia, where...people who don’t want to accept the only and official truth are easily accused of being traitors, or, paradoxically, for being silent (ibid).

The same suggestion about the signatories’ affiliation with Croatian politics was made throughout the whole text, but without ever explicitly naming the groups ‘nationalist’ or ‘patriotic’. In one of these places, Kesić and Knežević rejected the claim that the indeed good Western reception of their work was due to their good access (ie social capital). In that section, they also implicitly hinted that Kareta’s work might not be based on feminist principles:<sup>196</sup>

The truth is that our project [Center for Women War Victims], which began last November, has gotten a lot of attention and approval from foreign women’s groups and nongovernmental as well as governmental organizations. We strongly believe that [that] is because our project is autonomous, non-nationalistic, basically democratic, and in a feminist way oriented to self-help organizing (ibid).

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195 A somewhat different version of this reaction – but without any alterations which would be significant for this research – was published in 2005 on the website of the Center for Women War Victims: [www.women-war-memory.org/index.php/hr/povijest/raskol-zenske-scene/80-reakcija-zagrebackog-zenskog-lobbyija](http://www.women-war-memory.org/index.php/hr/povijest/raskol-zenske-scene/80-reakcija-zagrebackog-zenskog-lobbyija) [16/09/2013]. I use the version which I came across in the archives and which was integrally published in *off our backs* (May 1993c).

196 Although Kesić and Knežević spoke about ‘Kareta & Others’, this questioning of the feminist approach was actually directed only at Kareta. As I said earlier, Kareta was the only group of the four which was a self-declared feminist one.

## CHAPTER FOUR

The indirect delegitimisation of Kareta's approach as not feminist was articulated more explicitly when Kesić and Knežević contrasted this group's positioning on the war rapes with that of the groups they were involved with and which formed the Women's Lobby Zagreb:

'Kareta & Others' keep on repeating that [the] rapes in Bosnia cannot be extricated from the context of the whole war in Bosnia. We certainly agree. But again, what is their 'context' when they emphasize it? They seemingly, deny all other interpretations and understanding of this tragic phenomenon but the national one, under the state-imposed ideological slogan: 'We are the victims, they are the aggressor'. Everything else – for instance, the legitimate feminist approach, in which war rapes are looked at from a historical and global perspective (without denying that Serbian militias rape in massive numbers and for the purpose of genocide) – is forbidden because it differs from the only approved truth (ibid).

In an interview during the tour Kesić expressed even more explicitly the feminist component of the work of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster. Without denying the feminism of the groups from the other cluster, she portrayed the one of the former cluster as being the legitimate and classical – I would say, orthodox – version:

I definitely belong to this one [group] which decided to stay on the feminist positions...There are also many other projects which I believe are also very good and built on feminist principles, but they just don't have the same approach. They think that [those] who are raped are Croatian and Muslim women, which is a fact in the large amount of those who are, and is part of the strategy being seen from the Serbian side. But we still think that a feminist approach, a feminist context, a feminist historical point of view and a feminist principle [which entails] that we are going to help any women doesn't matter what nationality she is, is legitimate. So our projects start from those classical principles (*off our backs*, May 1993d).

Kesić and Knežević also addressed the accusation of being privileged under socialism and thereby implied that the four signatories might have been involved in the construction of the case of the 'five witches' in December 1992:<sup>197</sup>

When we started the women's movement in ex-Yugoslavia, at the end of the seventies, we were accused by the political establishment

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197 See the analysis of the 'Women in War' gathering in this chapter.

of 'importing decadent bourgeois ideology', and were sometimes brutally attacked. Ironically, we are now being accused of 'national treachery'. Even sadder is the fact is that just as the official, 'ideologically correct' women's organizations took part in such witch hunts then, some new 'correct' women's groups are doing the same now (*Answer to the letter*, 21.04.1993).

They observed further that the four signatories were silent about any advantages they might have obtained during socialism. While suggesting their own distance from the previous system, the two speakers gave a few examples to point out that at least two of the signatory groups had not been all that detached from it:

[I]f we accept their approach, shouldn't we accuse 'Kareta' of being the group 'empowered during communism'. One of its members, Katarina Vidovic was a candidate on the communist list in the 1990 elections. In addition, the group was headquartered in the building of the Central Committee of [the] Communist Party of Croatia... We and our groups never had such privileges and benefits in communism. But neither are we so stupid as to think this is significant. 'Kareta' like everybody else, was just using the weakness and confusion of the weakened communist regime, which, in the end, was liberal enough to allow and support funding of 'radical feminist groups' in its building and under the cover of the official women's organizations... Or yet another example: aren't the real 'profiteers of communism' organization[s] like 'Bedem ljubavi' [Rampart of Love], which moved into the offices and took all the property of the ex-socialist 'Conference for social activities of women'? This is what we are reduced to when we accuse people without taking into account the context in which events or facts exist (*ibid*).

Finally, Kesić and Knežević also referred to the accusation of being in one way or another responsible for the Serb (sexual) war violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, partially by virtue of their alleged embedding in the socialist system. They clarified that Knežević's directorship of the museum – 'a monument of the antifascist appraisal of the people of Croatia' (*Answer to the letter*, 21.04.1993) – had not lasted long. Soon after she had become its director and organised an exhibition on totalitarian political design, which included both communist and fascist design, Tuđman's newly-elected party in power shut it down (*ibid*).

As to Kesić's direct involvement in a pornographic magazine, the two feminists explained that the pin-up girl on the cover was the only pornographic element in the otherwise liberal magazine. Not being that controlled by the communist authorities, it could feature affirmative articles on feminism, gay and lesbian rights, antimilitarism

etc: 'Even pornography itself was written about critically. At least one of 'Kareta & Others' should know this, because an article of her's [sic] was also published' (ibid). Kesić would later repeat some of these clarifications in her important rebuttals of MacKinnon's article in *Ms.* In those texts she also rejected MacKinnon's claim that the Yugoslav pornography had been one of the main causes of the Serb genocidal war rapes (Kesić, 1994; *Ms.*, November/December 1993; *off our backs*, January 1994).

I have not come across any published information on frictions between or among the Belgrade and Zagreb speakers during the tour. Similarly to the journalistic articles on the speakers tour in Germany in 1991, the North American articles on the MADRE tour portrayed the Belgrade and Zagreb speakers as cooperating with each other and working in their respective countries against the official nationalist politics and on supporting the (raped) refugee women (*Merric Life*, 08.04.1993; *off our backs*, May 1993e; *The ACTivist*, May 1993; *The Lumberjack*, 31.03.1993; *Village Voice*, 13.07.1993). Kesić indicated that there were disagreements between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster, but did not specify whether they had occurred (also) during the tour: 'The character of the war – we don't have to agree. This is a legitimate issue to discuss, who is guilty in this war and up to which extent is who guilty?' (*off our backs*, May 1993d).

One Belgrade and one Zagreb participant alike evoked in the interview an example of the discomfort which each had had during the tour and which had been caused by a speaker from the other city. These two examples depict the recurring sources of annoyance for the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. Belgrade10AN talked about the guilt which was repeatedly imposed on them by the Zagreb feminists from both clusters. She implied that the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were not as critical of Croatia's politics as they were expecting their Belgrade counterparts to be regarding the politics of Serbia. Belgrade10AN illustrated this with a conversation she had had with Zagreb11AN during the tour. She had asked Zagreb11AN to stop talking to her against Milošević and let her do that, but speak instead against Tuđman.

Zagreb11AN did not recollect this conversation with Belgrade10AN, but the difficulties which she had had with Belgrade13AN. Whereas Zagreb11AN had spoken of the rapes committed by both Croat and Serb militaries, Belgrade13AN had preferred to speak in abstract terms against militarism and male violence against women. This had been unsatisfactory for Zagreb11AN. She had expected clear positionings on the deeds of the Serb forces because she had found it impossible not to be informed about them by then. Therefore, she had proposed that each should speak out against the politics of the state she lived in.

There are several significant issues here. Zagreb11AN said, thus, to have directed at Belgrade13AN the same suggestion which Belgrade10AN said to have given to Zagreb11AN. In both cases the reason for that suggestion was the same: the other had insufficiently accentuated the responsibility of the politicians and militaries of the state she was a citizen of. What is further important is that while Zagreb11AN was seen by the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists as having an abstract positioning, in a different interaction it was Zagreb11AN who had rebuked Belgrade13AN for employing an abstract positioning. Finally, Belgrade10AN disapproved of Zagreb11AN's insufficiently articulated criticism of Croatia in the same manner in which the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists criticised the other Zagreb cluster.

Some published statements show either that the above conversations bore fruit or that they did not happen during the MADRE tour but on (a) previous occasion(s). For example, during the stop in Toronto, Mladenović decidedly addressed Serbia's responsibility when she spoke about the positioning of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists: 'We know they started this war' (*The ACTivist*, May 1993) and '[W]e are completely against the regime of Milosovic [sic] and [the] Serbian regime. We feel that they are the ones who are most responsible for the war. We also think that the other national leaders of the sides who are involved in the war are also contributing' (*MADRE*, 25.03.1993).

In her criticism of the other Zagreb cluster's positioning on the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists, Kesić expressed her recognition of the oppositional message which these Belgrade feminists were publicly articulating:

They accuse them that they are not critical enough of [the] Serbian situation which I don't think is true at all in any sense. I think they are critical enough, just as much as they could be, and they are one of the most critical political groups in Serbia, where there's hardly any real opposition. So if you have a group of women who oppose war and if they release pamphlets and letters to us that they did this, I think this is pretty much a sign that they don't approve of any segment of this war. They don't have to kill themselves to prove to us that they don't approve (*off our backs*, May 1993d).

In the same interview, Kesić was also critical of the way in which the Croatian government and the pro-state media manipulated the war rape figures and stories: 'Everything will have to be actually proven. Nothing must be manipulated, especially not in favor of our governments – none of them if possible – and nothing should be serving for the national and warmongering purpose' (*ibid*).

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As to the positioning on the war rapes, it seems that there was not much difference between the statements of the Belgrade and Zagreb speakers. To my knowledge, the tour was the first occasion where each used the term 'genocide' to address the Serb war rapes. Nonetheless, unlike some Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, they also mentioned – albeit not always as explicitly – the rapes by the other warring parties and linked this war crime to the general (war) male violence against women:

[W]ar rapes are looked at from a historical and global perspective (without denying that Serbian militias rape in massive numbers and for the purpose of genocide) (*Answer to the letter*, 21.04.1993),

[W]e know from the individual cases, or from Amnesty International reports, that there are gang rapes by Croats, if we even try to say that, let's try to face that our guys are doing it, people are angry. All the militaries are doing it. It can be a different sort of crime. Sometimes it's only a war crime of rape. Sometimes it's a part of genocidal strategy. They really hate us when we say that. They won't accept (Kesić, in: *off our backs*, May 1993d), and

[People in Serbia do not know] that mass rapes are going on in Bosnia, that Serbs are raping Muslim and Croat women and the way it is done, that it's genocide...You know that *Serbian* women have been raped and the official media have all the same stories about how they have been raped, they have been raped in prison or individually [sic], and that's all true. But the media portray all that in a nationalist way. Of course we have this very complicated, contradictory situation as feminists. First we see that rape is presented by the media as a nationalist problem. Then we had to take step one further and say okay, it's a woman's issue but it's also a political issue because if it's done in a massive and systematic way and as instrument of 'ethnic cleansing,' so it's not only a women's issue (Mladenović, in: *off our backs*, May 1993d, emphasis in the original).

In an article written during the MADRE tour but published two months later in a Belgrade oppositional daily, Mladenović expressed the above positioning in a more condensed and clear manner:

The testimonies of women with Muslim names say that the Serb forces use rape, together with killing and setting homes on fire, for the purpose of genocide. (Systematic rapes are committed also by the Croat and Muslim faction, but to a smaller extent. They are judicially treated as war crimes) (in: *Borba*, 29–30.05.1993).

In closing, it looks like the MADRE speakers tour was the last event which was heavily coloured by the conflict between the Zagreb so-called nationalist and the Zagreb (and Belgrade) self-declared antinationalist feminists. Although the UN conference in Vienna in June 1993 was attended by feminists from both Zagreb clusters and from the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist one, I have not come across any information on conflicts between them. It was, however, at this conference that MacKinnon expressed her doubts on the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists' opposition to Milošević by asking them how come that they had not been killed.<sup>198</sup>

How is this lack of conflict in Vienna to be explained? To begin with, the feminists from the opposing clusters did not speak to one another. Furthermore, the session where MacKinnon spoke began with the live testimony of a female Bosniak survivor of war rapes in the heinous Bosnian Serb concentration camp Omarska. Although MacKinnon's accusation that the feminists with a gender-based positioning on the genocidal war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia were whitewashing those rapes was strong enough to incite many questions from the audience, the gravity of the story of the Bosniak woman left no space for debates (*Borba*, 14–15.08.1993a, 14–15.08.1993b; MacKinnon, 1994; Radović, 2002; *The Nation*, 09.08.1993; interviews with Belgrade13AN and Belgrade3AN).

The gradual disappearance of such conflicts after June 1993, despite the still ongoing mass war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is, in my view, due to several factors. First, the war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina lost their political and media significance both locally and internationally. Second, after the existence of different positionings among the feminists and the depth of the split became very clear, nobody attempted to bring together – let alone reconcile – the feminists with opposing positionings anymore. Third, the heretical challengers, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, moved to different (feminist) fields. They established their own networks there and did not come across the Zagreb (and Belgrade) self-declared antinationalist feminists anymore. In consequence, the struggle for legitimacy between them became obsolete. More precisely, as I explained in Chapter 3, Kareta and Women's Help Now continued to a different extent and in different capacities to work with MacKinnon and Nenadic on the lawsuit against Karadžić. In addition to this, the two groups, as well as their respective spin-off groups Nona and the Network of Multicultural Help, worked locally in Zagreb with female survivors of (sexual) war and/or domestic violence.<sup>199</sup>

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198 See footnote 189.

199 The possible overlap between these categories notwithstanding.

After the split of Trešnjevkica in the early summer of 1993 its (former) members seem to have disappeared from the debates on the war rapes. An important and, to my knowledge, only exception to this was Zagreb13N's one-time reappearance in 1995 with the already mentioned Croatian translation of Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*.

### **The meeting in Medulin (17–20 March 1995)**

The meeting in Medulin was planned to summon the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists who had been encountering each other throughout the war years at events in third countries. This was to be their chance to discuss with one another the conflicts which had appeared among them on those occasions. The direct inspiration for this get-together was the conflict at the women's consultation in Geneva in the spring of 1994.<sup>200</sup> That conference gathered feminist and/or peace activists from all over the post-Yugoslav region and was convened by the Women's Lobby Zagreb, with the financial and logistical support of the Lutheran World Federation, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the World Council of Churches. The latter three organisations wanted to end the conference with a joint peace declaration of all participants which could be used afterwards in the advocacy efforts to bring peace to the region.

However, the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist (feminist) participants clashed over the contents of the declaration.<sup>201</sup> A Zagreb participant recalled that the women from Belgrade had been unwilling to use formulations stating the extent of Serbia's role as a perpetrator, whereas three Belgrade participants recollected the same, *mutatis mutandis*, about the Zagreb ones. The Bosnian and Herzegovinian participants reacted to this conflict angrily – 'We do not want to be at the receiving end of this exchange of shots between Belgrade and Zagreb' (*Danas*,

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200 Since I could not obtain enough information on this conflict, I chose not to analyse this event in much detail.

201 In her short report on the consultation, Svenka Savić (1995) observed that the organisers had not taken into account that three days would not suffice to neutralise the differences in positionings which were partially due to the very divergent war experiences of the participants. A similar omission on part of the organiser was, in my view, the choice to have the 'International Women's Solidarity' meeting in Zagreb in February 1993 last only a single day (see also the criticism of Helms, 1998 of the MADRE tour). While I do not want to absolve the post-Yugoslav participants at these meetings from their part of the responsibility for the conflicts, I would argue that the role of the Western organisers should not be underestimated either. Unfortunately, I am unable to explore this issue further here.

23–24.02.2002) – and left the meeting room. Their statement, uttered at a time when the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was still raging, left the involved Belgrade and Zagreb participants with a bad taste in their mouths. They decided eventually to call a meeting where those and similar disagreements and differences could be discussed bilaterally (Ćetković, 2000; Radović, 2002; Savić Sv., 1995; *Women's Consultation*, 1994; interviews with Zagreb11AN, Belgrade10AN and Belgrade3AN).

The American funding organisation STAR Project of Delphi International agreed to fund such a reunion of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, but given the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the meeting could not take place in that country. Between the neutral ground of Hungary and the Istrian region of Croatia, the Belgrade feminists chose the latter 'out of sentimental reasons' (*Informacija III*, March 1995). Although the peace had not returned to Croatia as a whole yet, ie one part of its territory was still held by the Croatian Serbs, Istria had remained untouched by any direct war violence and was a safe and tolerant enough location for such an event. As the already quoted information sheet stated, the

[t]heme of the meeting is conversation and dialogue about what we think of one another, and whether our thoughts and relations have changed since the beginning of the war, nationalism and societal hatred. Further: how much are we shaped by the territory we live in; ethnic identity vs gender identity; feminist solidarity in war; conflicts at international gatherings (*Informacija III*, March 1995).

I am not familiar with the manner in which the participants were selected. Some of them did not belong to those who had been encountering each other at conferences abroad, while others who had clashed on such occasions were not present. Still, most of those who attended the Medulin meeting had indeed often come across one another in the preceding four years. The intention of the organisers to tackle the sensitive issues was also visible in the presence of an American trainer in conflict resolution skills, who was there to give a few workshops and assist the dialogue. In accordance with the closed character of the meeting, the local Istrian human rights activists who provided logistical support did not attend the working sessions.

I have come across only three texts which address this gathering. The more report-like contribution of Mladenović and Kesić (1996) is fully dedicated to it, whereas Mladenović and Miličević (1996) describe it more shortly and more affectingly as part of their reminiscence of the several for them very significant peace-building activities in the first half of the 1990s. The latter type of description is also

present in Mladenović (1998), wherein the Medulin meeting is mentioned in relation to the activities of the Belgrade Autonomous Women's Center. If combined, these texts give a good indication of the issues which played a role during those few days. Their further weight is that they belong to the scarce (first-hand) accounts which indicate that there were sometimes serious disagreements and misunderstandings between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists.<sup>202</sup>

Still, none of the three texts contains one of the first issues which the participants of this meeting recollected during the interviews: the superfluousness of the presence of the conflict resolution trainer. The anecdote which was repeatedly narrated to me with a certain dose of pride entailed the following: soon after the meeting had started the participants realised that the presence of an outside person for whom everything had to be translated into English hampered the process instead of assisting it. Having felt skilled enough to go through the painful and frustrating past experiences by themselves, they decided to continue alone (interviews with Zagreb9AN, Zagreb3AN, Belgrade11AN, Zagreb11AN, Belgrade13AN, Zagreb18ANA, Zagreb7AN, Belgrade3AN and Belgrade5AN).

As it would turn out, this meeting would be cathartic, especially for the feminists from Belgrade. One of the Zagreb participants, who had also taken part in the speakers tour in Germany in November 1991, attributed the special character of the Medulin meeting – besides being held in one of the warring countries and focused on the past conflicts – to the fact that its participants did not have to perform as members of their ethnic collectives in front of an audience.

[A]ll other meetings were...foremostly a performance...The three of us from Zagreb and the three from Belgrade did not get the chance [in Germany] to sit for three days to chat with each other and see where the differences between us were and what we have experienced. Instead we were [announced as] peace activists and put on the stage and we had to act. I mean, act... You talk about something, but only there on the stage, in front of those who ask, you realise that you do not actually agree about some things or you do not really understand one another properly. Something similar happened in Venice, Geneva, MADRE in America... All that was a game: 'We brought you peace activists, ask them.' This [the Medulin meeting] was not like that. We had the opportunity to talk without that pressure from the public (interview with Zagreb9AN).

Put differently, the previous encounters occurred in Western (feminist) fields wherein the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were

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202 See Chapter 2.

struggling over the legitimacy of their positionings (also) among themselves and in front of foreign audiences. Freed from the pressure to achieve something, such as produce a joint statement or precisely inform on the character and prevalence of the war rapes, the only agenda points of the Medulin meeting were its participants and their (previous) dynamics. That even a limited outside audience – the conflict resolution trainer, her translator and an American journalist – was not welcome in the end, additionally shows how needed such a secluded encounter was for those who attended it.

Nevertheless, the presence of audiences and conference agendas, and the absence of privacy and time had not been the only reasons why the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists had not managed to discuss the differences between them earlier. To do so would mean entering a political and emotional minefield, as witnessed by the following quotation. Žarkov (2002:61) noted a Zagreb feminist's recollection of the first meetings with the Belgrade feminists after the beginning of the war violence:

Only now I understand what was happening in these meetings. We were so physical! We kissed and hugged and kept [sic] each other's hands, sat embraced all the time. We cried a lot, and laughed a lot. And we brought each other presents. Little things, a chocolate, soap, whatever. Something to hold. But, you see, we were afraid to talk. We actually talked a lot, but there were themes we never opened up. Who is guilty? Who started it all? Is everybody equally responsible? These things we never talked about. We hugged instead. It was too much, you know. There were too few of us left. We could not bear to lose one more with a wrong question. So we kept silent and hugged.

What made the Medulin meeting additionally unique and laden for the Belgrade participants was its seaside location. This was the first time since the beginning of the war in the summer of 1991 that they saw the Adriatic Sea from the Croatian coast, but now as citizens of a different country: '[We] saw our sea. Whose sea? It is not ours any longer. The sea was the same as always, calm and blue, but we are foreigners in the land of sea. We need passports and visas' (Mladenović and Miličević, 1996:10). This fragment seems to have been inspired also by the scene in which the exclamation 'our sea' by a Belgrade participant was met by the comment of a Zagreb participant that it was not their sea anymore. This was a very painful moment for the Belgrade participants who did not get the apparently teasing character of the reaction (interviews with Zagreb12AN and Belgrade13AN).<sup>203</sup>

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203 During my fieldwork in Belgrade I received two more confirmations of the bias which the

For these Belgrade feminists the Medulin meeting was at once a reminder of their pre-war life, a reality check and a promise of a better future:

[T]here were much more emotions than a text could contain... Nadežda was crying one day long, Slavica two days, Daša two days, I [Mlađenović] sporadically, Ljiljana sporadically, Ana was silent. But all of us were singing the last evening in the Istrian tavern with the Istrian women who were also crying from time to time. So that we would grasp the idea of new states, so that we would leave behind the images of concentration camps and the images of dead people with which we lived because we cared about the suffering of people, so that we would start making plans for the future, this meeting cleansed us and brought us closer to our Zagreb friends. We started loving one another a lot (Mlađenović and Miličević, 1996:10).

In the interviews, the Belgrade participants recollected the encounter in a similar passionate manner. They also mentioned the tears which they had shed intensively during the joint bus ride from Zagreb to Medulin and at the meeting, but especially upon looking at the sea. This was also the case with the Belgrade participant who had chosen earlier in the 1990s to explicitly distance herself from Yugoslavia and the reference 'our sea'. Being aware that many Serbs with a pro-Yugoslav orientation ended up manipulated by Milošević, she decided to – as she put it – radically assume her responsibility:

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reference 'our sea' came to carry after the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia. Independently from one another, two outspokenly antinationalist friends of mine from Belgrade told me in a similar wording how much they regretted not being able to refer to the Adriatic Sea as 'our sea' anymore. Being afraid that they might be considered Serbian nationalists, they found the situation painful and frustrating, since the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea had played an important part in their memories of childhood holidays and school trips. Due to these memories, that part of the Adriatic Sea still felt a bit theirs, although they had no problem accepting its territorial belonging to Croatia. It was not a coincidence that these two scenes occurred in May 2009. Starting from that month and during the whole summer the streets of Belgrade featured a visible presence of posters and billboards from the Croatian National Tourist Board inviting people to spend their summer vacation in Croatia. The photos were depicting locations on the Croatian part of the Adriatic coast and carried the slogan 'Kad srce kaže leto, kaže... Jadran!' ('When the heart says summer, it says... Adriatic!'). According to the information on the website of the Croatian National Tourist Board (08.05.2009), this advertising campaign intended to prompt positive emotions, ie a positive appeal in the potential customers. Ironically, the effect which the campaign had on some people in Belgrade was to awake exactly those emotions which they were afraid of articulating publicly. To add to the irony, two of the campaign photos portrayed Dubrovnik (see footnote 177).

I was living by that [pro-Yugoslav] concept and when the war started, I had to deconstruct everything which I loved so much and believed in...Because of all those big crimes and tensions, I said that I would never again utter that that was our sea. We were always saying 'our sea'...And that was an excellent decision because I broke with one type of sentiment...A sentiment pulls you towards something which is politically problematic...I had to be done with that language (interview with Belgrade5AN).

Judging from the way in which the Zagreb participants described the Medulin meeting, it seems that the meeting did not have such a charge for them. Nonetheless, their recurring recollection of the crying of the Belgrade participants and their reaction to the sea shows that they were affected by the encounter as well. The meeting apparently exposed once more, but this time very explicitly, the dissimilar war experiences and the fact that one part of the participants (those from Belgrade) came from the country which had attacked the one wherein the other participants (the Zagreb ones) lived:

Women from Belgrade wanted the sisters from Zagreb to hear and know why some of them were crying already on the bus to Zagreb. Some women from Zagreb wanted their sisters from Belgrade to know why they had decided: 'never again [to go] to Belgrade' (Mladenović and Kesić, 1996:14).

The need of the feminists from each city to communicate their experiences to and be heard by the feminists from the other city indicates the shared feeling of not being understood and not having one's suffering recognised by the other side. Mladenović (1998) noted the absence of trust and the 'us' and 'them' divide which existed between the feminists from the two cities prior to the meeting. As I stated earlier, these issues started playing a role already during the first wartime encounter between the self-declared antinationalist feminists and peace activists from the two cities – the speakers tour in Germany in November 1991. So, on the one hand, there was a burning mutual need to have the other side acknowledge one's difference, while on the other, the feminists also felt the need to reconnect as women and sisters exactly because these differences were threatening the future existence of the gender-based solidarity and cooperation among them.

The insistence on the gender-based reconnection is already observable from the title of the text of Mladenović and Kesić (1996): 'Laughter, Tears and Politics: Dialogue – How Women Do It'. With the exception of the above quotation which states the dissimilar experiences of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, the rest of the text

speaks of the similar – if not the same – manner in which women in general do things, including the linking of personal histories and societal issues through dialogue:

A women's dialogue starts from personal stories and arrives at the political level. A women's dialogue begins from tears and laughter, a five hours-long singing in an Istrian tavern, from the level mum/dad/me, from childhood and our grandmothers' stories. A women's dialogue starts and returns to the personal experiences of war, genocide, home, state, nation and develops afterwards to the exchanges of our political thoughts and standpoints on Krajina, Kosovo, Jasenovac, Bleiburg, mass war rapes of women (Mladenović and Kesić, 1996:15).

Although one the purposes of the reunion in Medulin was to create space to discuss the conflicts which had occurred at the international encounters, none of my respondents who had participated in Medulin mentioned a concrete example of such a discussion. What many of them mentioned, though, was the moment when they realised that among them were the daughters – one Belgrade and one Zagreb feminist – of two men who had been on opposite sides in World War II. In May 1945 the father of the Belgrade feminist had participated, as a partisan, in the summary killing in Bleiburg (Austria) of the Ustasha prisoners of war among whom was the father of the Zagreb feminist. Two Belgrade participants recalled this episode as follows:

I had not even heard about Bleiburg before that. You can imagine how that looked; something just pops out, resurfaces...I was bewildered, and I think the others were, too, [about] how multilayered each of our stories was, and [about] the layers which you could inherit.

Me: Even among the activists who had chosen a similar positioning.

Yes, how different those prehistories were (interview with Belgrade5AN), and

The anger of this [woman] from Zagreb, the guilt of this [woman] from Belgrade...In fact, everything was somehow important. And then the conversation started about where our fathers and mothers were, on which side in the wars... What came out above all was that almost everybody's parent was a participant or a victim or a witness of some terrible war crimes! *Each of us* had some crime...in her family heritage...*Lives were changing* because of the [war] crimes and all of us have some similar history behind us. The point was in fact that we feminists end the hatred that our parents might have

had because of the crimes which had determined their lives and deaths...You cannot even grasp what kinds of crimes there were; my generation did not learn much about that at school (interview with Belgrade13AN, emphasis in the original).

This realisation and the ensuing discussion exposed the existence of silenced places in the official Yugoslav historiography of World War II which were nevertheless still vibrating in the family histories of individuals. At the same time, this exchange disclosed that even among the feminists there were issues which they had not touched upon, not even before the wars of the 1990s.

As I stated in Chapter 3, the Yugoslav feminists-in-becoming had mobilised themselves and others by stressing the problems they were all exposed to because of belonging to the same gender. This had left no space for discovering and articulating the differences among them – a phenomenon which was further strengthened by the equalising character of the communist ideology. The Medulin meeting provided exactly this very needed space for a more profound understanding of each other's different backgrounds and sometimes dissimilar positionings, ie for connecting the personal to the political and historical (Mladenović and Kesić, 1996).

In spite of the cathartic moments and the importance of the meeting for the participants, the three already mentioned texts are the only published records of it. In addition to the reasons which I gave in Chapter 2 for the general lack of (scholarly) texts on the conflicts and differences between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, I would argue that the omission of this specific episode has also been due to its anomalous character (Douglas, 1966). The encounter both enabled the participants to reconnect as fellow women (sisters) and made them aware of the differences and tensions among them. In other words, the event partially strengthened the myth of sisterhood, while simultaneously diminishing it partially. The safest way to deal after the meeting with such an empowering and disturbing anomaly was to be silent about it. This silence not only manifested in the scarcity of written records and analyses, but also in the fact that the format of the Medulin meeting has not been repeated. The Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists have kept avoiding another such joint questioning of their accustomed classification of themselves as feminists whose unceasing and mutual gender-based understanding of and solidarity with each other transgressed ethnic and state boundaries.

### **The Belgrade Women's Studies Center (throughout the 1990s)**

Unlike the Zagreb women's studies, which were established and run exclusively by feminists belonging to the self-declared antinationalist cluster, their Belgrade counterpart gathered from the very beginning both self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists. Even the two main initiators and organisers of the Belgrade group, Belgrade15N and Belgrade11AN, belonged to different clusters – a form of joint work which was impossible even to imagine in Zagreb in the 1990s. In view of this peculiar cooperation which, moreover, took place for the most part during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the occurrence of war-related tensions was to be expected.

However, the existence of such tensions and their intensity remain quite unclear if one is to form conclusions only from the very limited and nebulous relevant published information. My interviews managed to throw somewhat more light on the matter, also because the knowledge obtained from them helped me to better read between the lines in the published texts. Nevertheless, many gaps and obscurities still remain, making this group an exemplary location for studying the silenced war-related divisions among the Belgrade feminists.

To begin with, the Women's Studies Center is conspicuously missing from Mladenović and Litričin (1993) – the earliest text which reported on war-related tensions among the Belgrade feminists. The group was neither listed among those 'where the non-nationalist statement is clear' nor among 'all other groups [which] had many problems' (1993:117). The group's portrayal which several years later would be written by Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić (1998) also did not offer any information on the war-related positionings of the group. The existence of any related tensions or agreements was also omitted. The author only presented the different views on epistemological issues and the organisation of the work process, such as the issue whether the knowledge creation and transfer should have the format of an *ex cathedra* university lecture or of a more egalitarian coffeehouse conversation.

Some (covert) tensions appear, nonetheless, to have been present in the Women's Studies Center already from the beginning. This can be inferred from Belgrade11AN (1998:492), despite her cryptic form of writing and use of questions instead of statements:<sup>204</sup>

[I]n order to be more specific in addressing the problems of establishing a Women's Studies Centre amid a war, one moment

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204 Mladenović (2003) is another good example of this implicit form of writing.

should not be bypassed: was it the case that while assuming the anti-nationalist foundations of our Centre we actually wished to avoid clarifications concerning the matter so as to avoid conflicts? Later, in fact, this did erupt in individual conflicts and unresolvable differences in the critiques of nationalism which, in time, we learned to live with...Or, contrary to what Virginia Woolf tried to teach us – do women, in fact, have a country, or a nation?

Belgrade11AN, thus, set up a dichotomy between women who felt affiliated with their country or nation, and those who did not and positioned themselves more critically also regarding nationalism. When I asked her to tell me more about those unresolvable differences the activists had learned to live with, she said that in writing this essay on the eve of the group's split, she had made her 'last attempt to formulate it [the situation] mildly'. As to the differences,

[t]here were those who were not ready to accuse Serbia and the state politics of Serbia that much, and *especially not* the Serbs – that was markedly out of the question. They were not fools not to see what was going on, what was destroyed and how many people were killed; it was said that Šešelj<sup>205</sup> was a lunatic and Arkan<sup>206</sup> a war criminal, but that they were not us. Those were some paramilitary formations which were in fact not related... There was a refusal to see that that was a consistent state politics which was actually supported by the majority of the population. That was the conclusion which was hard to cope with (interview with Belgrade11AN, emphasis in the original).<sup>207</sup>

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205 Vojislav Šešelj is a Serbian politician and organiser of Serb paramilitaries in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo. He is currently on trial at the ICTY, charged with crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war.

206 Arkan, ie Željko Ražnatović, was a leader of a Serb paramilitary unit which had committed war crimes, including murder and rape, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo. He was shot in Belgrade in January 2000 without ever having appeared in front of the ICTY, which had charged him with crimes against humanity, violations of the laws or customs of war and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions.

207 In 2010, the same year when this part of the interview was conducted, Belgrade11AN's (2010) book on the question of responsibility in the works of Hannah Arendt was published. In the preface Belgrade11AN stressed once more her view on the collective responsibility of the citizens of Serbia, including those who had not committed any war crimes: 'If Serbia is to be developed as a modern citizens' society, founded on human rights, all those who want to be citizens of this society have to face the truth regarding what has been committed "in our name" ...Moreover, my thesis is that *the collaboration with the regime stems from the very status of a citizen, which belongs to the individuals, whereas the citizen's political adulthood can be achieved and acknowledged only if it includes the citizen's responsibility*' (2010:12–13, emphasis in the original). The question of the collective responsibility of the citizens of Serbia for the (post-)Yugoslav wars is not only one of the key issues which

In the introductory text featured in the group's tenth anniversary publication (Dojčinović-Nešić and Popović, 2002) there was not any mention of the presence of such 'conflicts and unresolvable differences in the critiques of nationalism'. The formation of two groups in 1998 was presented as resulting from the diversification of the activities of the initial group. Duhaček (2004) did not mention the split in 1998 at all. In a single sentence she spoke of the dissimilar positionings on nationalism in the group, but placed this sentence within her discussion of the difference among the members regarding the institutionalisation of women's studies, ie the academism vs activism difference. A certain overlap between those who were inclined towards activism and those who were inclined towards nationalism was suggested, as well as – implicitly – between those with a preference for academism and those with a preference for antinationalism. Although it was not stated, this dichotomy referred at least to the two main organisers. The so-called nationalist feminist Belgrade15N was more grassroots-oriented, while the self-declared antinationalist feminist Belgrade11AN was more of a theoretician. However, Duhaček (2004:45) did not elaborate on how those differences and the presumable concomitant tensions had been practically manifested and dealt with:

The suspicion that the academia would lose sight of activism, and should therefore be monitored, was in direct conflict with the argument that theory should have some independence from ideology, even from feminist ideology, if such a thing can be said to exist. What made matters even more complicated was that positions of unwavering feminist activism, though committed, were in some rare cases unclearly positioned, and in even rarer cases, leaning toward Serbian nationalism. This suspicion of theory has been hard to endure, even painful at times, since the vulnerable women's studies project had expected unconditional support from feminist activism.

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divide the Belgrade feminists into self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist. It also divides the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists among themselves. Nevertheless, given the major role of the Serbian state in those wars and the accentuation of Serb victimhood in the Serbian politics and media, it is not done for these feminists to express a less radical conceptualisation of the Serb collective responsibility or pronounce themselves on the collective responsibility of the Bosniaks, Croats and/or Kosovar Albanians. Moreover, if they would do so, they would risk being depicted as nationalists by other members of the cluster. This applies, too, to overt addressing of the Serb victims, ie the departure from the orthodox feminist positioning which focuses on the victims of the Serbs. I started realising this pregnant silence when some Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists confided to me their dissenting views which are nowhere to find in print (interviews with Belgrade10AN, Belgrade7ANA, Belgrade3AN, Belgrade6AN and Belgrade4AN). See Chapter 6.

Finally, Zaharijević (2007:247–248), using Belgrade11AN's reference to Virginia Woolf, linked the split of the group exclusively to the existence of different positionings among its members regarding one's country and/or ethnic collective: 'The creation of the Women's Studies and Gender Research Center and, consequently, of AŽIN [Association for Women's Initiative] and some other initiatives led once more, in 1998, to a regrouping of the women in relation to their positioning regarding the famous standpoint of Virginia Woolf'.

The explicit presence of this connection makes the above sentence unique in the body of published information on the Women's Studies Center. Nevertheless, even this text leaves many questions open. There is a lack of further information on the regrouping (ie what exactly those differences in positioning have been), the split is portrayed as immediately leading to the creation of more – instead of only two – groups, and it remains untold that the split was between the two organisers. Put differently, the author asserted, but only half-explicitly, that these feminists had differently positioned themselves on their country and/or ethnic collective. Given that Zaharijević's text was written in the second half of the 2000s and she belongs to the younger generation of Belgrade feminists, her manner of referring to the split indicates that the avoidance of (explicit) portrayals of the war-related divisions among the Belgrade feminists is to some extent still in place.

The second indication of significant differences in the war-related positionings of the members of the Women's Studies Center is a discussion which has evolved around the question how justifiable it would be to shoot to defend oneself and one's children if an armed soldier would appear at the door. The only two authors who partially recorded this episode (Duhaček, 1998; Mladenović, 2002, 2003) used the reactions which had been uttered then to point to the differences among the Belgrade feminists in their positioning on nationalism and the (post-)Yugoslav wars. There is one inconsistency in these contributions regarding the timing of the discussion, but it does not affect the argument which I want to make here. Mladenović (2002) situated the episode in 1992,<sup>208</sup> but spoke in a later work (Mladenović, 2003) of the second half of 1991. No temporal indications were provided in Duhaček (1998).

Both Duhaček and Mladenović (implicitly) suggested that not everybody had expressed an antinationalist positioning during the discussion. Due to the great scarcity of information on the differences in the war-related positionings among the

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208 The author did not state the year 1992 explicitly, but said that the participants had been students of the first generation of the Belgrade women's studies. This information locates the discussion somewhere between the launch of the studies on 8 March 1992 and the summer of 1992.

Belgrade feminists, I found it very important to learn more about this discussion, including the names of the participants. My search had to be limited, though, to the texts which I already had at my disposal because the significance of the discussion became clear to me only after the fieldwork.

Duhaček (1998) explicitly recollected the participation of two Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists in the discussion. Mladenović (2002) stated that the participants had been students of the first generation of the Belgrade women's studies, while in Mladenović (2003) she mentioned that the discussion had involved Belgrade feminists in general. As I explained in Chapter 3, some of the students of the first, experimental, generation had already been active Belgrade feminists. Next to being the teachers in the first programme, they had also attended the other lectures as students. This means that at least one part of the feminists who had participated in this discussion had continued to work together in this group, making the parallel existence of (very) different positionings inside the same group very probable.

Further in the search I discovered in the appendices of the essay of Dojčinović-Nešić (1998) a version of the first programme which featured the names of the lecturers. In addition to these feminists, it is possible that Belgrade6AN, who spoke of being in the first generation, and Belgrade15N – the other initiator of the Belgrade women's studies – had also participated in the discussion. While the list of participants which I compiled is uncertain, it indicates the probability of diverse views: some of the feminists on it are self-declared antinationalist, others are so-called nationalist. That some of the participants had children – one of them had actually brought her young daughter that evening (Duhaček, 1998) – has probably also influenced their positioning, ie made them more defensive, and increased the heaviness of the discussion.

But what was actually said that evening? After her suggestion that women positioned themselves differently vis-à-vis their country or nation, Duhaček (1998) explained that during the discussion in question Lepa Mladenović and Staša Zajović were adamantly and on principle against the use of arms. Other feminists, whose names were not disclosed, 'were ready to use weapons at least in order to defend themselves' (Duhaček, 1998:493). Next to recollecting two similar positionings, Mladenović (2003) additionally classified the feminists who had employed them. She spoke of pro-nationalists who had justified 'shooting in defence some of the time, but not all of the time' (2003:161) and feminist pacifists or antinationalists who had been against all shooting. In the slightly earlier contribution from 2002, besides addressing the fragility of trust even among women who have known each other and worked together for several years, the same author made an important connection between the discussion in the group and the then recently changed outside context:

Since we did not know how each of us would reply, the concentration among us was incredible. Everybody was surprised by the answer of the other...Those who said 'Yes, I will shoot in defence' felt that they did not have trust in those who would not shoot because, had they happened to be together, the person at the door [with a gun] would have shot them both. Those who said 'I will not shoot' felt uncomfortable when they realised that many others would shoot in defence because of what that meant in the context in which shooting in defence was the basic ideology of the Serb war violence in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. All of us were antiwar, but that term was obviously very broad (Mladenović, 2002:12).

When I initially read these accounts I was surprised that the participants were (implicitly) named one way or another based on how they would react in a hypothetical one-to-one violent situation. Having read, however, Mladenović's above link to the outside context and this author's elaboration of the contradictions among the Belgrade feminists (Mladenović, 2003),<sup>209</sup> I realised that the underlying question in the discussion was most likely not one's hypothetical reaction on a micro-level. Instead, the real issue at stake seems to have been one's positioning on the actual war situation in Croatia (and/or Bosnia and Herzegovina, depending on when exactly the discussion took place), ie the macro-level right of self-defence of one ethnic collective when threatened by another.

This research cannot, unfortunately, provide an answer to the question which feminists have positioned themselves in exactly which manner during the discussion and why. The question how one's positioning on this issue corresponds to the classification of the Belgrade feminists on self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist will also remain unanswered. Nevertheless, the mystifying and fragmentary manner in which this episode has been recorded both illustrates and reproduces the silence which surrounds the differences in the war-related positionings among the Belgrade feminists, including those active in the Women's Studies Center. It also warns against the simple referencing of the above works in the discussions of nationalism among the Belgrade feminists, given that the information provided in them is far from unambiguous.

The third indication of the existence of (silenced) war-related differences among the members of the Women's Studies Center is the conference 'Women's Rights and Social Transition in the FR Yugoslavia' which the group organised in June 1997. As will become clear from my succeeding analysis of the conference proceedings, it is

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209 I have analysed this elaboration in Chapter 2.

very likely that this event has caused some frictions within the group. This possibility is supported by the silence around this conference: none of my respondents spoke about it, and I have not found any records of it in other publications. I learned about it by coming across its proceedings in an Amsterdam library after the fieldwork.

The proceedings contain three texts in the section on women's rights and war. Since the authors of those essays do not belong to the target group of my research, I will focus instead on the telling choice which the conference organiser and editor of the proceedings made in selecting those contributions (Belgrade12N, 1997). In the first essay (Smiljanic, 1997), the treatment of war rape at the ICTY was discussed in a manner which gave no indication of the ethnicity of the perpetrators and victims of war rapes. In the second article (Jovanović B., 1997), the author addressed the rapes of Bosnian Serb women in Bosnia and Herzegovina and criticised the unethical and depreciatory approach of the ICTY towards those rapes, in comparison to its treatment of the rapes of Bosniak women committed by Serb men. In Jovanović's wording, the ICTY was to treat the Muslim rapes of Serbian women just as it treated the rapes by Serbs against Muslims – as systematic, widespread and aimed at ethnic cleansing. Finally, the third contribution (Stevanović, 1997) reported on the dreadful situation of the women from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia who lived as refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The author did not state their ethnicity, but it is to be expected that most of those people had been of Serb origin, as fleeing to Serbia, ie the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, had been the safest option for them. There were no contributions in the proceedings which explicitly focused on Serbs as perpetrators and non-Serbs as victims. Mladenović, otherwise one of the most vocal Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists regarding the articulation of the collective Serb responsibility for the (sexual) war crimes against non-Serbs, was featured with a non-war-related article on lesbian human rights.

To understand the point which I want to make here, it is important to summon the positioning on the aggressors and victims in the (post-)Yugoslav wars which was held by the four Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists. Without ever denying the Serb (sexual) war atrocities, these feminists – all of whom were in one way or another active in the Women's Studies Center – were not as outspoken about them as the other Belgrade cluster would start becoming from March 1993 onward. Furthermore, the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists did not underline the foremost perpetrator's role of the Serb militaries nor insist on assuming collective responsibility for the (sexual) war crimes committed in the name of the Serbs. Instead, they criticised in general the nationalism of all ethnic groups and the (sexual) war crimes committed by all sides against people of all ethnicities.

The Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists, thus, kept using the positioning of equal responsibility and victimisation – which had also been the initial positioning of the other Belgrade feminists – but, unlike them, usually focused on the suffering of Serbs. This did not only concern the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo, but also those in Serbia proper who suffered from the consequences of the wars next door, the international sanctions and the NATO bombing in 1999. This positioning can be inferred from the extensive scholarship which the three academic feminists from this cluster have produced on diverse topics – texts which also indicate the existence of cooperation between these feminists in the form of eg writing introductions to or recommendations for each other’s books and manuscripts (Belgrade16N, 1994, 1996, 1999a, 1999b; Belgrade2N, 1994a, 1994b, 1999, 2002; Belgrade12N, 1994, 2000, 2001, 2003; Belgrade12N et al., 1995, 1996; *Republika*, 01–15.11.1995). Finally, these feminists sometimes referred to the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia as a ‘civil war’. This reference was avoided by the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists because it was seen as wrongly equalising the responsibility and military power of all warring sides.<sup>210</sup>

The example of the Belgrade conference in 1997 is reminiscent of the situation in the Zagreb group Women’s Help Now, wherein before the official split in April 1992 one could find two types of war positionings signed with the name of the same group (see Chapter 3). Similarly to this, in the case of the Women’s Studies Center one could see the above conference being organised by a group in whose council there were three feminists who had started a few years earlier to (implicitly) state the Serb responsibility for the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia and/or the (sexual) war crimes against non-Serbs (eg Duhaček, 1995; Mladenović, 1994; Papić, 1994). The following mystifying and not further elaborated description of Dojčinović-Nešić (1998:213) might be explaining exactly this co-existence: ‘The selection of lecturers

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210 A good explanation of why some activists find the formulation ‘civil war’ problematic is given in Fridman (2006b:117). One of her interviewees stated that among the Belgrade antiwar activists ‘many were anti-Milošević’, but ‘some voices were not crystallized enough in what their position was; they usually say it was a civil war, but what civil war? It was a war of aggression against all these states’. This quotation is further significant for the use of the word ‘crystallized’ to convey that one’s positioning has insufficiently condemned Serbia’s politics. Several other feminists have employed similar formulations to express the same. For example, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist Đurđa Knežević (1994:4) spoke of a ‘very vague and seldom precise [criticism]’. For the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist Belgrade11AN some activists were ‘unclearly positioned’ (2004:45) and some statements ‘insufficiently politically nuanced’ or ‘insufficiently clearly [formulated]’ (interview with Belgrade11AN), and according to Belgrade5AN – another Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist – there were activists who ‘did not possess a political clarity and sharpness regarding the war’ (interview with Belgrade5AN).

is, let's say, very delicate. The question of "ideological suitability"...is rejected, but not the requirement that the lectures fit by their theme and contents into women's studies whereby the basic criterion is their quality'.

I would argue that the question of ideological suitability was rejected by not being, in fact, explicitly posed and discussed. It was rejected not because it did not matter to the involved feminists, but because their priority was to provide a rich women's studies curriculum. They gathered lecturers by virtue of their expertise on varied topics, and those with divergent war-related positionings avoided discussing with one another the issues which they knew or suspected were contested by the collocutor.

The fourth and last indication of different war-related positionings in this group is the absence of the topics of nationalism and war from the first three women's studies curricula: the experimental one of the spring of 1992 and the two regular ones of 1992/1993 and 1993/1994. In light of the omnipresence of nationalism in Serbia at the time and the vicinity of war violence, it is very likely that these topics were nevertheless at least touched upon during some lectures, such as the one on population politics in 1992/1993 and 1993/1994. This does not, however, take away the question why these topics were not paid any explicit attention in the curricula before the academic year 1994/1995. That year's programme and the following ones – 1995/1996, 1996/1997 and 1997/1998<sup>211</sup> – explicitly announced at least three lectures on nationalism and war (*Leaflet Curriculum for the School Year 1995/96*, n.d.; *Nacrtno programa za školsku 1993/94*, n.d.; *Program nastave za školsku 1994/95*, n.d.; *Program u letnjem semestru 1993*, n.d.; *Program u zimskom semestru 1992*, n.d.; *Program za letnji semestar 1992*, n.d.; *Program Ženskih studija za školsku 1996/97*, n.d.; *Školska 1997/98. godina*, n.d.).

According to Belgrade11AN (1998:491–492), this omission in the programme did not remain unnoticed. The organisers of the women's studies 'were directly reproached and asked why it was that we did not include as the topics of our lectures or workshops the burning issues around us. In our enthusiasm for our women's studies this criticism was unexpected, painful and ultimately rejected'. Since this article did not indicate who the author of the reproach had been and did not contain any other details on it, it was only after the interview with the author that I could link this part of the text to the, up to then unknown to me, episode it referred to: the letter of one Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist.

In the interview, Belgrade11AN recollected that some of the activists of the Women's Studies Center were very much angered by the Zagreb feminist's – in their

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211 I was unable to find the curricula for 1998/1999 and 1999/2000.

view unjust – act of teaching them a lesson while not even being around.<sup>212</sup> Others, including Belgrade11AN herself, thought that the Zagreb feminist had a point, but that she should have also expressed her support for and recognition of the efforts which the activists had put into setting up the programme. In her answer to my email inquiry after the interview with Belgrade11AN, the Zagreb feminist in question confirmed that she had written such a letter after the group had asked for feedback on the programme, but she recollected the contents of her comments somewhat differently. According to her, she had asked the activists to position themselves publicly on the war since it was being waged in their name (read: in the name of the Serbs). She also mentioned, without giving any further details, that she had received one angry reaction.

Belgrade11AN was surprised that I did not know about this letter, as it had apparently stirred up a lot of unrest at the time. This episode is indeed curious: although my interview with her was one of the last ones, nobody had ever brought up this letter nor had I read about it in the organisational documents and the scholarship. The one sentence in her essay from 1998 is the only (implicit) reference to it. Not having seen the letter,<sup>213</sup> but being eager to find out more about it and the discussion which it had inspired, I asked the five respondents I spoke to after the interview with Belgrade11AN about it: Belgrade16N, Belgrade15N, Sarajevo3EXT, Belgrade13AN and Belgrade4AN. Since some of them had been very active in the Women's Studies Center, I expected that they would have at least heard about its existence. However, none of them could even remotely recall this event. In my view, just like the silence surrounding the 1997 conference, the silence regarding this letter exemplifies the hushed-up war-related disagreements among the Belgrade feminists. In addition to this, it also illustrates the similarly concealed disagreements between the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists and the Belgrade feminists from both clusters.

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212 According to Belgrade11AN, some of them were especially provoked by the opening passage of the letter, wherein the Zagreb feminist had stated that she was writing it while flying to New York. While it is quite plausible that such a contextual indication made some feminists living in war-time Belgrade angry, it could also point to one issue which the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists had almost never publicly articulated – the irritation caused by the class differences among them. The Zagreb feminist was one of the feminists who belonged to the communist elite in Yugoslavia: her parents were former partisans and her father a Yugoslav diplomat. Another or an additional possible explanation could be that, although the Zagreb-born feminist was a resident of Belgrade and Zagreb alike, some Belgrade activists might have perceived her only as somebody from Zagreb. Therefore, they might have been (additionally) displeased by having their choices questioned by a person from the inimical city or, at least, by an outsider.

213 The Zagreb feminist wrote that she had not kept a copy, while Belgrade11AN said that she had the original in her paper archives, but that it would be difficult to find it.

In her 1998 article and in the interview, Belgrade11AN gave three explanations for the absence of lectures on war and nationalism in the first three women's studies curricula: the wish to obtain an official academic recognition of the studies, the need to create a safe place which would be as detached as possible from the daily (violent) reality, and the not publicly articulated – and maybe not even very conscious – knowledge that discussions of nationalism and war might lead to clashes between the organisers. To begin with, she explained that she had always been a proponent of the idea to have the Belgrade women's studies integrated in Serbia's official system of university education. At the same time, none of the initiators of the women's studies had any idea what these studies should look like. Therefore, she had asked some acquainted American feminist scholars, such as Alison Jaggar and Nancy Fraser, to send her reading materials and examples of already existing university curricula in women's studies. To have a programme which would to a great extent mirror those of the established and institutionalised women's studies was for Belgrade11AN a way to obtain legitimacy for the Belgrade women's studies in the attempt to have them recognised by the state. Consequently, the topics of war and nationalism, which had not been given much attention in the American women's studies curricula she had obtained, did not receive much attention in the Belgrade curricula either (see also Belgrade11AN, 2004).

Such a transfer of new – and supposedly superior – knowledge from a Western to an Eastern context without an accompanying critical juxtaposition and supplementation with the local knowledge and context is not unique,<sup>214</sup> but I see it here as shedding light on something else as well. The Belgrade feminists who had initiated the women's studies were not only beginning to learn how to set up the curriculum; they also had little theoretical background on nationalism. As I already stated in Chapter 3, in spite of the increase of nationalist discourses all over Yugoslavia in the late 1980s and at the turn of the decade, nationalism remained for the Yugoslav feminists a phenomenon which, while being a priori severely criticised and rejected, was not comprehensively analysed. So, in addition to Belgrade11AN's three explanations, it is also possible that nobody initially felt confident enough to lecture on nationalism and war.

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214 The absence of local experiences and knowledge in the curricula was soon felt by the members of the Women's Studies Center. Therefore, in June 1994, under the coordination of Marina Blagojević and with a grant from the Fund for an Open Society Serbia, the group organised a conference with the telling title 'What Can We Do About Ourselves?'. It primarily gathered women from Serbia and several other Central and Eastern European countries (Blagojević, Duhaček and Lukić, 1995; Lukić, 1996; *Republika*, 01–31.08.1994).

The need for a safe place and the unexpressed awareness of the possibility of conflicts – the second and the third reason which Belgrade11AN gave for the absence of the topics of war and nationalism in the early curricula – should be seen, in my view, as connected to one another. According to her, the possibility of conflicts was at the same time also a reason to keep at bay the discussions on the wars and nationalism altogether. In a similar manner, the use of the self-designation ‘antinationalist’ served not only to express the group’s war-related positionings, but also to discourage open dissent and thereby create the impression of like-mindedness, ie a safe space: ‘[W]as it the case that while assuming the anti-nationalist foundations of our Centre we actually wished to avoid clarifications concerning the matter so as to avoid conflicts?’ (Belgrade11AN, 1998:492). The important function of feminist groups as safe spaces vis-à-vis the outside world was addressed by several Belgrade and Zagreb respondents – all but one self-declared antinationalist feminists. These respondents commonly observed that the feminist groups had helped them to mentally survive the war years, ie remain sane (interviews with Zagreb12AN, Belgrade11AN, Zagreb1N, Belgrade10AN, Zagreb10ANA, Zagreb7AN, Belgrade1ANA, Belgrade3AN and Belgrade6AN).

The absence of painful discussions of nationalism, as well as the painful absence of these discussions, was also recalled by Belgrade13AN. She did not see this absence as being unique to the Women’s Studies Center, but as a common phenomenon in the Belgrade women’s groups in the early 1990s:

It is a fact that for many years nationalism was not discussed *at all* in the Women’s Studies [Center]...None of us was capable in the beginning to articulate her standpoint and to confront her friend who thought differently. Those were not differences in thoughts and standpoints; lives were in question. Nationalism killed. To my knowledge, in those years we have *never* talked about nationalism in any women’s group, not only in the Women’s Studies [Center]. That was such an emotional issue to everybody that we could not distance ourselves and discuss it. Not in Belgrade. Each of us was defending herself, totally emotionally. I have always thought that we had to discuss it, but I did not know how. We, who were radically against nationalism, considered nationalism as contributing to death. The [feminist] pro-patriots perceived us as traitors...That issue was emotionally intense for them, it was emotionally intense for us and I know we did not exchange our points of view. N-o-t-h-i-n-g.

Me: Was it more difficult to deal with the conflicts related to nationalism than with any other emotionally intense conflict?

Nationalism was extra. I do not know whether there has been any other such taboo topic at the time, a *total* taboo. The Belgrade feminists have talked *only* about [the nationalism of] a third person (interview with Belgrade13AN, emphasis in the original).

This respondent referred to the avoidance of exchanging different positionings on nationalism as being particularly strong in the early 1990s, but implied that it had been resolved later. However, my interviews, the respondents' reactions to and interventions in the interview transcripts, the continual absence of publications dealing with this subject as well as the examples which I have presented in this section witness a perseverance of this avoidance among the Belgrade feminists. As the following and final analysis in this chapter – that of the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the war in Kosovo – will show, the variations in the Belgrade feminists' positionings on the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia have not been the only silenced topics.

### **The NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the intensified war in Kosovo (Spring of 1999)**

There are, to my knowledge, only three texts which indicate that there were different positionings among the Belgrade feminists regarding the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the war in Kosovo (Fridman, 2006b; Mladenović, 2003; Zaharijević, 2007). Fridman (2006b) actually spoke about the Belgrade peace activists in general, but my interviews have shown that one of the issues she addressed – the (not) signing of the appeal of 27 intellectuals – also affected some of the feminists. Due to this intertwinement, unlike in the previous analyses, in this one I also look at several statements which have not been produced exclusively by Belgrade feminists.

In an informal conversation before the fieldwork I was told that the divisions which the NATO bombardment caused among the Belgrade feminists were similar to the earlier ones among the Zagreb feminists during the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Given the constitutive power of violence, this analogy was quite plausible and therefore worth exploring, but what made it additionally intriguing was its absence from the scholarship. Unfortunately, despite the special effort which I put into addressing this issue in the interviews – the Belgrade ones in particular – I have been unable to fully grasp the extent and the contents of these divisions. I will, therefore, only give some indications of these differences and divisions here and thereby point to a direction in which they could be explored further in another research project. The

particular difficulty which I and my respondents have experienced in discussing these two historical occurrences was, in my opinion, caused by their more recent nature, the still ongoing strife between Serbia and Kosovo regarding the status of the latter, the silence often mentioned in this thesis concerning the war-related divisions among the Belgrade feminists, as well as the general dilemma among peace activists regarding the justification of military interventions such as this one.

As I stated in Chapter 2, the feminists whom Mladenović (2003) classified as 'pro-nationalist' in connection to the NATO bombing and the war in Kosovo exempted Milošević from the responsibility for the bombing. They only spoke of the NATO-induced suffering of Serbs and destruction of Serbia, while being silent about the Serb ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians. The other group of Belgrade feminists, whom this author named 'anti-fascist', rebuked Milošević for both the bombing and the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians. Among these feminists there were those who approved and those who disapproved of the bombing, and they debated 'whether it was a realistic option or an idealistic option to take a pacifist positioning against both NATO and [the] Serbian fascist ethnic cleansing' (Mladenović, 2003:164).

However, a bit earlier in the same text Mladenović was more critical of those feminists who had not, at least partially, supported the bombing by implicitly accusing them of not empathising with the Kosovar Albanians. She recognised the hardship and the fear in Serbia which the bombing had caused, but suggested that these feminists should have nevertheless taken into account the suffering which had not directly affected them:

[The] [a]nti-fascist feminists in Serbia who were not so explicitly against military intervention wanted to reach beyond their personal feelings of fear by trying to understand the feelings and positions of feminists from Kosova. Many other feminists in Serbia who had lived through the bombings and the accompanying terror did not have any doubts that they were against military intervention, now that it happened over their heads...Some peace activists who chose to agree with the military intervention in 1999 still remained Women in Black peace activists, although Women in Black was against all militarist action, ethnic cleansing, and NATO bombings (Mladenović, 2003:163,164).

I would suggest that this variation within the same text in the description of the different positionings on the bombing and the Kosovar Albanians indicates the laden character of the not very articulated tensions among the Belgrade feminists. Although my interviews were conducted six years after Mladenović's essay, these

divisions proved not to have lost their explosiveness. This was especially true for the frictions among the self-declared antinationalist feminists, including those among the activists of Women in Black. I will return to this later in this analysis when I will address the respondents' interview narratives on the NATO bombing and the war in Kosovo.

The difference among the Belgrade feminists in their degree of support of the Kosovar Albanians has also been observed by Zaharijević (2007). She stated that when it came to empathising publicly with women from allegedly inimical ethnic groups – Albanians, Bosniaks and Croats – the greatest division among the Belgrade feminists was caused by the banner of Women in Black which declared sisterhood with the Kosovar Albanian women.<sup>215</sup> Zaharijević did not give a temporal indication regarding this cleavage, but it is most likely that her claim concerned – at least partially – the 1998–1999 time period. That is because it was then that the exacerbation of the situation in Kosovo and the (threat of) NATO bombing made the articulation of such a voice of support increasingly pertinent for some Belgrade feminists and progressively controversial for others. This was confirmed by several self-declared antinationalist respondents, some of whom spoke of unprecedentedly apparent differences in positioning among the Belgrade feminists (interviews with Sarajevo1EXT, Belgrade7ANA, Belgrade5AN, Belgrade6AN and Sarajevo2EXT).

Both Mladenović (2003) and Zaharijević (2007) suggested that one's opposition to the NATO bombing should not be immediately understood as being a principled antiwar positioning, but first checked against one's positioning on Serbia's politics on the ethnic Others, the Kosovar Albanians in particular. Mladenović's rebuke of the anti-NATO state-organised concerts in Belgrade – 'the *peace option* became an ideology of the Serbian fascist regime' (2003:163, emphasis in the original) – should be seen in this light. The peace paraphernalia which were present at those concerts only concerned the bombing, ie the suffering of the Serbs, whereas the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians was absent from the picture. In a similar vein, Zaharijević (2007:250) spoke of Women in Black as the only group which 'had the right to condemn...[the bombing], without having that sound like finally conceding to the politics which was unceasingly in place from the beginning of the 1990s to 1999, and based purely on the perseverance of the pacifist positioning it advocated'.

Zaharijević contrasted the anti-bombing positioning of this group to that of one Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist, who had criticised the 'global women's

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215 I addressed this example also in Chapter 2.

movement' for its allegedly unanimous full support to the 'NATO aggression',<sup>216</sup> ie for its 'quasi humanitarian and antiwar positioning' and discrimination between 'nations-victims' and 'nations-aggressors' (in: Zaharijević, 2007:249). Put differently, Zaharijević situated this feminist among the feminists who had not belonged to the same cluster as Women in Black and whose positioning on this issue had sometimes resembled that of the Serbian government.

In my attempt to obtain more insight into the claims of Mladenović and Zaharijević, I looked at eight texts of Belgrade feminists written during the bombing or shortly afterwards. Three texts were authored by so-called nationalist and five by self-declared antinationalist feminists (Belgrade16N, 1999b; Božinović, 1999; Belgrade3AN, 1999; Belgrade2N, 1999; Belgrade12N, 1999; Papić, 1999b; Belgrade6AN, 1999; Belgrade14AN, 1999b). However, the positioning of one of these self-declared antinationalist feminists on the bombing and the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians largely corresponded to the positioning of the so-called nationalist feminists. This was a respondent whom several Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists considered a nationalist in relation to these two events.

The texts can be divided into two categories based on whether the authors foremostly criticised Milošević or not and how they spoke of the suffering of the Kosovar Albanians and the Serbs. Nonetheless, there are also differences between the formulations within each category, such as a more or a less harsh condemnation of Milošević or NATO, or more or less attention for the suffering of the Serbs. Summarily speaking, four self-declared antinationalist feminists decried first the politics of Milošević and only afterwards the NATO bombing. They accentuated the suffering of the Kosovar Albanians, but also mentioned that of the Serbs. Their criticism of NATO, the international community and the media for their role in the bombing and the war in Kosovo was formulated without undermining the primacy of Milošević's responsibility. The other authors – one self-declared antinationalist and three so-called nationalist feminists – primarily rebuked NATO, the international community and/or the media for the bombing (and the destruction of Yugoslavia), as well as for the suffering and demonisation of the Serbs. Although they stated the responsibility of Milošević, they contrasted it with that of the other actors. The expulsion of the Kosovar Albanians was briefly acknowledged (Belgrade12N), mentioned in passing (Belgrade3AN) or overlooked (Belgrade16N and Belgrade2N).

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216 The use of the formulation 'NATO aggression' usually indicates one's positioning on the bombing and the war in Kosovo. Those who were very outspoken about the responsibility of Belgrade for the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians and the NATO bombing refrained from using this formulation (Zarez, 11.05.2000; interviews with Belgrade11AN, Belgrade9EXT and Belgrade6AN).

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While Belgrade14AN (1999b:140) introduced her text with: 'Yesterday it was very difficult to write: I didn't have much time, but mainly it was because of the powerful impact of listening to friends from Kosov@',<sup>217</sup> Belgrade2N (1999) opened her essay with two stories of children with non-Albanian names who had been killed during the NATO-bombing. Papić (1999b) titled her contribution 'War in Kosov@, Feminist Politics and Fascism in Serbia' and Belgrade12N (1999) 'NATO Aggression of Yugoslavia: Structure, Causes and Consequences of the Victimisation'. Belgrade16N (1999b:31–32) focused on the role of the media in creating the situation, ie the causes of conflicts in Kosovo (and Yugoslavia) and stated that

[i]t would be logical to expect that the real causes of ethnic wars are based in religious tensions and/or discrimination. However, neither of them was present in the former Yugoslavia to any significant degree...[T]he discrimination regarding the ethnic minorities in all republics and provinces was negligible (with the exception of Kosovo, where starting from the 1970s, the non-Albanian population was exposed to intensive discrimination by the Albanian administration and the Albanian population in general).

Božinović (1999:174), however, addressed Milošević's reversal of Kosovo's autonomy which drastically discriminated against the Kosovar Albanians:

Then [in 1989] occurred Slobodan Milosevic's unconstitutional act. He annulled Kosov@s and Vojvodina's autonomies. The Albanians' response was a general strike. The Serbian regime then sent [to the] employed Albanians notices terminating them [sic] from all paid activities and hiring replacements for their functions.

Finally, in their diaries written during the bombing, Belgrade3AN (1999) and Belgrade6AN (1999) addressed the situation of the Kosovar Albanians in quite a different manner. A telling illustration of this difference is their reference to the same Kosovar Albanian activist. Both authors evoked their friendship and past interactions with her, but whereas Belgrade3AN placed the accent on feeling cheated and betrayed by her, the focus of Belgrade6AN's recollection was the victimisation of this activist:

You ask me about my Albanian friends...Viosa [sic; it should be Vjosa] moved to Macedonia during the intensive bombing of Kosovo. She called me the day before she would exit. She was very afraid. She told me that Rugova was killed, that she saw how the soldiers were killing Fehmi Agani and his sons and that everything

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217 See footnote 8.

was lost. It turned out that none of that had been true.<sup>218</sup> I begged her to escape. She was shouting: 'How? How?'. The next day I got news from my friends in Macedonia that she was in Skopje and afterwards in Tetovo. She had a car and a mobile phone. A fax-invitation had awaited her at the border. She gave several statements for the CNN and the BBC. In these statements, she advocates the 'Albanian cause' and approves of the NATO intervention. I cannot understand that she had forgotten that me, my children, her Belgrade friends, are the targets of that intervention (Belgrade3AN, 1999:34), compared to

Then I saw on the BBC my friend Vjosa, an Albanian from Kosovo: a human rights activist, doctor, very beautiful woman. She spoke of the horrors which she had experienced while escaping from Prishtina. I started crying, not because of her story or the similar stories of other feminist friends from Kosovo which I had already heard, but because of her: she had changed, her face had the expression of a person who would never smile again, never be superficial again... I suppose that I look the same, I looked with fear at myself in the mirror. I remember when I went to Zagreb with Vjosa and a bunch of other friends to a feminist conference in 1996. The Croatian border police took her off the bus together with two Serb refugees from Krajina, and only the three of them did not get a visa (Belgrade6AN, 1999:121).

These differences between the Belgrade so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists notwithstanding, there were also significant differences among the latter. Different from before the bombing, the self-declared antinationalist feminists no longer functioned that much as a cluster, ie did not produce joint statements. Some of them did this with other, non-feminist, activists. I will present two examples of these ad hoc collaborations: the appeal of 27 intellectuals and the statements of the groups gathering in the office premises of the trade union Independence.

The 27 intellectuals who in mid-April 1999 appealed to Milošević, the representatives of the Kosovar Albanians and the leaders of NATO, the European Union and the United States asked for an immediate cease-fire and use of non-violent means for reaching a compromise. In addition to this, the signatories declared:

We sharply condemn the NATO bombings which have severely exacerbated the situation in Kosovo and caused a displacement

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218 Fehmi Agani was a prominent Kosovar Albanian politician who was killed on 6 May 1999 by the Serb forces. Since this concrete entry of Belgrade3AN was from 8 May 1999, it is very likely that at the time of writing the news of his murder had not reached her. It remains curious, however, that she did not add a footnote later to correct her original comment.

of people outside of the borders of, and within, Yugoslavia. We sharply condemn the ethnic cleansing of the Albanian population which is conducted by any Yugoslav forces. We sharply condemn the violence of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) against Serbs, moderate Albanians and other ethnic communities in Kosovo (in: *Vreme*, 17.10.2002).

While the signatories condemned the ethnic cleansing regardless of whether it was conducted by the official forces – the army and the police – or the Serb paramilitaries, they linked the deterioration of the situation in Kosovo and the refugee flows primarily to the NATO bombing, not Milošević's politics. As Fridman (2006b) pointed out, this formulation became one of the points of contestation even among the Belgrade peace activists who were not silent about the suffering of the Kosovar Albanians. One part of them underlined that, contrary to what Milošević was claiming, they were not fleeing Kosovo because of the bombing, but because of being driven out of their homes by the Serb (para)militaries. These activists found Milošević the primary actor responsible for the bombs and stated that the appeal should have been addressed only to him.<sup>219</sup> Others disagreed: they found it necessary not to gloss over NATO's responsibility for the human losses and the material destruction, as well as for the creation of a homogenising effect among the Serbs – the rally-'round-the-flag phenomenon – which further thwarted their anti-Milošević and peace activities.

Two of my Belgrade respondents were among the signatories: a self-declared antinationalist feminist and a self-declared antinationalist peace activist, both of whom were often involved in the activities of Women in Black. Rereading the text ten years later, the former said that she was not sure whether she would sign it again. She found it obvious that some of the utterances had been softened and insufficiently clearly formulated, although the text as such was not extreme. She disagreed with the construction 'NATO aggression' and the claim that the bombing had caused the displacement of the Kosovar Albanians, but assumed that she had placed her signature because the appeal rightly and explicitly condemned the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians (interview with Belgrade11AN).

The other respondent questioned her own endorsement of the appeal as well. In hindsight she considered it problematic that the text, next to addressing the situation in Serbia, did not state that Kosovo had been 'the epicentre of the bloody

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219 In a more recent interview for a Serbian daily, Nataša Kandić – a prominent Belgrade peace activist who had refused to sign the appeal exactly for this reason – shortly reflected upon this, still insufficiently analysed, controversy. With one sentence she indirectly corroborated the comment that the NATO bombing had brought hitherto unprecedented divisions among the Belgrade (feminist) peace activists: 'When the NATO bombing had started, all of us showed our true faces' (*Danas*, 08.02.2013).

drama'. She also indicated her dilemma which accompanied the signing of the appeal, ie her creation of a positioning on the bombing and the ethnic cleansing:

There were people who thought that it [the bombing] was right and that it was *the only* way to stop the actions of...the Serbian state against others. The effect of that [the bombing] is quite questionable. I was listening to...a NATO commander when he was asked on the [BBC TV] programme *HARDtalk* why he was against the bombing. He said: 'Because I was nine years old in Berlin. My mother was an antifascist, but when the bombing started, we homogenised'. That is the question. I do not have the answer. At that time I was wondering what to do. It seemed to me that it was a positive move to speak in one voice from here [Belgrade], but at the same time, that voice was too benevolent for the regime we were under. In fact, the question is whether you had at the time two enemies: Slobodan Milošević and the NATO pact.

Me: One or two enemies?

Yes. Those were very difficult moments because you were aware of both your friends in Kosovo and your friends here (interview with Belgrade9EXT, emphasis in the original).

Obviously, the creation of one such joint voice demanded making concessions with some formulations one might not necessarily use otherwise. As the interviews with the signatories of the appeal show (Ristić and Leposavić, 1999),<sup>220</sup> these intellectuals were everything but a homogenous group with a homogenous positioning. They held different degrees of opposition towards Milošević's politics and Serb nationalism, some used the term 'aggression' in referring to the NATO bombing, while others were less critical of this military action, one signatory used the very derogatory word 'Šiptari' for the Kosovar Albanians,<sup>221</sup> some spoke of the victimisation of the Kosovar Albanians by the Serbian government, others (also) pointed to the Kosovar Albanians' nationalism, and yet others hardly referred to them.

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220 Given that most of the interviews (22) were conducted during the bombing and the remaining five immediately afterwards, this book offers unique first-hand material for analysing the then articulated positionings on the bombing and Kosovo.

221 In fact, 'Šiptari' is a derogatory designation for the Albanian ethnic group in general in all Slavic languages in the post-Yugoslav region, *regardless* of the fact that it originates from the name of this ethnic group in Albanian ('Shqiptarët'). I do not know when the term received its derogatory connotation in Yugoslavia, but it seems that it has not always had it. As Mrđen (2002) noted, this term was used as one of the population categories in the Yugoslav censuses of 1948, 1953 and 1961. It would be only in the census of 1971 that the term would be replaced with 'Albanians'.

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Nevertheless, it remains an open question how many of the activists and intellectuals still residing in Belgrade<sup>222</sup> would have dared at that moment to put their name under a statement which primarily, if not exclusively, denounced Milošević's politics and linked him to the ethnic cleansing – an act which was possible before the bombing. One good example of this previously existing space is the statement of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist groups the Autonomous Women's Center, the Belgrade Women's Lobby and Women in Black, which opened as follows:

The autonomous Belgrade women's groups address the public to condemn the violence of the Serbian regime in Kosovo. The war in Kosovo has definitely started. The violence by the Serbian regime is a continuation of the politics of apartheid which the regime has been conducting in the past ten years (*Rat na Kosovu – logika patrijarhata*, May 1998).

Another example is the action of Women in Black on the central square of Belgrade in October 1998. Even though the month before NATO had threatened with air strikes for the first time, this group was nevertheless allowed to have a public activity in which each activist explicitly declared her continuous commitment towards 'firstly denouncing the murderers' from her country of residence and towards 'opposing the Serbian regime's politics of repression, apartheid and war against the Albanian population in Kosovo' (7 godina, 09.10.1998).

The existence of space for articulating dissent did not mean, though, that it was safe to do so. In his address to the Serbian parliament on 28 September 1998, Vojislav Šešelj, the then vice-president of the Serbian government, said the following:

If the USA decides to attack Serbia, it should withdraw on time its quislings, such as the members of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, the Belgrade Circle and Women in Black, and not leave them as hostages behind. We might not be able to grab each plane, but we would snatch those (from the aforementioned groups) who are within our reach (in: Zajović, 2007:66; see also *BH Dani*, 20.09.2002; *Naša borba*, 07.10.1998; Tešanović, 1999).

Even though the accusations made by the 27 signatories of the appeal were much less severe than the previously expressed ones of Women in Black, the state authorities in Belgrade called the signatories 'a bunch of traitors' (Ristić and Leposavić, 1999:209). Whereas such threats were not a novelty, this time the NATO intervention

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222 Many publicly outspoken critics of Milošević temporarily left Belgrade during the bombing.

altered the context. Due to the marshal law another penal legislation was in place. Even more importantly, the appeal was sent out only few days after the daytime murder of the prominent oppositional journalist Slavko Ćuruvija in the centre of Belgrade<sup>223</sup> – an act which made many Belgrade activists feel anxious (Ćetković, 1999; interviews with Belgrade11AN, Belgrade9EXT, Belgrade3AN and Belgrade5AN).

Following the media censorship and the prohibition of all public gatherings – except the daily state-organised anti-NATO mass concerts in Belgrade – the opportunities for expressing one's opposition to Milošević in Serbia were quite limited. One of the available spaces for exchanging information and ideas, as well as for producing joint statements, was the office of the trade union Independence. These semi-private mixed gender encounters gathered members of peace and human rights groups and trade unions, as well as a few feminists active in Women in Black and the Women's Studies Center. I have traced four of their statements, all addressed at different recipients. Without analysing these documents in great detail, I want to point to the positionings expressed in them on the bombing and the expulsion of the Kosovar Albanians.

In the general appeal (*Appeal*, 06.04.1999), the signatory groups declared to be '[d]eeply disturbed by [the] NATO destruction of our country and the ordeal of [the] Kosovo Albanians'. Despite their foremost attribution of the great numbers of Kosovar Albanian refugees to the bombing, which was also Milošević's positioning, these activists claimed their legitimacy as anti-Milošević and peace activists by accentuating their unceasing support to this ethnic group:

The most powerful military, political and economic powers of the world are for two weeks incessantly killing people and destroying not only military but also civilian objects...At the same time, in fear of the bombing campaign and military actions by the regime and [the] KLA [Kosovo Liberation Army], hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians, in an unprecedented exodus, [are] forced to leave their devastated homes...[We] have courageously and rationally fought against war and nationalistic propaganda and in support of human rights. We emphasize that we have always raised our voices against the repression against Kosovo Albanians and demanded the respect of their liberties and guarantees for their rights. We have also requested the return of the autonomy of Kosovo (*Appeal*, 06.04.1999).

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223 The appeal, which was republished in Ristić and Leposavić (1999), was dated 16 April 1999, whereas the date of the same document, republished in *Vreme* (17.10.2002), was 15 April 1999. Ćuruvija was murdered on 11 April 1999.

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The letter to the 'Albanian friends from nongovernment[al] organizations' (*Letter to Albanian friends*, 30.04.1999) was milder in tone regarding Serbia's politics on the Kosovar Albanians. This change was very likely influenced by the increasingly deteriorating political and general climate in Belgrade, due to the continuation of the bombing and Ćuruvija's murder. While calling the 'Albanian friends' to join forces and 'step on the road of peace, democracy, respect of human rights, mutual reconciliation and respect', the signatory groups equalised their own suffering with that of the Kosovar Albanians without any mention of the Serb forces' treatment of the latter. Thereby the displacement of the Kosovar Albanians was portrayed only as a consequence of the NATO bombing, albeit this time implicitly, and their actual double victimisation glossed over. The signatories also implied an equal responsibility of the 'most radical forces' among the Serbs and Kosovar Albanians, as well as the international community:

We are writing to you in these difficult moments of our shared suffering. Convoys of Albanians and other citizens of Kosovo, among whom many of you, were forced to leave their homes...This tragedy, yours and ours, personal and collective, is a result of a long series of erroneous policies of the most radical forces among us and in the international community. The continuation of these policies will take both Serbs and Albanians into [an] abyss...As citizens of Serbia, we today suffer destruction and casualties as a result of [the] NATO bombing, [the] armed conflict in Kosovo and [the] long lasting economic and social tumbles under the burden of the dictatorship's deadly policies (*Letter to Albanian friends*, 30.04.1999).

The third document, addressed to the government and parliament of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the republican ones of Serbia and Montenegro (*To the governments*, 10.05.1999), simply called on the state officials to accept the military supremacy of NATO and agree to work on a compromise peace solution in order to put an end to the human and material losses. The expulsion of the Kosovar Albanians was once more implicitly ascribed to the bombing:

The NATO aggression and continuous attacks against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have lasted 44 days now. Hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians have been forced to leave their homes...Non-governmental organisations, [sic] have sharply condemned the NATO aggression against our country. But the organs of state must assume political responsibility, realistically estimate the magnitude of losses and damages so far, and on that basis take rational decisions on [the] further steps...We are at war

with an enemy who is many times stronger, and are not in a situation to set down conditions without concessions and compromises. It must not be allowed that a whole population and society should perish in the name of an alleged national and state interest (*To the governments*, 10.05.1999).

Finally, while the previous three documents appear to have originated spontaneously, the reprimanding letter to the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights from 21 May 1999 (in: *Lol@ Press*, July–October 1999) was a response to a letter of this organisation's executive director Aaron Rhodes. In reacting to the appeal from 6 April 1999, Rhodes had criticised the portrayal of the displacement of the Kosovar Albanians as resulting from the bombing and not from the actions of the Serb forces, and expressed his hope for a more favourable reception of the bombing by the civil society (*Letter*, 18.05.1999). The groups gathering in Independence reacted to this request for support to the NATO bombing with an increased disapprobation of it and the politics of the international community on the (post-)Yugoslav wars. In spite of repeating their continuous general condemnation of Serbia's politics, they only implicitly linked this politics to the situation in Kosovo:

The request – received in the midst of war, 'humanitarian intervention' and NATO aggression, in other words, in the midst of a breakdown of the legitimacy of public and political life, at a time of emergency legislation, martial law and very summary trials – asks us to lift up our voices and sharpen political criticism and moral condemnation of the Belgrade regime. Furthermore,...it is expected that, insofar as possible, we accept and even understand NATO military intervention in Yugoslavia...We have opposed both [the] ethnic cleansing suffered by Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and presently by Kosovo, and [the] NATO intervention. We have fought with equal determination Belgrade's murderous policy and the ferocious militarism of the Atlantic Treaty. Within this context, it cannot be expected of us to unilaterally denounce local totalitarianism while showing solidarity with the pretensions of the global hegemony...To end, please may we remind you that the brutal disintegration of the old Yugoslavia and the adjacent nationalist conflicts that ended in the ethnic catastrophe of Kosovo, took place with the complicity of European governments and international diplomacy (*Lol@ Press*, July–October 1999).

During the bombing even Women in Black did not articulate its positioning as explicitly as it had done in May and October 1998. In its appeal to the governments of the NATO member-states, besides demanding an end to the bombing, the group

requested provisions which would enable the return to Kosovo of the 'refugees, expelled and displaced' or their move to third countries (*An Appeal*, 20.04.1999). However, it was not specified nor implied which forces had caused the people from Kosovo – the term 'Kosovar Albanians' was not used – to become refugees, expelled and displaced. Unlike in the past statements of Women in Black, in this appeal Milošević and the politics of the Serbian government were not mentioned at all. In my view, these silent places are quite telling. I suggest that in a context of a state of war and martial law such silence was a way to maintain the group's pre-bombing positioning. By not saying anything at all, Women in Black did not depart from its positioning that the politics of Serbia was the force primarily responsible for the suffering of the Kosovar Albanians.

The divergent formulations in the separate appeal of Women in Black and the joint statements of the groups (including Women in Black) gathering in Independence probably indicate that different feminists were involved in the creation of the separate and the joint statements, and/or that due to the diversity of the groups gathering in Independence and the wish to create a singular voice, significant concessions needed to be made. That some members of Women in Black were in favour of a much more explicit positioning against the Serbian politics and Milošević, also and especially during the bombing, can be read from Mladenović's personal letter to the activists gathering in Independence (*Zašto nema*, 01.06.1999). This letter is one of the scarce published indications of the dissonant positionings on the NATO bombing not only among the activists of Women in Black, but also among the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists in general:

On 25 March 1999 the state declared a state of war. Since then my positioning reads: the Serbian regime is responsible for the beginning and the continuation of the NATO air militarist campaign against this state. This means that the necessity of opposing the Serbian regime and its leader has increased. At the same time, this political activity was prohibited. Unless I am allowed to publicly utter ten thousands of oppositional statements per day against the Serbian regime, I will not publicly position myself. In that case I also will not articulate my opposition to the other militarist formations which did not originate from the country whose passport I hold. I do not equalise the responsibility (*Zašto nema*, 01.06.1999).

Positionings like this one could have been the reason why some of my respondents – regardless of the cluster – claimed that Women in Black had endorsed the bombing, despite this group's formal (joint) statements which explicitly stated its disapproval. Put differently, it is possible that one's individual positioning was interpreted as the organisational one. At the same time, as Belgrade6AN and

Sarajevo2EXT have suggested in the interviews, the repetitive accusations which Women in Black had addressed at Belgrade, as well as the group's unceasing support to the Kosovar Albanians, might have been interpreted as an endorsement of the bombing. These interpretations have imposed, in fact, a false *Tertium-non-datur*-dilemma whereby opposition to the NATO bombing and opposition to Milošević's politics on the Kosovar Albanians were seen as incompatible positionings. And yet, the third option – being able to simultaneously criticise both NATO and Milošević, ie say 'neither/nor' (Cockburn, 2000b) – was exactly that which Women in Black officially, albeit not always equally explicitly, advocated.

For example, in the already mentioned appeal to the NATO member-states Women in Black demanded an immediate stop of the bombing. The group declared further that given that it had 'always been engaged against militarism, that is, against all forms of military intervention', this time it opposed 'the NATO military intervention against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia' (*An Appeal*, 20.04.1999). An earlier statement with the telling title 'Better Pact than War',<sup>224</sup> which was produced and distributed by Women in Black at the time of NATO's second air-strikes warning and the Rambouillet negotiations, read: '[s]igning the agreement at this time is the ultimate act of patriotism and failing to sign it means [a] continuation of [the] killing and destruction'. A compromise 'leads to calming down of [the] conflict and an end to [the] armed violence' (*Better Pact than War*, 23.02.1999).

My interviews confirmed the suggestions of Mladenović (2003) and Zaharijević (2007) about the great differences among the Belgrade feminists regarding Milošević's politics on the Kosovar Albanians. None of the five Belgrade feminists – all four so-called nationalist and one self-declared antinationalist – who had been described to me as having a nationalist positioning (also) on the NATO bombing and the Kosovar Albanians evoked their expulsion in 1999. One of these respondents referred to an article of hers from 1995 where she had indeed mentioned the Serb oppression of the Kosovar Albanians and the denial of their right to self-determination and secession. However, she did not say anything in the interview on their highly exacerbated situation in 1998–1999. In addition to these five respondents, two self-declared antinationalist feminists did not address the suffering of the Kosovar Albanians either and also spoke only of the destruction and victimisation in Belgrade.

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224 The title of this statement in Serbian, 'Bolje pakt nego rat', was an alteration of the well-known slogan 'Bolje rat nego pakt' ('Better War than Pact'), which had been used at the demonstrations in Belgrade on 27 March 1941. These demonstrations were a part of the military coup following the decision of the government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to form an alliance with the Axis Powers. In response to the overthrow of the pro-Axis government, Germany bombed Belgrade on 6 April 1941.

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These seven feminists firstly decried NATO and only afterwards – if at all – Milošević. The criticism of Milošević was mentioned in passing, while their criticism of NATO was more elaborated. It concerned the impossibility of bringing lasting peace by militarist means, the false premise that NATO was after Milošević (because the ordinary people were the only ones who were factually exposed to suffering), and the glossing over of the existence of Serbs who were against Milošević. The rebuke of this dichotomised portrayal of the Serbs only as perpetrators and of the Kosovar Albanians only as victims was also visible in some respondents' appeal for a recognition of the suffering of Serbs, as well as in the disapproval of the attitude of Kosovar Albanian women's activists at international meetings: eg their exaggerated portrayals of the situation in Kosovo or their unwillingness to communicate with the Belgrade feminists (interviews with Belgrade16N, Belgrade15N, Belgrade10AN, Belgrade2N, Belgrade7ANA, Belgrade12N and Belgrade3AN).

While the remaining seven self-declared antinationalist feminists mentioned the suffering of the Kosovar Albanians, they had different positionings on the bombing (interviews with Belgrade11AN, Belgrade13AN, Belgrade1ANA, Belgrade5AN, Belgrade6AN, Belgrade4AN and Belgrade14AN). Two were decidedly against and five supported it, albeit three only partially. One of the two who fully approved of it had even left the group she was active in because of the disagreement with the fellow activists who opposed it. The three respondents who were partially for the bombing also expressed their criticism of the international community and the use of militarist responses to crises, but all five underlined that the bombing had not just happened to the Serbs out of nowhere and that there had been a good reason for it: Serbia's politics (see also *Zarez*, 11.05.2000). Consistent with this accent, they dedicated more space in the interview to the expulsion of the Kosovar Albanians than the two respondents who were fully against the bombing. The latter foremostly – but not only – focused on their disapproval of the bombing.

It is quite telling that exactly these two feminists reacted very irritated when I shared with them in the interviews the comment about the analogy between Zagreb (1991–1995) and Belgrade (1998–1999) regarding the antinationalist vs nationalist split among the feminists. I would argue that their strong reactions were triggered by their perception of the parallel as suggesting that their positioning had been a nationalist one, or at least less antinationalist than that of some other Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. One of them repeated her previously uttered claim that the Serbs had the right to feel bad about some issues as well, while also expressing her awareness of the Serb-inflicted suffering of the Sarajevans and the Kosovar Albanians:

Look, that bombing was disgusting and only a fool can say: 'Great that they have bombed us because we had deserved it'. Although, of course, that was crossing my mind as well and it was then in particular that I understood Sarajevo. At the same time, Kosovo's horror was present in me, but the one did not block the other. Both were present (interview, name withheld).

The other respondent rebuked the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists for not attending the gatherings in Independence in larger numbers. She criticised them for their separatism and hiding behind feminism because of being unwilling to get involved in risky activities, such as those gatherings or the action 'Better Pact than War'. She was also very critical of the activists who, driven by a 'heroic feeling of guilt because of the situation in Kosovo', asked for sharper positionings without thinking about the security of the activists (interview with Belgrade14AN). Further reacting to the analogy which I suggested, this respondent underlined that her anti-NATO positioning had nothing to do with the fact that Serbia was bombed. Moreover, her opposition to NATO differed from the anti-NATO positioning of those advocating a Great Serbian hegemony, anti-cosmopolitanism and so-called Yugoslavism.

The last issue which I will address in this analysis is the situation in Zagreb. The NATO bombing and the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians revealed once more the differences among the Zagreb feminists. The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist groups the Network of Multicultural Help and O-zona sent out two statements, one of which was also co-signed by Nona (*Action Alert*, n.d.; *Priopćenje za javnost*, 02.04.1999). They expressed their support to the Kosovar Albanians, asked the ICTY to press charges against Milošević and his collaborators, and created an analogy between, in their words, the genocide which the Serb forces were carrying out against the (female) Kosovar Albanians and the previous Serb genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. In addition to this, in the statement which was signed by the three groups, the signatories asked for the entrance of NATO ground troops into Kosovo and for the opening up of the borders of 'Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, as well as Croatia' for the Kosovar Albanian refugees (*Priopćenje za javnost*, 02.04.1999).

The two statements from the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist cluster were less critical of Serbia's politics and less supportive of NATO. In its press release on the NATO air strikes, B.a.B.e. declared its condemnation of 'all use of military force, including that of NATO', but also expressed its hope that 'the destruction of Milošević's war industry will prevent further combat activities' (*Izjava*, n.d.). The group supplemented its antimilitarist message by recalling and praising the work of the peace and women's groups in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, such as the

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Belgrade Women in Black and the Prishtina-based Sisters Qiriaz. B.a.B.e. closed its statement with the gender-based positioning of support to and belief in women, 'given the fact that the victories and successes of each nation are observable on the warrior/diplomatic faces of men, whereas the suffering and the defeats appear on the faces and bodies of women' (*Izjava*, n.d.).

The other statement was written by Women's Network Croatia (which B.a.B.e. was also a member of) on the occasion of 24 May – the International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament. Quite unlike the statement of the Network of Multicultural Help, Nona and O-zona, in which Croatia was mentioned last on the list of countries which should admit the Kosovar Albanian refugees, Women's Network Croatia repeatedly underlined Croatia's duty to host these refugees, as well as all opponents of the war politics of Milošević's regime (*Izjava Ženske mreže*, n.d.):

While condemning the politics of ethnic cleansing, especially [that] against the people of Kosovo at this moment, we also express concern with the role which the government of Croatia has assigned to our country in the war in the FR Yugoslavia. Croatia, by joining the states which support the NATO allied forces, is obliged to bear the consequences of that decision and accept the refugees, as well as those who want to leave the war area.

In addition, the Network called upon Croatia to enable the return of the 'Croatian citizens of Serb ethnicity who live in the areas which are affected by the war' (*ibid*). This referred to the Croatian Serbs who, after having been expelled from Croatia in 1995, were resettled in Kosovo, as part of Milošević's politics of increasing the percentage of ethnic Serbs there. Therefore, the call of Women's Network Croatia for the return of the Croatian citizens convened the implicit criticism of the Croatian authorities for driving out the Croatian Serbs in 1995 and obstructing their return after the end of the war in Croatia.

These different positionings between the two Zagreb clusters appear not to have led to confrontations in 1999 as those taking place between 1991 and 1995. The feminists from each cluster sent out their press releases to their networks, but the two clusters did not interact with each other on that issue, ie did not fight within the same field for obtaining legitimacy of their positioning on the war in Serbia. This confirms once more that the main struggle for legitimacy between the Zagreb so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists had taken place during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## Conclusion

When in early 1990 several Zagreb feminists put forward the initiative for founding a pan-Yugoslav feminist umbrella organisation, the opposition which one part of the Yugoslav feminists expressed was later interpreted by some Yugoslav feminists as indicating nationalism. Others negated that resolutely or partially and pointed to the non-nationalism-related sources of conflict: the proposed hierarchical organisational format and the tensions between the established and newcomer feminists or those between academics and activists.

The absence of a direct exchange between the most affected parties and the presence of indirect communication through essays in (international) publications, which did not contribute to a better understanding of each other's positionings, are exemplary for the way in which the war-related tensions would be dealt with. The same is true for the later accusations of nationalism and denial of the war reality which were articulated to Western (funding) audiences in printed and oral accounts and aimed at increasing the legitimacy of the author and decreasing that of the criticised feminists. In a context where the feminists were political agents who fought for the legitimacy of their own positioning, ie definition of the situation, those attempts at (de)legitimation held a significant place, especially since they were often related to access to funds, networks, conferences, trainings and other resources.

In the first months of the war in Croatia the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists were confronted with the realisation how progressively profound the gap between Serbia and Croatia has started to become. Not only did the war affect each city differently, but also, given the disruption of the information, communication and transportation channels, the feminists from each city became as good as unfamiliar with the situation in the other city and country. The subsequent divergent perceptions of the war and the extent of the responsibility of each warring side caused tensions and, sometimes, also severe accusations. Those from one city felt misunderstood, disrespected and hurt by their (former) sisters from the other city, leading to a lot of confusion, disbelief, distrust, disappointment, as well as pain and anger on each side.

While the diverse experiences and perceptions between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists remained in place, it gradually started to become clear that a serious split was coming into existence within Zagreb. One part of the feminists there – the so-called nationalist ones – started using war-related positionings which resembled to a great extent those of the Croatian state and offered a black-and-white portrayal of Croatia as the victim of Serbian aggression. This dichotomy extended to the Belgrade feminists as well. They were seen as belonging to the inimical ethnic group and – by

some of these Zagreb feminists – as complicit with Milošević's politics. The other Zagreb feminists, the self-declared antinationalist ones, chose to maintain the cooperation with the Belgrade feminists despite the differences in positionings and the risk which such a move entailed in Croatia. Their perception of the war was more complex. It attended, too, to the utterances of Croat nationalism and did not only criticise the politics of the Serbian government, but also those of its Croatian counterpart and its responsibility for the war in Croatia.

This led to an intense struggle for legitimacy between the Zagreb feminists which was foremostly carried out in the interactions with Western audiences and included to a great extent the use of positive self-ascribed designations and negative ones which were ascribed to the other cluster. After the practice of war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia was disclosed in the summer of 1992 the two Zagreb clusters adopted different positionings. The self-declared antinationalist feminists focused on the gender component of the rapes and thereby kept using what had been the pre-war positioning on (war) rape among the Yugoslav feminists. From late 1992 onward, these Zagreb feminists nuanced their gender-based positioning and started speaking – albeit not always equally explicitly – about the greater prevalence of the war rapes committed by the Serb forces. They never failed, though, to underline the gender component of the rapes and criticise all use of exaggerated war rape stories and figures, including that by the other Zagreb cluster. When the Bosnian Croat forces, supported by Croatia, started fighting with the Bosniak forces in the spring of 1993, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists rebuked these Croat politics and spoke up against the (sexual) war crimes of the Bosnian Croat forces.

The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists put great efforts into challenging the gender-based positioning on the war rapes which was not only the dominant, orthodox, positioning among the Yugoslav feminists, but also among the Western ones. Their task was additionally laborious because they had on average less cultural, economic and social capital than the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. In trying to increase the legitimacy of their definition of the war situation and their own legitimacy as the only authentically motivated advocates of the cause of the (raped) refugee women, the so-called nationalist feminists also resorted to denouncing the other Zagreb cluster (and, to a much smaller extent, its Belgrade counterpart). In the letters which they sent to Western feminist authors, groups and publications, they accused the other Zagreb feminists of working against the interests of women – (raped) refugee women in particular – and being covert endorsers of the Serb genocidal politics against the Bosniak and Croat people.

The lesser security of the heretical positioning and position of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists in the (academic) feminist fields was also visible in their lack of a public reaction to the Bosniak-Croat war. Not wanting to disturb their conceptualisation of the (Bosnian) Serbs as the only (sexual) perpetrators – the positioning they employed in the struggle for legitimacy – they chose not to pronounce themselves at all on this war. Nevertheless, despite these two very different positionings, the two Zagreb clusters did not differ much in their practical work with (raped) refugee women. Both clusters provided different types of assistance to these women, such as psychosocial support and easier access to humanitarian help and health services.

The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists also made the daring choice not to cease the cooperation with the Zagreb feminists, ie with those who were still interested in such cooperation. However, when they met their Zagreb counterparts at conferences abroad, many of them felt that guilt was imposed upon them because of the perpetrator's role of the country whose citizens they were (this was even more so the case in their interactions with the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists). The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists were criticised by their Zagreb counterparts for insufficiently accentuating the foremost responsibility of Serbia for the wars and war rapes. However, their positioning of equal victimisation and responsibility was already very divergent from the one of the Serbian state, which conceptualised the Serbs only as the victims of the perpetrating deeds of Bosniaks and Croats. At the same time, these Belgrade feminists also objected – in a very similar manner – to the positioning of their Zagreb counterparts. Even though the latter's positioning was also quite dissimilar from the one of Zagreb, the former did not consider it sufficiently explicit on the Croat responsibility for the (sexual) war violence.

Another contested issue among the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists was the former's continuous affiliation with the vanished country Yugoslavia, which was also manifested in maritime nostalgia, ie the nostalgia for the Croatian Adriatic coast. The feeling of loss which these Belgrade feminists expressed with regard to the Adriatic Sea, as well as their use of the pre-war reference 'our sea' even after the beginning of the war in Croatia, irritated their Zagreb counterparts. They saw these utterances as not taking the new geopolitical reality into account and resembling the Serb expansionist discourse about the creation of Great Serbia. In turn, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists felt hurt and offended by these remarks because they silenced their (peacetime) memories and experiences.

These varied and laden perceptions of each other's positionings, which were experienced in the encounters in third countries throughout the war years, created the

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need among the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists to meet in private, ie outside the official conference settings. The idea was to discuss openly with one another the issues which had led to conflicts and share with each other the emotions and the positionings which had been left unexpressed. However, the single time when such a meeting was convened – in Croatia in March 1995, in a coastal area which had been untouched by the war violence – the experience was particularly emotionally charged. This was not only due to the weight of the wars and previous encounters, the seaside location and the fact that it was the first time since the beginning of the wars that the activists met in one of ‘their’ countries. The experience was hard to cope with also because of the realisation that despite their strong commitment towards the gender-based solidarity among them and the boundary transgressing aspect of their work, there were many profound and not all that easily reconcilable differences among them. Some of these differences were grounded in the (previously unshared) familial histories of World War II.

Even though the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists had started off with a strict gender-based positioning on the war rapes and the positioning of equal responsibility and victimisation of all warring sides, by the spring of 1993 they began to accentuate the Serb responsibility. Hereby, and rather counterintuitively, the positioning of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists on the (sexual) perpetrators and victims approached the corresponding one of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. This change of positioning was caused, first, by the appearance in early 1993 of more reliable accounts of and figures on the preponderance of the Serb war rapes. Second, it was a consequence of these Belgrade feminists’ encounters with Zagreb feminists from both clusters at various events in third countries. During those interactions the latter have demanded from the former a much sharper criticism of Serbia’s politics and a straightforward acknowledgment of its greater share in the (sexual) war violence.

The focus on the Serb responsibility and the (sexual) war crimes committed by the Serb forces meant that the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists became the heretical challengers in the Belgrade feminist field. The Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists maintained the previously dominant positioning. Due to the greater number of self-declared antinationalist feminists and their much more extensive interaction with Western feminists and funders, the heretical positioning soon became the orthodox one and the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists ended up as heretical challengers with less symbolic capital. Their positioning – which was foremostly expressed in scholarly works – was also nuanced by adding ethnicity, although in a different manner than that used by the Belgrade self-declared

antinationalist feminists. While the latter accentuated the Serb responsibility, the so-called nationalist feminists focused on the Serb victimisation. Nonetheless, they never denied the at least partial responsibility of Serbia and sometimes explicitly disapproved of its politics (although not in such fervent terms as the other Belgrade cluster).

These dissimilar positionings did not, however, lead to such a clearly pronounced split in the Belgrade feminist field as had been the case in Zagreb. The large role of Serbia and the Serb militaries in the (sexual) war violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, as well as the state positioning of exclusive Serb victimisation, silenced the creation and/or expression of some positionings. It made it impossible for the feminists to exempt the Serb politics from responsibility even though they differed in their understanding of the extent of this responsibility. At the same time, the self-declared antinationalist feminists who wanted to (slightly) depart from the dominant feminist positioning and also speak about the Serb victimisation did not do so publicly. They were afraid that they would thereby approach the positioning of the Serbian authorities, be consequently perceived by other feminists from that cluster as nationalists, and lose their legitimacy as antinationalists.

This internal struggle for legitimacy among the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists and the absence of such struggle among the Belgrade so-called nationalist ones points to the difference between these clusters, ie to the caution which needs to be applied to the treatment of the so-called nationalist feminists as a cluster. Next to not struggling among themselves for legitimacy, at least not within the feminist field, the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists did not compete much with the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists either. This was also due to the different fields in which the feminists from the two clusters predominantly moved. The main Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists were foremostly academics and the self-declared antinationalist ones mainly grassroots activists. Even when the feminists from the two clusters worked together in the Women's Studies Center up to its split in 1998 – a type of cooperation which was impossible to maintain in Zagreb – the legacy of Serbia's politics, as well as the wish to keep the diverse expertise within the group, silenced the (extensive) articulation of opposing positionings.

A more profound and disturbing, but not more extensively recorded, split among the Belgrade feminists was the one regarding the NATO bombing and the intensified war in Kosovo in the spring of 1999. The bombing was the first time in the 1990s that direct military violence was experienced in Belgrade and Serbia. Its constitutive power, as well as the dilemma regarding the justification of military intervention, brought a division among the self-declared antinationalist feminists. One part of them was for the intervention due to the anger and despair which were

caused by the perseverance of Serbia's warmongering politics. These feminists' sharp rebuke of the Serb ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians was shared by the self-declared antinationalist feminists who disapproved of the bombing as a method of exerting political pressure. Other feminists from this cluster, however, did not talk about the suffering of the Kosovar Albanians at all, but only of the victimisation which was induced by the bombing. In other words, they addressed – more or less explicitly – only the suffering of the Serbs. This was also the positioning of the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists, as well as of the Serbian government. Due to this overlap, the self-declared antinationalist feminists who fervently disapproved of the bombing (while also addressing the ethnic cleaning) felt that their legitimacy as antinationalists was endangered.

The NATO bombing did not cause any turmoil among the Zagreb feminists even though they had different positionings. These positionings were expressed through statements, but no direct confrontation and struggle for legitimacy took place among the two clusters. The so-called nationalist feminists were supportive of NATO and spoke about a continuum between Serbia's genocidal politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia and those in Kosovo. Unlike them, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists opposed both the bombing and Serbia's politics. These feminists did not homogenise the Serbs, but mentioned the existence in the country of opponents of Serbia's politics. Finally, they were also more pronounced than the other Zagreb cluster about Croatia's duty to accept the Kosovar Albanian refugees, and did not forget to remind the Croatian government about its responsibility for driving out the Croatian Serbs in 1995.

In the following chapter I will compare the life stories of the key producers of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminist positionings. The first goal of that chapter is to explore the biographical differences and similarities between the main Belgrade and Zagreb respondents, while the second goal is to inquire into the possible relations between one's biographical characteristics and participation in one of the clusters.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Biographical differences and similarities

The data which I use in this chapter has been extracted from the not withdrawn interviews with the main Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist (eight and seven, respectively) and so-called nationalist feminists (four and seven, respectively). I also had obtained during the fieldwork some biographical data from the additional and external respondents in order to understand also their societal positions and better grasp the overall picture. However, due to my focus on the main self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists, that data has not been included in this chapter. As I have already indicated in Chapter 1, the conclusions which I draw in this chapter should be seen as only concerning the main producers of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminist positionings, and not extrapolated to all Belgrade and Zagreb feminists.

I begin by contrasting two aggregated categories: all (ie from both clusters) Belgrade respondents with all Zagreb ones. This comparison allows me to show that Belgrade and Zagreb should not be treated as interchangeable locations since there are some substantial biographical differences between the feminists from the two cities. I proceed to compare the self-declared antinationalist feminists with the so-called nationalist feminists within each city, first in Zagreb and then in Belgrade.<sup>225</sup> I explore there the biographical differences and similarities between the feminists who were based in the same city but employed different war-related positionings and struggled with each other for legitimacy. More precisely, I examine the ways in which the biographical characteristics are related to the war-related positionings. With these two comparisons I also demonstrate the importance of using both geographical (contextual) and political markers – ie markers of positioning – in the analyses since it is only then that one can secure less homogenising and more accurate findings.

However, before I present the three comparisons, I need to address three characteristics which had been initially intended to enter the succeeding text: age, ethnic background (ie ethnicity of the respondents' parents) and motivation for engaging with feminist activism. I eventually left them out because of the absence of significant differences among the respondents on those points, which means that the three characteristics in question appear to be unrelated to the war-related positionings.

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225 See my explanation of the choice to begin with Zagreb in the opening part of Chapter 2.

Since the scholarship did not provide any information on the possible relation between one's age and one's participation in one of the clusters, I was curious as to whether any such relation existed. Three respondents voiced this possibility in the interviews. Zagreb9AN and Zagreb20EXT, two Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondents, commented that when the Zagreb group Women's Help Now had split in two in 1992 (see Chapter 3) there had been an obvious difference in average age between the activists who had ended up on the opposite sides. In a somewhat different manner, the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist Belgrade15N saw her age – and the resulting knowledge – as the reason for the dissimilar war-related positionings between her and the much younger feminists from the other Belgrade cluster (see Chapter 6). Nevertheless, this research was unable to confirm that in either city the war-related divisions had been in any way related to the age factor.

The percentage of respondents with parents of the same ethnicity resembled in all comparisons that of respondents with ethnically-mixed parents. In the latter cases the combinations were diverse, although there were no respondents with a partially Albanian or Bosniak ethnic origin. Next to the dominant ethnicity – Croat in Zagreb and Serb in Belgrade – the mixed composition (partially) contained the Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Jewish, Montenegrin, Polish, Serb and Slovenian ethnicity (in Zagreb) and the Croat, Czech, German, Italian, Jewish, Montenegrin and Slovenian one (in Belgrade). Even in the Zagreb so-called nationalist cluster which strongly emphasised the Serbs as perpetrators of war crimes there were feminists of mixed Croat/Serb origin, just like in the other Zagreb cluster.

As to the motivation for feminist activism, the respondents spoke about being driven by the need to end injustice, the power imbalance between women and men in society, and the discrimination and (sexual) violence against women. Some articulated their wish to alter the traditional gender roles in the family, create space for women and women's experiences in the social sciences and humanities, and contribute to women's liberation, independence, self-determination and freedom of choice. There were also those who – after initially visiting a feminist group or lecture – had become inspired by the sense of community of equal and mutually supporting individuals, or the realisation of the societal extent of the problems which up to then they had seen only as their personal ones.

Only three self-declared antinationalist respondents – two from Belgrade and one from Zagreb – made a connection between their motivation for feminism and the war violence, and even their motivation was not uniquely caused by the new reality. While also being fascinated by the principles on which the work on the Belgrade SOS Hotline had been based and the non-hierarchical relations among the members

regardless of age or class differences, the first Belgrade respondent, Belgrade5AN, said to have chosen feminism because it had offered the best response to nationalism and the war violence. The other Belgrade respondent, Belgrade6AN, had become involved in feminism during her residence abroad, but professed to have joined Women in Black because of the war. The Zagreb feminist Zagreb12AN had also been introduced to feminism while residing abroad, but was pushed into direct action by the sexual war violence against women and the situation of the refugee women in Croatia. That the remaining feminists did not link their motivation for feminism to the war situation had to do with the timing of their activist beginnings. The majority had become active in the 1980s or at the latest in the early 1990s, but before Yugoslavia's violent disintegration.

### **The Belgrade and the Zagreb feminists compared**

The educational qualifications of the Belgrade respondents were higher: all of them had at least a first university degree, whereas there were some Zagreb respondents with only a high school diploma. There were, however, no significant differences between the feminists from the two cities regarding the area of study. Most of the degrees in each city were in liberal arts, and the other degrees were equally diverse.

Many more Belgrade respondents were atheists. The single Belgrade non-atheist respondent, Belgrade16N, described herself as a spiritual person who accentuated people's biological sameness and prayed in all places of worship, regardless of their denomination. The Zagreb non-atheist respondents spoke about worshipping different female deities, being a Catholic, having a non-sectarian spiritual affiliation or feeling attracted by some aspects of different religions and beliefs.

In both cities there were respondents with at least one more highly placed parent in the Yugoslav society (eg an army official, a diplomat, a governor of a correctional facility, a head of an academic institution, a judge, a manager of a large company, a surgeon or a university professor), but that was much more often the case with the Belgrade respondents. They had further less often a personal or family history of grievances inflicted by the partisan and/or communist authorities during World War II and Yugoslavia's existence, respectively.

The Zagreb histories of grievances included instances of fathers losing their jobs because of belonging to the bourgeoisie before World War II or criticising the actual implementation of the proclaimed communist ideology, or being sent to prison for not choosing Tito's side during the split between him and Stalin in 1948. Zagreb13N

linked the three traffic accidents (two with lethal consequences) in which members of her family had been hit by a car with her family's criticism of the communists' practice of silencing their political opponents. The lawyer Zagreb15N had been incarcerated in the 1970s due to her participation in the Croatian Spring and defence of 40 members of this political initiative. Finally, Zagreb14N recalled two such episodes. The first one concerned her uncle's narrow escape from being executed – despite being a minor – by the partisans in World War II because of his alleged collaboration with the fascists. The second episode was her personal experience of not being allowed to pass a language exam. She saw this incident as an instance of human rights violation:

When I was making entry for an exam at the university, I had to write down [the name of the language as] 'Croato-Serbian' or 'Serbo-Croatian' [the two official names of the language during Yugoslavia's existence]. I wrote down 'Croatian' and I was sanctioned because of that. I live in Croatia, I speak Croatian, I neither speak Croato-Serbian nor Serbo-Croatian...I deem that I should be allowed to freely pronounce and write its name. That is my basic human right (interview with Zagreb14N).

Only two Belgrade respondents reported situations which resembled those of the five Zagreb feminists. Belgrade14AN talked of her father, who had been degraded and sent to the Yugoslav gulag Goli Otok because of disagreeing with the party's imposition of one correct way to look at Tito's break with Stalin. The other Belgrade feminist, Belgrade5AN, spoke of being unfairly treated by the League of Communists. She had lost her job as the editor-in-chief of a student magazine and risked imprisonment as a consequence of her critical political views.

In line with the previous findings, many fewer Belgrade respondents spoke about being underprivileged in the former state, ie not having very (financially) secure lives. This better status in the Yugoslav society also corresponded with the fact that the Belgrade respondents had reported much more often to have felt affiliated with Yugoslavia. Besides those with an explicitly declared affiliation, one Zagreb and two Belgrade feminists alluded to a partial one. The Zagreb respondent, Zagreb16N, recalled being passionate about the Yugoslav concept of self-management and the youth labour actions.<sup>226</sup> Belgrade16N, the first Belgrade respondent, praised

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226 The youth labour actions 'involved mass-scale voluntary labor on the part of young people with the goal of implementing projects for the common good. On an ideological level, the Yugoslav communist party used...[these actions] as an instrument to construct a youth that would create, support, and live the principle of "brotherhood and unity" as part of a reconciliation program in Yugoslavia after the Second World War' (Popović, 2010:279).

Yugoslavia's modernisation project and politics of non-alignment, while the second – Belgrade6AN – talked of having developed multiple affiliations due to her life in different countries. Whereas all Zagreb respondents who recalled it spoke of this affiliation as having ended with the end of the country in 1991, that was the case only with a half of the corresponding Belgrade ones. For few Belgrade respondents some affiliation with Yugoslavia still existed even at the time of interviewing (2009 or 2010).

Another striking dissimilarity between the feminists from the two cities was that the Belgrade respondents were those who spoke of Yugoslavia's disintegration also in connection to the pain they had felt because of it. Only one Belgrade respondent – the one who felt affiliated with several countries – explicitly said not to regret the end of Yugoslavia per se, but only its violent character. Such statements regarding the disintegration of the former country were much more common among the Zagreb respondents and there were also respondents from that city who were ambivalent about that historical occurrence. Zagreb13N expressed this ambivalence in the following way:

The fact that people [in Croatia] have decided in the parliamentary elections [sic; it was a plebiscite] that they wanted their own state, ie that the majority has decided [that], was for me obligatory. I said immediately: 'OK. If the majority has decided that, it will be so and I can remain living here or leave if I do not like it'...Then the war happened and I made the decision not to go away from my country under any circumstances.

The Belgrade feminist Belgrade11AN commented upon Yugoslavia's disintegration in a quite different manner:

I try not to come back to it. I have barely managed to get myself out of it. I found it horrible. I was really among the last ones to believe in it. When it was happening in front of my eyes, I did not believe it. That had nothing to do with any reasons of state or identity, but precisely with my view that Yugoslavia had been a good attempt and a good opportunity to solve the conflicts caused by the differences; that it [Yugoslavia] was some kind of space in which we were able to communicate more easily. I had somehow the impression that it [Yugoslavia] was the rational choice, whereas its dissolution was based on totally irrational passions and nationalism.

My question about respondents' ethnicity more often than not caused uneasiness among the respondents in both cities, and the answers to it were usually supplemented by clarifications and comments. Nevertheless, there were more Belgrade

respondents who did not at all declare themselves ethnically. Moreover, the designation ‘Serb’ was for the Belgrade respondents much more laden than the corresponding ‘Croat’ for the Zagreb ones. Among the Zagreb feminists who did describe themselves as Croats, there were those who stated not to give much importance to ethnicity; for some this declaration resulted from their feeling of being at home in the Croatian language or context, while for others it was simply a consequence of being born in Croatia or of Croat parents. Unlike these Zagreb feminists and their use of ‘Croat’, even those Belgrade respondents who spoke of being connected to Serbia through citizenship or language fully avoided the use of the word ‘Serb’ for describing themselves. Neither was the word ‘Serb’ employed easily by the three Belgrade feminists who (eventually) declared themselves so. Belgrade16N uttered it only after my explicit probe, while Belgrade2N and Belgrade12N simultaneously distanced themselves from this declaration by mentioning their affiliation with Yugoslavia. In addition, Belgrade12N described herself later as surpassing ethnic or state identities.

While the Zagreb feminists usually began earlier with feminist activism, most of the respondents from each city had at least some pre-war experience with working on the respective SOS hotline against male violence against women. The preponderance of this particular form of feminist engagement is very important since the work on the hotline was based on the premise that men are the perpetrators of the (sexual) violence against women. It was, thus, with this gender-based and ethnicity-free positioning that the main producers of the Belgrade and Zagreb war-related feminist positionings had entered as it were the warring 1990s.

One of my questions related to the outbreak of war violence in 1991. I was interested in whether there were differences between the respondents in terms of having close family members or friends who had been drafted or otherwise in direct danger because of eg living in the war zones. More Belgrade than Zagreb respondents answered this question affirmatively. In addition, there was a difference in the reported sort of threat due to the then contextual differences between Croatia and Serbia. Since at that time there had been no direct war violence in Serbia as opposed to Croatia and the Serbian constitution of 1990, different from the Croatian one, had not allowed conscientious objection to military service,<sup>227</sup> the Belgrade respondents foremostly shared their experiences of shielding their sons and/or (former) partners who had been at risk of being drafted due to the large conscription actions. Belgrade6AN described this period in the following way: ‘All of us were in a difficult situation. Not only I in my family, everybody around me was hiding men, nobody [no man] slept

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227 See footnote 168.

in his own house. There was a large resistance in Belgrade. 80% [of the called-up men] did not respond to the draft notices.' To this group of respondents belongs also Belgrade12N, who was intensively personally affected slightly later and for a different – but, nonetheless, war-related – reason. In 1992, due to the lack of medicines which was caused by the international sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, her daughter passed away only a week after being born.

The Zagreb feminists commonly spoke of family members, friends and relatives who had been mobilised or lived in areas which had been directly exposed to the war. There was also a feminist – Zagreb14N – whose underage son had voluntarily gone to the battlefield and two feminists who had feared for their fathers' lives. The father of Zagreb7AN had to go to a hospital regularly for dialysis, even if the air-raid sirens would go off, which potentially made him look suspicious in the eyes of the Croat militaries. Zagreb12AN's father received threats because of being of Serb ethnicity and a retired military staff member of the Yugoslav People's Army. One respondent, Zagreb24AN, enlisted herself voluntarily because of feeling that her home and life, as well as the lives of her underage child and parents, had been endangered to such an extent that she had to take a proactive role in their defence. After bringing her child and parents to safety she entered a military unit and remained in it for two months. Her move is unique among the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists.<sup>228</sup> In addition to these respondents, Zagreb1N, another Zagreb feminist, had also considered volunteering in the military because of being taken aback by all the destruction in Croatia. Eventually she did not do it because of not wanting to leave her underage child.

In both cities there was one group with explicit publicly stated war-related positionings which gathered a big part of the respondents from the respective city after the beginning of the war violence.<sup>229</sup> Most of the Belgrade respondents had been in Women in Black, but two of them – Belgrade15N and Belgrade12N – had stayed in it only for a short time because of disagreeing with its positioning on perpetrators and victims. Slightly more than a half of the Zagreb respondents had been active in the Antiwar Campaign Croatia. Similarly to the situation in Belgrade, one of these respondents had left the group shortly after its establishment. Zagreb16N had

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228 See the short analysis of this act in Chapter 6.

229 The indication '[a group] with explicit publicly stated war-related positionings' is needed because of the situation in Belgrade. The Belgrade Women's Studies Center also gathered a large part of the Belgrade respondents (including all so-called nationalist ones), but it did not appear in public with such pronounced war-related positionings as Women in Black. Therefore, one's participation in the former group did not represent such a clear marker of a positioning as that in the latter. See the analysis of the Belgrade Women's Studies Center in Chapter 4.

objected to the way in which the war in Croatia was referred to in the group's public announcements.

The last point of comparison which I present here concerns the respondents' participation in feminist groups at the time of interviewing. In addition to the fact that more Belgrade respondents were still active, the two cities further differed in the level of functioning of the groups the feminists were engaged in. Whereas all still active Belgrade respondents worked in fully operational groups, in Zagreb that was the case only with some of the still active respondents. The remaining feminists were involved with groups which had significantly reduced their activities.

### **The Zagreb feminists compared**

More self-declared antinationalist respondents described themselves as atheists. The remaining feminists from that cluster were one Catholic and one with a non-denominational spiritual affiliation. Among the so-called nationalist feminists there were those who believed in female deities and one who felt partially attracted to some religions and beliefs. Nonetheless, regardless of the cluster, even those respondents who expressed a religious or spiritual affiliation criticised the treatment of women in organised religions.

There were no significant differences in educational level between the two Zagreb clusters. In each cluster, the majority had obtained at least a first degree of university education. However, the respondents differed in terms of their parents' societal positions in Yugoslavia. Slightly less than half of the self-declared antinationalist respondents, but none of the so-called nationalist ones, had at least one parent with a higher societal status. The dissimilarity between the clusters in the experienced grievances from the partisan and/or communist authorities was even greater: No self-declared antinationalist and a majority of the so-called nationalist respondents reported such episodes. In fact, all experiences of grievances which I listed in the first comparison as being recollected by Zagreb feminists belonged to so-called nationalist ones.

A related and equally telling disparity, which also indicates the existence of pre-war grudges among the (future) so-called nationalist feminists regarding the feminists from the (future) self-declared antinationalist cluster, was observable in the accounts of (under)privileged life in Yugoslavia. With the unexpected exception of Zagreb15N, the feminist who had been imprisoned in the 1970s because of political dissidence, all remaining so-called nationalist respondents recalled being underprivileged compared

to the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist (feminist) activists. The former saw the latter as belonging to the 'red bourgeoisie' – ie the communist elite – and having, therefore, more financial means, larger political freedoms and easier access to employment opportunities. A partially resembling account of having an outsider's position was communicated only by one self-declared antinationalist respondent. Zagreb23AN compared her life with that of the established feminists from *Woman and Society*:

Back then feminism repelled me; I envied those feminists for their freedom in the head and the body, their safety and self-confidence. I was 22, 23 years old, with a small child and without money, a subtenant, with unfinished studies, and my marriage was falling apart. A total chaos...They were all university professors, journalists and self-confident students. They looked glamorous, talked about a certain America and books to which I could not relate because it was too theoretical and too abstract for me to talk about philosophers and analyse them from a women's perspective while living in some hole and not knowing what would happen to me the next day.

Another self-declared antinationalist respondent, herself a daughter of an army official, addressed the existence of privileges, too, but in a different manner. Zagreb12AN recollected her ex-husband's comment that had he caused such an accident as she had in which a portrait of Tito had been burned, he would have probably ended up in prison, unlike her who was protected by her father's partisan background and employment in the military. One more respondent from this cluster mentioned her own privileged position. Zagreb11AN did not relate her status to her family background, but to her work as an established journalist at a prestigious newsmagazine which brought her popularity and provided her with many opportunities to travel and attend events. No so-called nationalist respondent spoke of being in any way privileged in Yugoslavia.

While these findings would lead one to expect that the so-called nationalist feminists would less often speak of having felt at least partially affiliated with Yugoslavia, the opposite was the case. The clusters resembled one another, though, in the fact that all respondents who had felt at least some attachment to Yugoslavia had stopped feeling it when the state had (violently) ceased to exist. Besides feeling such an attachment less often, the self-declared antinationalist respondents were also less inclined to declare themselves ethnically. This means that among the Zagreb respondents the absence of adherence to an ethnic collective did not necessarily include attachment to Yugoslavia (and vice versa). In addition, contrary to what the designations 'antinationalist' and 'nationalist' may evoke regarding these respondents, the affiliation with Yugoslavia did

## CHAPTER FIVE

not automatically imply the use of self-declared antinationalist positionings (and vice versa).

Some of those who refrained from expressing an ethnic affiliation – including one so-called nationalist respondent – added that they found it very problematic that in Croatia since 1991 declarations of Croatness were often used for excluding the ethnic Others, ie those with a (partially) non-Croat ethnic background. There were also respondents who did not declare themselves ethnically, but said to feel related to Croatia by virtue of being its citizens or being most familiar with its context or language. For example, the self-declared antinationalist feminist Zagreb9AN explained the following:

I would not define myself ethnically. My parents are Croats. I write that I am a Croat...I have a Croatian passport and even before in Yugoslavia I wrote that I was... [presumably, a Croat]. My parents are Croats; that did not have any additional connotations to me...I cannot escape the fact that I speak and write Croatian and that I feel at home in the Croatian language. I recognise Serbian as something else. Not that it is a foreign language to me...but it is somewhat different from Croatian. I see those differences primarily through language...I am quite certainly not a Croat in a political sense, in the sense that the ethnic determination would be exceptionally important to me, but there are elements I cannot do away with. I find the issue of language fascinating.

In a similar manner, there were feminists (from both clusters) who did declare themselves as Croats, but said not to attach much or any meaning to it, saw ethnicity as simply resulting from their parents' ethnic origin or softened their statement by eg commenting that they had felt connected to Yugoslavia as well. One so-called nationalist respondent who declared herself as '100% Croat' only after my explicit probe seemed to feel the need to excuse her non-mixed background. Immediately afterwards Zagreb16N added: 'We simply come from those kinds of cities where there were no other possibilities [meaning: no ethnic Others]'.

The so-called nationalist respondents had generally a longer record of participation in feminist initiatives, including the more theoretical engagement in *Woman and Society*. Therefore, these feminists' heretical war-related positionings should not be understood as coming from activists who were newer to feminism. Also significant is that all Zagreb so-called nationalist respondents – compared to a majority of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist ones – had been active before the wars in combating male violence against women by working on the SOS Hotline. Although not very large, this variation is counterintuitive because of the former's

quick abandonment of the gender-based positioning on the war rapes and the latter's continuation of it.

That continuation also does not seem to fit the fact that many more Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondents, including the one who had voluntarily become a soldier, reported to have been personally affected by the war in Croatia. One thus cannot say that the feminists who had been more hit or threatened by the war employed by definition so-called nationalist positionings. Correspondingly, the feminists who had been less menaced by the war did not necessarily use self-declared antinationalist positionings. For example, the so-called nationalist respondent Zagreb13N did not allow her partner to voluntarily join a military unit. She did not, apparently, consider herself that endangered to support his wish to take up arms.

There was further a marked dissimilarity between the Zagreb clusters in terms of involvement with the Antiwar Campaign Croatia during the war years. The (non-) participation in this group – which supported, inter alia, the military conscientious objectors in Croatia – turned out to be one of the major differences between the two Zagreb clusters. All self-declared antinationalist respondents had been active there. Zagreb16N, the only so-called nationalist respondent who had participated in this group and even been among its initiators, terminated her involvement soon after the intensification of the war violence in Croatia. She disagreed with the group's definition of the war.

At the time of interviewing the clusters resembled one another in the sense that there were more respondents who had withdrawn from regular participation in feminist groups than respondents who were still active. Nonetheless, there was also one significant difference between the clusters on this point. The groups of the still active self-declared antinationalist respondents functioned normally, whereas the groups where the still active so-called nationalist respondents were involved operated in a very limited way. This suggests that the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were more successful in networking and obtaining funds (also) for non-war-related activities, and that they possessed better skills than the other Zagreb cluster for adapting to the new and more bureaucratic grant procedures and organisational formats which came into place after 2000. One so-called nationalist respondent looked at this issue with a considerable amount of self-criticism:

We turned out to be *utterly incapable* of catching up with what is demanded from the civil organisations to be able to apply for money. They [the other Zagreb cluster] were always ten steps ahead of us when it comes to that. I do not know to this day how to write a project proposal. I manage to write it, but... The idea can be brilliant,

but I always mess up something so that I cannot... They know how to do it and they receive money without problems (interview with Zagreb6N, emphasis in the original).

### **The Belgrade feminists compared**

All Belgrade respondents were atheists, with the exception of one so-called nationalist feminist who described herself as a spiritual person. While all respondents from this city held a first university degree, the educational qualifications of the so-called nationalist respondents were significantly higher: Most of them were university professors. At the same time, more self-declared antinationalist respondents came from better-off families with at least one parent who was more highly societally placed. In each cluster there was one respondent who was an exception to this rule. The so-called nationalist feminist Belgrade15N had a father who had been awarded the Order of the People's Hero after World War II and held a high military rank in the Army. Opposite was the case of the father of the self-declared antinationalist feminist Belgrade14AN. Despite having fought with the partisans from the beginning of the armed resistance, he was sent to a prison camp for having criticised the way the League of Communists had dealt with the conflict between Tito and Stalin.

Two self-declared antinationalist feminists were the only Belgrade respondents who said to have been exposed to injustices which had been committed by the Yugoslav authorities. The first was Belgrade14AN, whose father had been sent to a gulag. Belgrade5AN, the other respondent, elaborated on the degrading treatment she had received from the university branch of the League of Communists she was a member of. Two years after her appointment as the editor-in-chief of a student magazine, she had been replaced and almost imprisoned because of her editorial policy of critically speaking of the decaying socialist system and calling for its improvement. Belgrade5AN referred to that experience as 'social death', but did not compare her disadvantaged position in any way with the lives of her later fellow feminists.

Belgrade14AN, the self-declared antinationalist respondent with an imprisoned father, and the so-called nationalist respondent Belgrade16N did compare – as the only ones – their underprivileged positions with those of other (feminist) activists. Belgrade14AN recalled the great poverty she had grown up with. Because of it, and different from other feminists, she had to work already as a student in order to sustain herself and be able to travel. Still, unlike Belgrade16N below, Belgrade14AN

did not bring her resentment of the societal position and some attitudes of those middle-class activists in connection to their later war-related positionings:

I belong to a family of the intellectual proletariat. We did not benefit from any regime. Many of those who are middle-class intellectuals or of these who are antinationalists – whatever you want to call them – are, in fact, children of the very highly positioned former communist class who have kept *all* the privileges of the former position and, on the top of that, received new privileges as champions of freedom, democracy and so on. I have nothing to do with that (interview with Belgrade16N, emphasis in the original).

There were two self-declared antinationalist feminists who addressed the privileges which they had enjoyed in their lives. On account of her parents' work, Belgrade6AN could live in foreign countries, attend good schools and have enough money to travel regularly. Belgrade3AN praised the skills she had acquired during her 17 years of work in the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. The experience of writing high-profile political documents (including speeches for prominent party officials), personally witnessing the decision-making and negotiation processes, and organising conferences had greatly benefited her later feminist activism and work as a journalist and a writer.

It is quite telling that all but two respondents (one per cluster) declared to have felt affiliated with Yugoslavia, and even those two who did not deny this affiliation fully. Belgrade16N, the so-called nationalist respondent, said that she was not nostalgic about Yugoslavia, but still thought of it as a serious country with a good project of societal modernisation and an excellent ideology of non-alignment. The respondent from the other cluster, Belgrade6AN, explained that ever since she had been a child, her life had been taking place between three countries and languages. Being unable to develop an affiliation with a single country as her parents could with Yugoslavia, Belgrade6AN defined herself 'as a globalist, a citizen of the world, not out of ideological reasons, but because of the reality' who was 'missing the second and the third part' wherever she was.

Whereas the self-declared antinationalist respondents were typically those who had decidedly left the attachment to Yugoslavia behind, in each cluster there was one respondent for whom this attachment was still vivid. The self-declared antinationalist feminist Belgrade4AN explained this by her enormously mixed ethnic background (she jokingly referred to herself as having 'a multinational background, like a multinational company'), while for the so-called nationalist feminist Belgrade15N the whole of Yugoslavia was her homeland that she still cared for dearly. The remaining

two so-called nationalist respondents stated only implicitly that they still felt affiliated with Yugoslavia, even though less than before. Belgrade2N commented: 'I was very strongly attached to Yugoslavia. Now I am more rational because after all this [the violent disintegration] you realise that some things just do not function anymore, partly because of internal and partly because of external factors'. Belgrade12N mentioned first that she had a Yugoslav identity, but corrected herself afterwards by saying that she was beyond all those identities and that she felt as a cosmopolitan, especially because of her mixed ethnic and religious background.

The self-declared antinationalist respondents who referred to their affection for the (post-)Yugoslav region and its inhabitants in the past tense gave the following reasons for this discontinuation: such an affiliation became pointless after the country had ceased to exist, its expression became problematic for somebody from Serbia because it was understood as hegemonic Serb nationalism, or it had to be abandoned in order to communicate one's clear disagreement with the Serb hegemonic and unitarist politics. In the words of Belgrade5AN, those who had remained 'Serb pro-Yugoslavs' were manipulated by Milošević and contributed, thereby, to the suffering of the ethnic Others.

This means that although all Belgrade respondents had had at least a partial attachment to Yugoslavia, in terms of explaining (the end of) it, the two clusters were not homogenous. It was also not the case that everybody within the self-declared antinationalist cluster linked the affiliation with Yugoslavia after 1991 to Milošević's politics. Among those who did, there were both those with a more reactive positioning (ending the affiliation because of the reactions to it) and those whose positioning was more proactive (ending the affiliation to express opposition). Unlike these respondents, no so-called nationalist one made an explicit connection between this affiliation after 1991 and Milošević's politics.

Another telling difference between the clusters concerned the expression of one's ethnicity, although all respondents resisted this expression in some way. All self-declared antinationalist respondents emphatically refrained from declaring themselves ethnically. Some saw it as a non-feminist act, others simply rebuffed the use of such a (repressive) classification, and yet others found it impossible to do so because of their ethnically-diverse background and/or life trajectory. The few who recounted some connection to Serbia – through citizenship, language or the felt responsibility for the deeds which had been committed by Serbs in the name of all Serbs – were careful not to describe themselves at any moment as Serbs. With the exception of Belgrade15N, the so-called nationalist respondent who declared herself a Yugoslav, the other respondents from this cluster (eventually) professed to be Serbs. However,

each qualified her statement by communicating a broader identification. Immediately after declaring themselves as Serbs two of them proceeded to express their (partial) affiliation with Yugoslavia. The third, Belgrade16N, appeared to be even more concerned with taking a distance from her Serb ethnic origin. She initially depicted herself as a Belgradian from the city centre or a Terrestrial who was terrified by the, as she put it, Serbisation of the city and the accompanying loss of its former ‘Yugoslav and cosmopolitan’ character. It was only after I had explicitly inquired about her ethnicity that she described herself as a Serb.

More self-declared antinationalist respondents had worked against male violence against women on the SOS Hotline. In general, the respondents from this cluster had become involved in feminist activism slightly earlier than the so-called nationalist feminists. So, just like in Zagreb, the Belgrade feminists who would abandon the gender-based positioning on the war rapes were those with a longer record of using a gender-based positioning on violence, whereas the feminists who maintained it had by then employed it for a shorter time.

The so-called nationalist feminists spoke somewhat more often of close family members or friends who had been directly endangered after the outburst of the war violence in 1991. With the exception of Belgrade12N, the so-called nationalist feminist who had lost her child in 1992, the rest of the Belgrade respondents, regardless of cluster, commonly stated their active involvement in helping their (former) partners, sons or other draft resisters and deserters not to go to the battlefield. Nonetheless, there was one obvious difference between the clusters on this issue. Dissimilar to the so-called nationalist feminists, some self-declared antinationalist ones had not provided this support only privately to people to whom they had been related through familial or friendship ties. They had expressed an even greater dissent by also offering free (legal) advice – in the antiwar groups in which they were active, too – to anybody who wanted to become or support such a conscientious objector. In addition, these feminists had publicly stated their support for those men. This was also the case regarding the conscientious objectors during the NATO bombing and the war in Kosovo in 1999.

I posed to the Belgrade respondents a supplementary question on the NATO bombing in 1999. Since the whole population had been potentially endangered then, I was wondering whether they had had family members or friends who had been in particular danger. Only four respondents (two from each cluster) shared such an experience, and I was unable to detect a pattern in their answers. The so-called nationalist feminist Belgrade12N – whose husband was enlisted for defending Belgrade, but never summoned – said approvingly that had he been called up to fight in Kosovo, he would certainly not have done it. By contrast, Belgrade15N, the other

respondent from this cluster, commended her son's decision to report to his unit immediately after the bombing had started, given that the country was under attack. In turn, the self-declared antinationalist respondent Belgrade11AN spoke of her fear due to her son's dangerous work as a camera operator in charge of filming the bombing, while the other – Belgrade3AN – recalled helping a friend's son to leave the country. This was a respondent who was considered a nationalist by some feminists from the same cluster due to her positioning on the NATO bombing.

An activist engagement in Women in Black – a group which also supported the conscientious objection to military service – formed a clear dividing line between the two Belgrade clusters. All self-declared antinationalist respondents had this experience (albeit to a different extent), as opposed to half of the so-called nationalist ones. Moreover, the latter had not remained in the group for a long time because of disagreeing with its positionings which did not take into account the Serb victims and non-Serb perpetrators. Lastly, at the time of interviewing the majority of the so-called nationalist respondents was publicly involved with feminism mainly through academic work, while more self-declared antinationalist respondents were still engaged in feminist groups. Unlike in Zagreb, however, all feminist groups functioned actively.

### **Conclusion**

The three comparisons of the biographies of the main producers of the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminist positionings revealed no significant differences between these feminists in age, ethnic background and motivation for feminist activism. As to the religious affiliation, an overwhelming majority of all respondents declared to be atheist. There were, however, many more atheists among the Belgrade than among the Zagreb respondents, and more among the self-declared antinationalist respondents (in each city) than among the so-called nationalist ones (in each city). Only one of those who did not describe themselves in that way, a Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist, expressed adherence to an organised religion (Catholicism). The other non-atheist respondents defined themselves as spiritual, believing in female deities or being partially attracted to different faiths. However, I did not come across any indication in the scholarship and the collected empirical material that the absence or presence of (a particular) religious affiliation might have been in any way connected to these feminists' war-related positionings, and I do not have any reason to suggest that either.

Most of the respondents in Belgrade and Zagreb alike had pre-war experience with working against male violence against women, which means that their initial positioning on (sexual) violence was purely gender-based and paid no attention to ethnicity. This is important to keep in mind, given the later war-induced changes of this positioning. Belgrade and Zagreb further resembled one another in the presence of one group with explicit publicly stated war-related positionings wherein many of the respondents had been active. Furthermore, both groups had lost some of their members due to disagreements regarding the war-related positionings.

These similarities between Belgrade and Zagreb notwithstanding, if the two cities are considered contextually alike and, therefore, interchangeable locations with regard to the war-related feminist activism in the 1990s, some important differences between the respective feminists escape attention. To begin with, the Belgrade respondents had higher educational qualifications, more often at least one more highly placed parent in the Yugoslav society and less often a personal or family history of grievances inflicted by the partisan authorities in World War II and/or the communist ones in socialist Yugoslavia. Moreover, many fewer Belgrade respondents spoke about being underprivileged in the former state. Actually, unlike in Zagreb, there were no serious disparities between the Belgrade feminists in terms of feeling (under)privileged in Yugoslavia. This suggests that the war-related divisions in Belgrade were much less fuelled by the pre-war differences than the corresponding divisions in Zagreb.

While being common among the Belgrade respondents, some kind of emotional attachment to Yugoslavia was communicated much less often by the Zagreb feminists. Additionally, all Zagreb respondents who spoke of having had such an affiliation said to have abandoned it when the object of affiliation had ceased to exist in 1991. That abandonment was a much more gradual process in Belgrade. Moreover, there were respondents in the latter city for whom that process was not fully completed yet and others for whom it had never begun. This variation in one's post-1991 affiliation with Yugoslavia had commonly caused tensions between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the 1990s.

Another point on which the respondents from the two cities differed greatly was the declaration of ethnicity, although this question turned out to be in general among the most complicated ones to answer. The uneasiness with which it was usually met – unlike the question on one's parents' ethnic backgrounds – showed that for most respondents to declare oneself ethnically was not a neutral action of stating the facts about one's ethnic background, homeland and/or mother tongue, but a deed with deep political implications. In light of the knowledge that those who were (lethally)

harmed and displaced in the (post-)Yugoslav wars were chiefly victimised because of being considered as belonging to a 'wrong' ethnic group, the respondents' uneasiness is not surprising. Even less surprising is the finding that it was easier for the Zagreb respondents to describe themselves as Croats than it was for the Belgrade ones to utter the word 'Serb' in connection to themselves. The conspicuously bigger aversion of the Belgrade respondents regarding the use of this ethnic identification is consistent with Serbia's heavy war legacy, ie its graver responsibility for the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia, as well as with its greater temporal and political proximity to the wars of the 1990s.

Even though the outburst of the war violence in the second half of 1991 did not physically take place in Serbia but in Croatia, more Belgrade respondents reported to have been personally affected by it. This, at first glance counterintuitive, finding helps clarify why some Belgrade feminists felt offended by the comments of Zagreb feminists that the former, unlike the latter, did not live in a war-affected area. The Zagreb respondents typically recalled fearing for the lives of their family members and/or friends who had been mobilised or lived in parts of Croatia which were close to or constituted the battlefields. One Zagreb respondent had felt so endangered that she had decided to directly participate in the war as a volunteer soldier. The experiences of the Belgrade feminists foremostly concerned their efforts to physically hide and otherwise help their male friends and relatives who had not responded to the draft notices – an act of conscientious objection which was criminalised in Serbia, but not in Croatia.

The Zagreb so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists had similar educational levels, but the latter had more often at least one societally better placed parent in Yugoslavia and – unlike almost every so-called nationalist respondent – no history of injustice perpetrated by the partisan and/or communist authorities. Besides this, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondents mainly did not portray their lives in the former country as underprivileged, which was exactly what most of the Zagreb so-called nationalist respondents did. Thus, while the socialist educational system has enabled the achievement of similar educational qualifications for people from more and less privileged backgrounds, the so-called nationalist feminists saw themselves as distinctively deprived of the benefits which the self-declared antinationalist feminists had acquired by virtue of belonging to the communist elite. Some self-declared antinationalist respondents had expressed their awareness of certain privileges which they had enjoyed during Yugoslavia, but these accounts of privileged life were much less common.

At the same time, more so-called nationalist respondents recollected having felt at least partially affiliated with Yugoslavia. This finding is particularly significant not only because of its seeming incompatibility with the underdog position these respondents professed, but also in view of the fact that '(pro-)Yugoslav' was a designation which they had ascribed not to themselves, but to the other Zagreb cluster and by way of criticism. Regardless of this difference, the two clusters had in common that none of the feminists who had felt such an affiliation continued feeling it after 1991. If the finding that less self-declared antinationalist feminists expressed an affiliation with Yugoslavia is compared to the finding that they were also more reluctant about stating their ethnicity, it becomes clear that when it comes to the Zagreb respondents, those who did not declare themselves ethnically had not necessarily felt attached to Yugoslavia and the affiliation with Yugoslavia had not excluded the affiliation with an ethnic group.

That the heretical war-related positionings of the so-called nationalist feminists were not positionings of less experienced newcomers is indicated by the findings that these feminists had on average participated in feminist groups for a longer time than the self-declared antinationalist respondents and had more extensive experience with using the pre-war strict gender-based positioning on (sexual) violence. Thus, even though the self-declared antinationalist respondents had been previously less at home in this gender-based positioning, they have maintained it for a longer time after the beginning of the war in Croatia, despite the fact that they appeared to have been more personally affected by that war than the feminists from the other Zagreb cluster. Even the feminist with a voluntary combat experience was a self-declared antinationalist.

There was great overlap between one's cluster membership and one's participation or non-participation, respectively, in the Antiwar Campaign Croatia. Almost as a rule, the self-declared antinationalist feminists were those who had agreed with this group's support of conscientious objection and positioning on the wars which did not consider the Serbs as the only responsible and the non-Serbs as the only victimised party. Lastly, although in each cluster the number of still active feminists at the time of interviewing was smaller than that of inactive ones, the groups of the self-declared antinationalist feminists were the normally functioning ones, whereas those of the so-called nationalist respondents were quite dormant. This finding points to a possible continuity of the difference in capital between the clusters, ie to the greater skills and larger (funding) networks to which the self-declared antinationalist feminists could appeal also in the post-war period.

Just like in Zagreb, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists were those who came from more prosperous backgrounds, but unlike in Zagreb, there was

a marked difference in educational qualifications between the two Belgrade clusters. The so-called nationalist respondents were those with significantly higher average degrees. Further different from Zagreb was the absence of a clear relation between the participation in one of the clusters, on the one hand, and the experiences of grievances from the authorities or the accounts of a disadvantaged societal position, on the other. A minority of the Belgrade respondents spoke of such injustices, and both recollections came from self-declared antinationalist feminists. Whereas these feminists also addressed their own underprivileged position in Yugoslavia, only the corresponding account of a third respondent, a so-called nationalist one, contained implicit criticism of the self-declared antinationalist positionings of the privileged (feminist) activists. Similarly to Zagreb, there were fewer recollections – and of self-declared antinationalist feminists only – which acknowledged some of the privileges which these feminists had enjoyed in the former country.

All Belgrade self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists spoke about having (had) at least a partial attachment to Yugoslavia, but only self-declared antinationalist feminists – in fact, the majority of them – referred to this attachment in the past tense. For some of these latter respondents the continuation of one's affiliation with Yugoslavia after 1991 meant expression of implicit support to the Serb hegemonic and unitarist politics which was carried out by Milošević. Nobody within the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist cluster perceived this post-1991 affiliation in such a way.

A comparable (dis)similarity between the clusters existed regarding the declaration of ethnicity. Answering this question proved to be a highly uncomfortable task for all Belgrade respondents, but only the self-declared antinationalist ones vigorously refused to do so. In other words, to use the designation 'Serb' for describing oneself was not done for these respondents, not even in combination with qualifiers, as all but one so-called nationalist respondent did (the remaining feminist defined herself as a Yugoslav). This difference between the clusters corresponds to that in the war-related positionings, given that the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists were those who emphasised that the Serbs were most responsible for the (post-)Yugoslav wars and felt, therefore, the need to distance themselves from this ethnic collective.

Unlike in Zagreb, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists were the war-related heretics in the Belgrade feminist field, but the two cities resembled one another in the fact that also the Belgrade heretical feminists were not the less experienced newcomers regarding the gender-based positioning on (sexual) violence. Different from Zagreb, though, the so-called nationalist feminists in Belgrade were

those who stated more often to have been personally affected by the war violence in 1991. So-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists alike provided diverse help to men who did not want to fight, but only self-declared antinationalist respondents – in 1999, too – expanded this support also to men to whom they were not privately related, and communicated this act of dissent publicly. Fewer respondents from both clusters recollected similar experiences concerning the war violence in 1999, and there was no clear relation between these experiences and the participation in one of the clusters.

Just like in Zagreb, the (non-)participation in one specific group overlapped to a large extent with the involvement in one of the clusters. A majority of the Belgrade respondents who were active in Women in Black were self-declared antinationalist feminists. Those from the other cluster did not stay in the group for a long time, though, due to dissimilar positionings on the Serb victimhood and responsibility. Finally, a rather clear dividing line existed between the Belgrade clusters at the time of interviewing. The feminist engagement of the majority of the so-called nationalist feminists took place chiefly in the form of academic work, whereas the self-declared antinationalist feminists who were still active were foremostly involved in feminist groups.

After these three comparisons of the biographical characteristics of the key Belgrade and Zagreb respondents, I proceed now with the last empirical chapter of this dissertation. I will analyse there the ways in which, during the interviews, the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists referred to the war-related dynamics which had taken place in the 1990s among the feminists in the respective city.



## CHAPTER SIX

### Perceptions at the time of interviewing

The last empirical chapter of this dissertation is foremostly concerned with the ways in which the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist respondents spoke at the time of interviewing in 2009 or, for some, 2010 about the intra-feminist war-related divisions in the respective city in the 1990s. I pay specific attention to descriptions of the divide – ie the war-related differences and similarities – between the feminists, references to the process of naming, conceptualisations of the ascribed-to designations, as well as depictions of concrete feminists as (un)authentic (anti)nationalists.

Prior to that I compare accounts of the authenticity of one's feminism. Even though I was not originally interested in this topic and did not, therefore, ask a specific question about it, it turned out that the respondents' elaborations of the (anti) nationalism of other feminists were often closely interwoven with discussions of the genuineness of the latter's feminism. Due to this, I chose to include here these accounts, too, in order to present a more comprehensive picture of the main topic – the more recent perceptions of the war-related divisions. I close the chapter by addressing the still persisting silence on these divisions, ie the absence of discussion among the direct actors regarding their dissimilar war-related positionings and corresponding tensions in the 1990s. Unlike in the previous chapter, in this one I once more use information from all interviews. The focus is on the narratives of the main and additional Belgrade and Zagreb respondents, whereas the statements of the external respondents serve to further illustrate the argument in question.

The goal of this chapter is to show how the respondents looked at the above issues from a time distance and the changed societal context of Croatia and Serbia. The contained first-hand accounts offer important novel insights on topics which have previously remained as good as unaddressed in the scholarship. While slightly more scholarly attention has been given to the discussions of the divisions among the feminists, even those contributions have not juxtaposed the views of the direct feminist actors and thereby disclosed the differences and similarities between these views. The comparisons which are presented in this chapter reveal sometimes unexpected differences among members of a same cluster, as well as surprising similarities between members of clusters with an 'opposite prefix'.

Although the focus of this chapter is on the ways in which the respondents from one city depicted the war-related dynamics in that city, I incorporated in the

main text also some observations which were made on the situation or the feminists in the other city. In my view, these comments help to better understand the positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, as well as the divisions among and between them. In the interviews I gave priority to the accounts of the dynamics in the Belgrade or Zagreb respondent's respective city, but I hoped to be also able to collect enough data to analyse the respondents' perceptions of the war-related divisions in the other city. Such an analysis proved to be unfeasible, though. The Belgrade and Zagreb feminists more often than not refrained from talking about the other city. They usually said not to remember or to be insufficiently familiar with the specific situation there. Few Belgrade respondents mentioned some Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists and their proximity to the nationalist politics of the Croatian state, but did not provide much more information beyond that. In a similar manner, few Zagreb respondents hinted that not all Belgrade feminists had wanted to participate in the vigils of Women in Black and alluded to the existence of different positionings on the NATO bombing in 1999 and the Kosovar Albanians.

The elaborations of authentic feminism and the discussions of authentic (anti) nationalism, ascribed-to designations, naming and individual feminists are presented per cluster, whereas the section on the silence is presented per city. The latter choice, which I initially made only in view of the limited available material, proved to be very fortunate. It unexpectedly created a dialogue between the feminists from the same city which does not exist in everyday reality. By way of introduction, I begin with one vignette. Although it is more of a sketch than an elaborated analysis, it introduces the issues which will appear in the rest of the chapter.

### **The unique deed of Zagreb24AN**

The case of Zagreb24AN, the prominent Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist who spent two months on the battlefield in Croatia, is unparalleled among the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists. In short, soon after the beginning of the war in Croatia Zagreb24AN – who worked in Women's Help Now – enlisted herself voluntarily in Croatia's defence forces to fight against the Yugoslav People's Army. In her words, she did not volunteer in order to defend a homeland or a nation, but to protect her flat, her life and the lives of her family. Consequently, when she stopped seeing them as being under threat, she resigned from the unit and chose not to become a professional soldier in the by then consolidated defence forces of Croatia. Zagreb24AN spoke of her

deed as an act of self-defence: 'I am against the war, but I want to have the possibility, just like when I walk on the street at 2 o'clock in the morning and somebody tries to attack me, to have the legitimate right to defend myself. I will defend myself in any imaginable way'.

Zagreb24AN recalled further that upon returning from the battlefield she had wanted to resume her work in the shelter of – the not split up yet – Women's Help Now. Since not all members had approved of that, a meeting had been called to discuss her act. Some had suggested her expulsion from the group because, in their view, feminism equalled pacifism and her non-pacifist deed had made her unsuitable for working in a feminist group. Nonetheless, she was able to remain active: the feminists in support of her freedom of choice managed to persuade those favouring expulsion.

Unfortunately, in spite of its uniqueness, I did not explore this episode in great detail during the fieldwork. Due to the anyway very laden character of my topic, I did not feel comfortable making one specific person the object of my research. I was worried that stating this feminist's full name and military past in all interviews might stigmatise her, which was not something I wanted to inflict upon any respondent. Moreover, Zagreb24AN herself has shown a certain ambivalence regarding the exposure of her act. On the one hand, she has occasionally publicly spoken about it using her full name (Fischer E., 1993; Mikula, 2005; *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 21.03.2001; *Why Don't Women Make War?*, 2004). On the other hand, though, she did not want to appear by her real name in this thesis.

I have not come across a single text of a Belgrade or Zagreb (or any other post-Yugoslav) feminist which would mention this remarkable example of one feminist's response to war violence. In addition to this, whereas slightly more than a third of my respondents (17) mentioned Zagreb24AN in one context or another, only seven of them touched upon her military past. These were one Belgrade and four Zagreb self-declared antinationalist, as well as two Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. In my view, the hesitation to address this case points to its anomalous character and the sensitivity of the issue of military involvement of feminists. Simultaneously, this episode testifies to the perpetuation of the silences surrounding war-related positionings not only by the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, but also by me as a researcher.

While differing in the rest of their contents, the seven narratives of Zagreb24AN's case had two common denominators. The first one was the absence of explicitly communicated doubts regarding her feminism (in view of her military engagement). In addition to the aforementioned anomalous and laden character of this episode, the absence of doubts was probably also due to her long-term extensive

efforts to end male violence against women and assist its survivors. The other common denominator concerned the absence of any overt designation of Zagreb24AN's war-related positioning, including the act of going into combat.

The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist Belgrade6AN recollected having listened to Zagreb24AN's honest account of her specific war experience at a gathering. Belgrade6AN described that meeting as both very emotional and having a good and open vibe. By saying that everybody had spoken from her heart instead of transmitting the views of her government, she actually implicitly conveyed her perception of Zagreb24AN's move as unrelated to the Croatian state and Croat nationalism. At the same time, Zagreb4N, one of the Zagreb so-called nationalist respondents, insinuated that there had been something odd about Zagreb24AN's choice. She did so by not wanting to disclose more details and advising me to obtain firsthand information. The other respondent from this cluster, Zagreb6N, covertly expressed her doubts about Zagreb24AN's self-declared antinationalist positioning. She hinted that Zagreb24AN had remained with the self-declared antinationalist feminists not because of a shared positioning on the war in Croatia, but due to the availability of funds.

Some kind of pragmatism instead of a factual antinationalist positioning was also suspected by one of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondents. Zagreb9AN spoke of not being quite able to reconcile Zagreb24AN's soldiering with her participation in the Antiwar Campaign Croatia. Quite to the contrary, another respondent from the same cluster, Zagreb23AN, seemed not to have any difficulty harmonising those two choices. She admitted that she had completely forgotten about that episode and portrayed it as just another manifestation of the same ardent warrior spirit with which Zagreb24AN led her life and worked against violence against women. Moreover, Zagreb23AN suggested that Zagreb24AN's peace orientation had become firmer after the experience on the battlefield and professed never to have heard her say anything which could be termed nationalism or hatred towards others.

The ambiguity among the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists regarding Zagreb24AN's war-related positioning was also visible in the narratives of the other two respondents from this cluster. Talking about the 'Women in War' gathering in October 1992,<sup>230</sup> Zagreb3AN clearly situated Zagreb24AN's positioning within the self-declared antinationalist cluster, ie as dissenting from the ones of the so-called nationalist feminist organisers. Zagreb7AN, however, spoke of Zagreb24AN

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230 See Chapter 4.

as still holding a completely different view of the war.<sup>231</sup> Nonetheless, by immediately afterwards interpreting Zagreb24AN's choice to go to war as a panic reaction to a perceived approaching danger, it seems that Zagreb7AN wanted to counteract her previous suggestion that that choice might have originated from nationalism or patriotism.

Zagreb24AN herself explained that she did not associate her move with any ideology and scorned those – including some, further unspecified, activists of the so-called nationalist feminist group Women's Help Now – who had praised her decision to, in their view, defend the homeland and the Croatian state. She asserted to be unable to care less about the concepts of a homeland, state or ethnic group, and to have been driven purely by the urge to feel safe and protect her flat, her life and the lives of her family members. According to her, her antiwar positioning was equally manifested by taking up arms and by participating in a group which advocated non-violence – as was the case with the Antiwar Campaign Croatia.

Zagreb23AN and Zagreb7AN held opposing views regarding the extent to which Zagreb24AN's deed had been discussed among the Zagreb feminists. Zagreb23AN's exclamation of surprise upon hearing my question on Zagreb24AN's military involvement confirmed her later comment that she had completely forgotten about it. She recalled that Zagreb24AN had not mystified anything and soon after her return from the front had freely discussed her experience with the rest of the group. However, for Zagreb7AN – who had been in the same group with Zagreb23AN and Zagreb24AN – this episode was not a non-issue. She spoke of it as a topic which had never been raised.

Zagreb24AN as well did not think that the tensions regarding her deed had ever been resolved – at least not in Zagreb. She described the silence in Zagreb as follows:

[T]hat is such a hard and deep silence and a complete break of the communication and, I think, quite a lot of fears on both sides...

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231 I did not manage, unfortunately, to ask this respondent for a more specific answer. Zagreb7AN possibly referred to Zagreb24AN's conceptualisation of the war in Croatia as a legitimate act of self-defence which had only been wrong because of the ethnic cleansing and destruction of the Croatian Serbs' villages, as well as the killing of Croatian Serb women, children and elderly. Zagreb24AN expressed this positioning in a documentary and added that she felt shame about those acts of the Croat forces, especially since she had also been part of them (*Why Don't Women Make War?*, 2004). She did not say anything, however, about the responsibility of the Croatian government for the beginning of the war in Croatia – a point Zagreb7AN probably also alluded to.

Me: Fear of what?

I do not know, I have not defined it fully myself either...[War] brings people, regardless of age and gender, into a state of reacting in completely unusual ways...When those topics would be opened, probably... In those times it was not at all possible to open them because we were all terrified...and in shock and we wondered whether we would live today, tomorrow and day after tomorrow or not, and if we would, how – without an arm, leg, something else... Whereas nowadays I think that we are afraid...since a lot of wounds from those times have remained sedimented and never discussed...I think that we are all afraid of hurting one another once more (interview with Zagreb24AN).

In her view, the attitude of the Belgrade feminists had been altogether different. Some had overtly disapproved of her decision, while others had avoided the topic out of fear of saying something wrong which would halt further communication. Yet, at one point she stopped sensing any tensions from their side. Zagreb24AN said not to be aware at all how this had been possible because they had never discussed her move, but she was content that it had been the case. Nonetheless, since she had never asked those Belgrade feminists what had caused their change of heart, it seems that something remained brewing in the air, but that she wanted – similar to her interactions with the Zagreb feminists – to let sleeping dogs lie and not open old wounds.

## **Authentic feminism**

### **Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists**

Some Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondents considered it impossible to be simultaneously a feminist and a nationalist: feminism entailed solidarity with women in general, whereas nationalism constructed these boundaries differently. It constricted the bonds of gender-based solidarity to include only women of the same ethnicity, while expanding the ethnicity-based ones to incorporate men. Zagreb3AN recollected half-jokingly that she and her fellow self-declared antinationalist feminists ‘were convinced, as all crusaders are, to be absolutely right’, ie that their version of solidarity was the only genuine feminist positioning – a view that she acknowledged to still hold at the time of interviewing. According to the external Sarajevo respondent Sarajevo3EXT, this restructuring of the boundaries of solidarity had led to the incomprehensible situation that somebody who had declared herself a feminist was

able to feel closer to an antifeminist from the same country than to a feminist from the neighbouring one.<sup>232</sup>

There were also those who employed less strict definitions of feminism. For example, for Zagreb24AN feminism did not presuppose a pacifist positioning. She recalled disagreeing with some feminists from the self-declared antinationalist cluster who had argued that feminism equalled pacifism. She maintained that a person who carried a weapon could remain a feminist and continue working in a feminist group. Zagreb9AN deemed it possible to have clearly articulated feminist positionings on some issues and nationalist ones on other issues, as had often been the case in national liberation movements:

I cannot deny the feminism of those who are called nationalists by one faction only because they are nationalists. How can I deny it when with regard to many issues they are far more radical, feminist, take more the side of women than... [presumably, some self-declared antinationalist feminists]?...The whole of Africa, the anticolonial struggle, our women are liberating themselves... It makes you wonder... Feminism and modern nationalism are, in fact, quite close. Only later you have this feminism which tries to be international and has more that class... [presumably, element]. I think that [name withheld; a Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist] had said in some interview...that feminism is incompatible with nationalism. I disagree.

Sometimes, a stricter and a broader definition of feminism could both be found even in the narrative of a single respondent. Zagreb11AN explained first that the feminist positioning on war rape conceptualised these rapes as being committed by male militarised units, not genocidal ethnic collectives. In other words, she implied that the latter positioning – the one of the so-called nationalist cluster – was not feminist. Still, when comparing each Zagreb cluster's positioning on the war rapes a bit later, Zagreb11AN spoke of differences between feminisms, ie treated the positioning of the other cluster as feminist as well. This ambiguity was also visible in her statement about considering the construction 'patriotic feminists' an oxymoron (since it entailed

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232 I do not know for certain which episode(s) Sarajevo3EXT had in mind concretely. Possibly she referred to the coalition of a sort between some Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist groups and the Zagreb women's group Rampart of Love which was exemplified by the production of several joint statements containing their shared positioning on (sexual) aggressors and victims in the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. This positioning included the exclusion of the Belgrade feminists as members of the inimical ethnic group. See Chapter 4.

both loyalty and resistance to the *pater familias*, ie patriarchy) and using it exactly for this reason.

### **Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists**

Among the Zagreb so-called nationalist respondents there were more feminists who were sceptical of the feminism of the other Zagreb cluster than those who were not. The first of the latter two, Zagreb1N, spoke of all Zagreb feminists as feminists without questioning anybody's authenticity. Zagreb4N, the other one, observed that time had shown that 'feminism was the priority for the majority of Zagreb feminists'. That the indication 'majority' also included self-declared antinationalist feminists could be inferred from her approval of some feminists' employment in (educational) institutions engaging with gender issues. This concerned mostly Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, although Zagreb4N was herself employed in such a way as well.

The other so-called nationalist respondents typically distanced themselves from the other cluster by portraying themselves as the only genuine feminists whose very concrete daily commitment to helping women, in spite of its authenticity, had been insufficiently recognised and valued by the Western audiences, including funders. At the same time, they criticised the self-declared antinationalist feminists for the funds and the other benefits which they had managed to obtain. These respondents found it additionally problematic that, according to them, those gains had been secured driven by personal (financial) interests instead of an authentic motivation to change certain women-unfriendly practices and help women. Some so-called nationalist respondents even asserted that the interests and activities of the other cluster had been harmful to women.

More precisely, Zagreb15N and Zagreb13N disapproved of the same process of professionalisation of feminism which was greeted by Zagreb4N above. While Zagreb15N only spoke about it as an unfortunate replacement of the pre-war voluntary work and enthusiasm, Zagreb13N elaborated her claim more extensively. She reproached the feminists from the other cluster for being only concerned with the acquisition of stable jobs instead of joining forces – presumably with the so-called nationalist feminists – to bring the perpetrators of war rapes to justice. Zagreb16N chiefly scolded some self-declared antinationalist feminists who had not joined a feminist group when activism had been conducted on voluntary basis (meaning: before the war), but only after extensive foreign funds had become available: 'Some women lost their jobs, so they needed a place... That great amount of money proved

counterproductive for our movement. It [those women's activism] was not an authentic need: "We want to be against that".

Zagreb14N further rejected the feminism of the other cluster for consisting only of *salonfähig* discussions and theories which were often inapplicable in practice. For her, feminism had to include real human experiences. She illustrated this 'big difference, enormous difference' between the Zagreb clusters with the example of the 'Women in War' gathering which she had co-organised. Zagreb14N contrasted the intention of the self-declared antinationalist feminists to only theoretically talk about the war rapes with the organisers' decision to directly hear witness testimonials of women who had been raped for months. Another dismissal of the feminism of the other Zagreb cluster was formulated by Zagreb6N. She castigated these feminists for not opposing pornography, ie frequenting the office of the Antiwar Campaign Croatia untroubled by the presence of an antimilitarist poster featuring a nude woman. Her words additionally conveyed a strong dismissal of this group's work and, more implicitly, its war-related positionings:

All our colleagues [the self-declared antinationalist feminists] got into the Antiwar Campaign. I will never forget the poster I saw when I went there...Those colleagues of ours could calmly pass by that poster...they merged into it completely, whereas I was unable to come round (interview with Zagreb6N).

### **Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists**

The narratives of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists who addressed the authenticity of feminism contained a clear normative claim about the existence of only one type of (correct) feminism and (feminist) agency. However, the narrative of Belgrade11AN also showed the respondent's ambiguity on this issue. Earlier in the interview she criticised another feminist from the same cluster for commenting that something was not a feminist deed, and asked afterwards: 'Who decides what feminism is? Don't tell me that there exists a single definition of feminism. *It does not*' (emphasis in the original). Nevertheless, when she recalled later the heated discussions at the 'Third Yugoslav Feminist Gathering' in the spring of 1990,<sup>233</sup> Belgrade11AN said that some participants had allowed themselves to be lured by the mainstream political discourse (read: nationalism) which they reproduced when discussing the political situation in Yugoslavia. They had subordinated thereby the importance of the

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233 See Chapter 4.

common gender cause to the importance of ethnic identification. So, next to alluding that the latter had deviated from feminism, she articulated in a more straightforward manner her perception of their agency as being (partially) reduced in the process.

Belgrade3AN communicated a very explicit positioning on the incompatibility of feminism and ethnic identification: ‘The ethnic identification cannot be combined with feminism, communism and varied other -isms. It can be very easily combined with fascism, but hardly with anything good’. She recalled further becoming painfully aware that she had to part with some Zagreb feminists – the so-called nationalist ones – after they had changed their allegiances, and in spite of the shared feminist history of cooperation and support. Belgrade3AN mentioned in passing also one not war-related criterion for being a true feminist. She criticised another Belgrade feminist from the same cluster for never having understood properly what feminism entailed: a confrontation with and questioning of all one’s knowledge and patterns of behaviour instilled by patriarchy.

Unlike Belgrade3AN, Belgrade14AN seemed not to be surprised that feminists could side with nationalist politics and place a greater importance on the relations between ethnic groups and states than on those between women. Talking about the meeting in Venice in February 1992,<sup>234</sup> she spoke about this change of allegiance as a phenomenon which had been known already then, although that had not made it less dramatic. Without overtly denying the feminism of the concrete Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, she described their affiliation with nation-building projects as dirty politics which excluded solidarity, honesty and probity.

Belgrade14AN also mentioned one more improper type of feminism, but she was inconsistent in naming it feminism. She spoke about it both as a positioning which had nothing to do with feminism, and as faulty feminism. It was held by activists who wanted to mask their Serb nationalism and/or did not want to publicly pronounce themselves on very risky political matters:

That gender essentialism always appears when [one’s] nationalism has to be concealed. That essentialism – that that [issue] is not a women’s issue and women should not deal with it – is, in my view, very irresponsible and rudimentary feminism. That is something which I absolutely could not accept then and cannot accept now (interview with Belgrade14AN).

She did not state explicitly who the Belgrade feminists were who hid behind gender essentialism, but one of her examples made it clear that she did not only allude

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234 *ibid.*

to the so-called nationalist feminists, but also to some self-declared antinationalist ones. Belgrade14AN criticised the minuscule presence of feminists at the gatherings in the trade union Independence during the NATO bombing and the concurrent Serb ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.<sup>235</sup> This meant, in fact, that she rebuked these feminists' non-participation in, inter alia, the production of appeals in support of the Kosovar Albanians.

### **Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists**

The Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists expressed their doubts on the quality of somebody's feminism relatively more often, but none of them openly identified another activist as not being a feminist. For Belgrade2N the problematic character of the feminism of some activists (read: the self-declared antinationalist ones) was visible first in their lack of attention for the protection of the economic and social rights of women:

Those women who are in some so-called movement have no concept at all. They do what they please and what, in my opinion, brings them profit. What they really need to do in order to change the position of women in Serbia does not cross their minds at all. You have laid-off women, women do not get employed, they are ill-treated at the workplace, but nobody works on that.

Second, it was manifested in their war-related positionings. She criticised implicitly the prejudiced and unknowledgeable positioning of some feminists, local and Western alike, on the Serbs as the only responsible ones for the (post-)Yugoslav wars. Belgrade2N additionally disputed these feminists' agency by seeing them as succumbing to the warmongering propaganda against the Serbs and its portrayal of Belgrade as a nationalist city (I will return to this later in this chapter). The sincerity of their motivation for feminism was doubtful as well, given the career, financial and other gains which they obtained from exploiting the situation in the region. In passing, she also hinted that one's later involvement in feminist activism indicated a lower quality of one's feminism. She depicted one concrete self-declared antinationalist feminist as learning the feminist alphabet while others (including Belgrade2N herself and other so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists) had been busy developing the Women's Studies Center.

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235 *ibid.*

The pursuit of personal benefits, including funds, as the driving force behind some feminists' involvement with feminism was also rebuked by Belgrade16N. In her view, the proper motivation for feminism was not supposed to comprise such a pursuit, but the wish to bring about societal changes for the good of all. However, in view of whose motivation she approved or disapproved of, it seems that her suggestion of some feminists' dubious motivation for feminism was related to the differences in war-related positionings. She praised the motivation of another so-called nationalist feminist who – just like Belgrade16N herself – had not used the women's movement to satisfy her own ambitions but had invested her own resources for the purpose of expanding it further. Belgrade16N contrasted the two of them with those feminists, such as one self-declared antinationalist, who had been only concerned with their careers and had, therefore, presented themselves in international fora as antinationalists.

For Belgrade15N true feminism was based on practicing 'four sacrosanct feminist principles: trust, dialogue, tolerance and solidarity'. She situated their existence in the Belgrade pre-war feminist activism, ie the group Woman and Society,<sup>236</sup> and commended those times as a period when there had been no professional feminists but only feminists by conviction – either students or employed elsewhere like her. To make a living by being a feminist was inconceivable to her, but she conceded that women had to do it because of the economic situation. In addition to this, at the end of the interview Belgrade15N said: 'I support all my feminist friends who truly advocate in different ways the quality of women's lives. *Truly advocate*. Some really do not have [money] and that [work] is their only chance to survive, while some went to some higher circles in the United Nations' (emphasis in the original). Thus, on the one hand, Belgrade15N was ambiguous regarding the authenticity of the present-day professional feminists. On the other hand, however, she implied that there were professional feminists with a genuine feminist motivation and those without. This claim could also indicate a covert underlying evaluation of the authenticity of one's feminism depending on one's war-related positionings – a linkage which she did not state explicitly anywhere in the interview.

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236 See Chapter 3.

## **Authentic (anti)nationalism, ascribed-to designations, naming and individual feminists**

### **Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists**

Without denying the presence of dissimilar positionings and other differences between the two Zagreb clusters, the self-declared antinationalist feminists were on average more inclined than the other Zagreb cluster to question the names which they had employed for themselves and the latter. Whereas nobody among them doubted the existence of two distant clusters – Zagreb5ANA described them as ‘two parallel worlds which did not touch one another and never established a dialogue’ – the actual distance between the positionings was often wondered about. The self-declared antinationalist feminists implied that that distance had been smaller than that which had been suggested at the time by means of the designations ‘antinationalist’ and ‘nationalist’. The following quotation from Zagreb3AN expresses the simultaneously existing awareness of the differences and the purpose of their accentuation, as well as of the question about their magnitude:

In hindsight, I wonder whether we really had to engage in such a bloody feud. At that moment probably we had. That was our *differentia specifica* and it helped us in some way to survive the war and remain normal – to consequently stick to our ideas and somehow rationalise the whole story.

One divergence which was stated by the self-declared antinationalist respondents concerned the so-called nationalist feminists’ relation to the Croatian state and media propaganda about the Serb perpetrators and Bosniak and Croat victims. Using two different conceptualisations of the agency of the latter feminists, the self-declared antinationalist respondents spoke about them as accepting or getting caught by that propaganda in order to become good and acceptable feminists instead of witches and enemies of the state – denunciations which the Croatian pro-state media had directed at the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists.<sup>237</sup> Conformity and fear of the consequences of a dissenting positioning were also the explanations provided by Ljubljana3EXT – an external Ljubljana respondent.

The other differences concerned the so-called nationalist feminists’ (overt) refusal to communicate and cooperate with the Belgrade feminists, and the emotionally-charged reproduction of the mainstream Croat positioning on

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237 See Chapter 4.

perpetrators and victims which did not provide space for all perpetrators, all victims and all nuances. In line with this positioning, the so-called nationalist feminists had started to express a more limited type of solidarity among women instead of the up to then jointly advocated gender-based solidarity regardless of ethnicity. Finally, the so-called nationalist feminists were singled out as being given more (positive) attention by the pro-state media.

However, some self-declared antinationalist feminists shared their doubts about the rigour of the other cluster's explicit positioning on providing assistance only to (raped) refugee women of Bosniak and Croat ethnicity. Despite the existence of original documents from that time which contained that positioning, as well as the witness accounts of hearing such statements or statements against Serb women (including the Belgrade feminists), several self-declared antinationalist respondents spoke about not being sure that the so-called nationalist feminists would really have refrained from helping a woman of Serb ethnicity.

Put differently, these respondents alluded to a possible partial discrepancy between the advocacy and legitimacy efforts of the so-called nationalist feminists and their assistance to refugee women. A broader actual conceptualisation of the sexual perpetrators was suggested as well. As various self-declared antinationalist respondents observed, although the so-called nationalist feminists had drawn attention only to the war rapes committed by the Serb forces, ie unambiguously equated the categories 'rapists' and 'Serbs', they had never publicly denied the possibility that the Croat (or Bosniak) forces had perpetrated war rapes as well.

The certain proximity between the two clusters was additionally hinted at by the comments on the later alterations in the positionings of some so-called nationalist feminists and the parallel existence of overlapping positionings. Zagreb9AN pointed out that it had been a so-called nationalist feminist, not a self-declared antinationalist one, who had published the Croatian translation of Brownmiller's *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* – a book which argued for a gender-based positioning on war rape.<sup>238</sup> Zagreb17ANA recalled agreeing with all critical comments which one so-called nationalist feminist had directed at the Commission for Equality Issues of the Croatian government in a meeting in Zagreb in November 1997, and Zagreb12AN reported a similar experience regarding some of the points made by the same so-called nationalist feminist in a television appearance during the war in Croatia.

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238 *ibid.*

Zagreb10ANA proposed that the so-called nationalist feminists had changed their ethnicity-based positioning as a result of the changes in the political and media landscape in Croatia. In her view, these feminists' fervent refutation of the designation 'nationalist' probably had to do with those changes, ie the decreased legitimacy of the previous mainstream ethnicity-based positioning on the war in Croatia (and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Hereby she attended, in fact, to the same process which Gouda (2007:12) had described – in the fragment already quoted in Chapter 1 – as the removal of the no longer strategically useful historical narratives 'from the museum of public recollections'. Zagreb10ANA said to be surprised that

nowadays in *Latinica* [a popular political magazine on Croatian national television], in the newspapers, it is much more openly said that not all Serbs were aggressors; all of a sudden some Serbs are revealed who fought in Vukovar [on the side of Croatia]... Now you can read that, but not ten years ago. It is not a wonder that women who thought so at the time, that they maybe also changed their views in time...If you are so much influenced by something, but that changes... All of a sudden it turns out that your positioning does not make sense either. It is nothing but normal to negate it.

Similarly to the multiple perceptions of the extent of the difference between the two clusters, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondents presented diverse views on the suitability of the terms 'nationalist' and 'patriotic' for describing the feminists from the other cluster and their positionings. Some used the designation 'nationalist' without questioning its appropriateness. Others expressed their uncertainty regarding this reference to nationalism (eg because of the possibility that not nationalism, but some psychological reactions might have been the reason for one's positioning), but did not propose that 'patriotic' might be a more apt term.

The latter proposition was made by yet other self-declared antinationalist respondents. They shared the more or less explicitly stated understanding that 'patriotic' was a more euphemistic name than 'nationalist'. One of them, Zagreb7AN, remembered her discomfort about employing the term 'nationalist'. She found nationalism too simplistic to fully explain the choice of a different positioning because it did not take into account the variety of reasons which might have played a part (eg fear of the war violence or jealousy regarding the backgrounds and competences of some self-declared antinationalist feminists). In the absence of a better designation, Zagreb7AN had chosen 'patriotic' inspired by an article in a pro-state weekly wherein

this term had been featured as part of the favourable portrayal of the so-called nationalist feminists.<sup>239</sup>

Their articulated preference for ‘patriotic’ notwithstanding, some respondents ended up using ‘patriotic’ and ‘nationalist’ interchangeably. Zagreb11AN explained that ‘patriotic feminists’ had been her favoured way of naming the so-called nationalist feminists for two reasons. First, to call somebody ‘a nationalist’ had been the worst thing to say to a person because nationalism had been the state’s official warmongering ideology. Second, she found the construction ‘patriotic feminists’ suitable because it disclosed the oxymoronic character of the combination of the two ideologies. At the same time, Zagreb11AN did consider these feminists to be nationalists – albeit to different extents – and their positionings on the (sexual) war violence as both exemplifying and further contributing to downright nationalism.

The external respondent Zagreb22EXT – whom I mention here because she recurrently funded and extensively interacted with the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists – said to be reluctant to name the so-called nationalist feminists ‘nationalist’. Even though this term was the right antonym to the designation ‘non-nationalist’ which she had overtly used for the other cluster, she did not believe that the so-called nationalist feminists had deliberately chosen to support Tuđman’s regime and his ideology. Zagreb22EXT doubted that even ‘patriotic’ could have been these feminists’ self-designation due to their sharp criticism of the role of the state, armies and men. Still, when discussing these feminists’ oft-used analogy between the raped bodies of Bosniak and Croat women and the raped bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, she spoke of a nationalist positioning. A bit later Zagreb22EXT employed ‘patriotic’ again, this time to refer to the so-called nationalist feminists’ black-and-white defence of two ethnic groups (Bosniak and Croat) and accusation of a third one (Serb, including the Belgrade feminists).

The absence of consensus among the self-declared antinationalist feminists regarding the right way of naming the feminists from the other cluster can be further inferred from the depictions of concrete so-called nationalist feminists. Different self-declared antinationalist respondents described the same one feminist as a true nationalist, as a nationalist who had become one not as a result of a well-considered choice, but due to fear, confusion or some character traits, or as not really a nationalist. On several occasions the respondents refrained from pronouncing themselves on a specific feminist because of not really knowing her. Hence it seems that the perceptions of a so-called nationalist feminist were greatly influenced by one’s direct experience with her, and not necessarily based on her war-related positionings.

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239 *Danas* (29.01.1993). See Chapter 4.

For example, Zagreb12AN – who is of partially Serb ethnicity – recalled being told that a particular so-called nationalist feminist had stated that she would speak with Serbs only through a gun-sight. However, since such a thing had not been said to her face, Zagreb12AN did not want to bear a grudge against the other feminist her whole life. Another example is Zagreb21ANA who spoke of closely interacting with one so-called nationalist feminist during the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Zagreb21ANA had wanted to support this feminist's art and work with refugee women, and the two of them had never discussed their dissimilar war-related positionings.

Several self-declared antinationalist respondents explicitly invoked the process of naming. They did so in a critical manner, regardless of whether they addressed the naming performed by their cluster or by the other. None of them said that 'nationalist' or 'patriotic' had been a self-designation of the so-called nationalist feminists. In fact, some stated clearly that the two designations had been ascribed by their cluster to the other one. These respondents were, furthermore, aware that the so-called nationalist feminists might not have appreciated the designations which often made them having to exonerate themselves in front of others. Zagreb9AN described this process as sometimes related to the competition for financial resources. The attribution of a negative designation served to denigrate the other and make oneself a more eligible grantee.<sup>240</sup> Whereas the self-declared antinationalist feminists had accused the other feminists of nationalism, Zagreb9AN recalled that the so-called nationalist feminists criticised a prominent self-declared antinationalist feminist for writing for an allegedly pornographic magazine.

This struggle for resources and legitimacy did not always take the same form, however. Its form depended on the field in which it was carried out. Due to this influence, the power imbalance between the clusters took two contradictory shapes:

They [the designations] were very vital and very important... because of the different positioning. That was a very important distinction to us and we felt it. From today's perspective, if I look

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240 Apparently, this process was not unique to the war period and the struggle between the clusters. One self-declared antinationalist feminist shared her comparable experience from the second half of the 1990s. Together with several other unsatisfied activists she had decided to leave the group they had worked in and establish a separate one, while maintaining the same war-related positionings. Due to their dissidence, these feminists had to find ways to cancel out the negative information about them which their former colleagues addressed to the relevant funding bodies (interview with Zagreb10ANA). Similarly to my comment in footnote 201 about the partial responsibility of the Western conveners for the conflicts at conferences, I want to point here to the partial responsibility of the Western funders for the local divisions and struggles.

at it more carefully, we [the self-declared antinationalist feminists] felt threatened within the country. Objectively speaking we were not threatened because we were women, so we did not really matter, but the positionings which we had back then were inadvisable, they were not mainstream ones...We felt a bit unsafe, whereas they [the so-called nationalist feminists] thought that we were rolling in money and that we were the darlings of the international community, which was correct. But, what does 'rolling in money' mean? Money for activities (interview with Zagreb3AN).

After this indirect rejection of the so-called nationalist feminists' claim that the self-declared antinationalist feminists had only been interested in their personal (financial) gain, Zagreb3AN explained that the latter had felt more powerful than the other cluster in the interactions with international (read: Western) audiences. They were able to name both themselves and the so-called nationalist feminists, possessed better networks and enjoyed a wider acceptance as relevant actors. This, I would add, also meant a wider acceptance of their designations as the correct or legitimate ones.

Two respondents from this cluster focused on the names which they had received from the so-called nationalist feminists. Zagreb12AN – who did not have the pre-war experience of joint work with the feminists who would later become so-called nationalists – spoke of a newspaper article in which some so-called nationalist feminists defamed those from the other cluster for not naming (ie not singling out) the enemy and for being pro-Yugoslav. She insinuated afterwards that these classifications must have hurt the self-declared antinationalist feminists who had had a shared pre-war history of feminist activism. Zagreb11AN, the other respondent, pointed out that the self-declared antinationalist feminists had not been the first to publicly delegitimise the other feminists. They had started to do so only after having been subjected to several defamatory announcements by the other side, including accusations of being traitors.

Zagreb11AN felt especially wronged by the episode in which one so-called nationalist feminist group had joined forces with one Zagreb women's group of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The two groups had published a press release in which they had attacked her for being a pro-Serb collaborator of the Yugoslav People's Army. Besides the particularly uncomfortable situation of being targeted in such a manner by women from Sarajevo (read: victims), Zagreb11AN additionally felt unfairly treated because of her group's wartime efforts to secure funds for the women's groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One way in which these activists had made such efforts was by declining the offered foreign grants and requesting to have them redirected to the neighbouring country.

### Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists

With the exception of one Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist who rejected the idea that there had been any divisions among the Zagreb feminists caused by the wars, the other respondents from this cluster acknowledged the existence of such a split. Unlike the self-declared antinationalist feminists, they spoke of two truly different clusters, albeit by no means one antinationalist and one nationalist (or: non-nationalist and patriotic). Most of the so-called nationalist respondents resolutely defended their positioning on (sexual) perpetrators and victims as empirically-based, and equally decisively denied that this positioning or they themselves could be named 'nationalist' or 'patriotic'.

A particularly indicative example in this sense was the justification which Zagreb13N gave for her use of inflated figures of raped women. In critically referring to one American feminist who had declared that she had thereby lost her legitimacy, Zagreb13N evoked her mastery of statistics, history and politics. Thanks to this – in her view, uncommon – knowledge, she had been aware that only large figures could set things in motion. Had such figures not been used, no large assistance funds would have been earmarked and the ICTY would have never been established. Finally, she explained that those figures had not come out of thin air, but from her statistical calculations. They had been based on the available figures of concrete war rape cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, as well as on historical data on war rapes in other parts of the world.

In the discussions of the differences between the two clusters one claim surfaced repeatedly. The so-called nationalist respondents underlined that they had been so immersed in assisting (raped) refugee women that they had not had the time, money or interest to write texts, travel abroad to conferences and contemplate about nationalism and the wars. Hereby they also justified their non-involvement with the (Western) scholarship on the (post-)Yugoslav war-related feminism – an absence which was not characteristic for the other Zagreb feminist cluster. This was also the way in which Zagreb13N, Zagreb16N and Zagreb14N vindicated their absence of cooperation with the Belgrade feminists during the 1990s. Several additional reasons were provided as well: impossibility to travel to Belgrade, damper after the meeting in Venice in 1992, and anger because no Belgrade feminist had inquired about the respondent's situation.

Zagreb13N was particularly irritated by the issue of cooperation with the Belgrade feminists. This respondent assumed that it had been due to her unwillingness to engage in such a collaboration that she had been named 'nationalist' by some German feminists, one in particular:

She insisted on cooperation, intense cooperation, in those most difficult war conditions and she brutally discounted all of us who had refused that. And once that process started rolling, there was no way back. We were unable to do anything anymore. It is enough to get a tiny label and everything is gone (interview with Zagreb13N).

There were also so-called nationalist respondents who were not upset by this issue. Two of them simply established the non-existence of any exchange with Belgrade and proceeded to recount the first encounter after the end of the wars. Zagreb4N spoke about how wonderfully she had been received by the Belgrade feminists although she had hardly communicated with them during the wars, and added that she had always considered them as her fellow feminists and never as her enemies. Zagreb8NA recalled being stupefied by the courage of Women in Black to protest on the streets despite being constantly threatened and wiretapped, as well as occasionally arrested. Speaking about them with great respect, she observed that the Zagreb feminists had never had to deal with such dangerous situations.

The so-called nationalist feminists tended to distinguish themselves from the self-declared antinationalist ones also by describing the latter as being pro-Yugoslav. In other words, they portrayed the split among the Zagreb feminists as involving those who had advocated the preservation of Yugoslavia and those who had not. However, more often than not these respondents did not explicitly speak of themselves as being pro-Croatian, ie did not articulate unbridled enthusiasm regarding Croatia's independence from Yugoslavia. Instead, they expressed prosaically and more or less explicitly their acceptance of the new polity. This was also the case with the respondent who had been imprisoned in the 1970s because of her involvement in the Croatian Spring. So, on the one hand, the majority of the so-called nationalist respondents delegitimised the other cluster in the same manner as they had done in the 1990s, when that form of defaming the critics of Tudman's regime had been widespread in Croatia. On the other hand, though, they were wary of presenting themselves as supporters of the Croatian state. Presumably they wanted to avoid being associated with the designations 'nationalist' and 'patriotic' which they so strongly rejected and felt harmed by.

At times, this distancing from the other cluster was manifested by attending to the perceived differences in position (cultural, economic and social capital) between the feminists from the two clusters. The so-called nationalist respondents who brought up this issue spoke of the other cluster as being populated by feminists who had been privileged in the previous system by virtue of belonging to the 'red bourgeoisie'. In light of these benefits the latter were seen as being fonder of Yugoslavia and the communist system, and more committed towards securing their undisturbed

continuation. This conceptualisation of the dissimilarities between the two groupings was echoed in the already mentioned classification of feminists who did have the resources to contemplate, travel and write, and those who did not and were, moreover, overwhelmed by the intensity of their more down-to-earth and hands-on work.

The definition of (sexual) perpetrators and victims in the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia was another evoked dividing line. A majority of the so-called nationalist respondents depicted themselves as those who had not hesitated to state the enemy (the Yugoslav People's Army and/or the Serbs) and call the wars by their real name: aggression, ethnic cleansing or genocide against the Bosniaks and the Croats, ie Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. The feminists from the other cluster were referred to as being bothered by these clear-cut definitions. They had spoken of equal guilt of all involved parties, refused to single out any party in particular and described the (sexual) violence only in neutral and gender terms.

The majority of the so-called nationalist respondents considered their own positioning as simply describing the reality and therefore being completely detached from (Tuđman's) politics. Somewhat opposed was the elaboration of Zagreb1N, who indicated that their positioning had indeed corresponded to that of the Croatian government. She also addressed another related issue using the example of the meeting in Venice (which she had not attended, but was informed about by one of the Zagreb participants). Although the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists had only stated the facts and their personal experiences, they had been criticised by the Belgrade feminists for (being manipulated into) supporting Tuđman. Zagreb1N implied that she disapproved of this view, as well as of the insistence of some feminists – presumably also the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist ones – on avoiding the state's definition of the war only because of its origin and despite its reflection of the actual state of affairs:

That is a very sensitive situation because all interpretations are to a certain extent political. But not in the sense of official politics...I think that this is in a nutshell that conflict in which some collision would always occur regarding whether, if we interpret the war in Croatia as aggression, whereby it is exactly known who conducted it, whether that is then the official interpretation, which was so, or we have to have another interpretation which will circumvent the official one.

There were also so-called nationalist respondents who did not speak of perpetrators and victims. One of them was Zagreb15N, who denied the existence of a war-related fissure among the Zagreb feminists. Zagreb13N depoliticised the split by portraying it as being purely about money. She also explained the decision of the self-

declared antinationalist cluster to continue cooperating with the Belgrade feminists as being motivated by the foreign financial incentives. When I asked Zagreb13N how it was then possible that the scholarship usually treated nationalism as the cause of the division, she answered: ‘Who would admit it? Just as a battered woman says that she has fallen, the women who have made a career and a living out of that money – and still live from it – would not admit it’. Furthermore, she exempted the Zagreb feminists from much of the responsibility for the split. She accused several German feminists for pulling them apart due to their own (financial) interests.

The last of these respondents, Zagreb8NA, offered varied interpretations of the division. One of them was formulated in an extremely covert manner: ‘It was only later that the differentiation took place. They<sup>241</sup> defined themselves in one way, these<sup>242</sup> defined themselves differently. Those who defined themselves went to one side [sic] and those who remained, remained here’. Elsewhere in the interview Zagreb8NA indicated that these divisions might have had to do with one’s positioning towards the Serbs or the Bosniaks, but she depoliticised the split by portraying it as resulting from rebellion and vanity during personal conflicts: ‘If you think that, then I will not. I will really oppose it’. Her third and equally depoliticising explanation involved the foreign (funding) audiences. She explained that only those who would spit on Croatia and Tuđman at conferences abroad would prosper, and suggested that much of what the self-declared antinationalist feminists had done stemmed from their obligations towards their foreign funders. Unlike them, Zagreb8NA herself and the other members of her group had not depended on such (financial) benefits due to being employed elsewhere. It turned out, though, that a certain degree of anxiety had also played a role in this respondent’s absence of criticism of the state. She defended her attitude by underlining that after those conferences she would have to return to Croatia and continue living there.

Zagreb6N evoked one more divergence between the Zagreb clusters: the positioning on ethnic identification. She described the self-declared antinationalist feminists as being blinded by their ideology and consequently unable to see that the so-called nationalist feminists had not deliberately chosen their ethnic identification, but that this identification had been imposed upon them by the perpetrators. Thereby she created, in fact, a dichotomy between the feminists from the other cluster, who had

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241 The feminists who would establish the Autonomous Women’s House Zagreb (the shelter) as a separate group; the future self-declared antinationalist feminists.

242 The feminists who remained on the SOS hotline, ie in Women’s Help Now; the future so-called nationalist feminists.

cast off their ethnicity, and those from her cluster, who had not (albeit driven by an outside agent instead of an authentic personal motivation).

At a different moment in the interview Zagreb6N insinuated once more that the self-declared antinationalist feminists had rejected their ethnicity. By accusing them of demanding the same positioning from the refugee women they had provided assistance to, she suggested an additional and particularly ethically laden difference between the clusters – the treatment of this vulnerable category of people:

[W]e would occasionally get the information that the women who went to them to receive humanitarian help felt a bunch of times blackmailed by them into saying things...in order to receive [it].

Me: What kinds of things?

Those which they wanted: ‘Who has set us against each other, yo?’<sup>243</sup> and ‘They are all the same.’<sup>244</sup>...Out of gratitude they [the refugee women] showed submissiveness which in this case meant showing equal contempt towards all ethnic collectives and the ethnic identification as such. As if that was something which was forbidden, sick and politically incorrect (interview with Zagreb6N).

In order to understand the implications of this quotation, it is important to keep in mind that both utterances – ‘Who has set us against each other, yo?’ and ‘They are all the same’ – connote a positioning on the (post-)Yugoslav wars in which all warring sides are seen as equally guilty. It is particularly indicative that Zagreb6N used ‘Who has set us against each other, yo?’ to illustrate her argument. This formulation is often attributed to people from Serbia and is regarded as especially notorious because the expressed ignorance conveys a denial of Serbia’s responsibility for those wars.

So, when Zagreb6N rebuked the self-declared antinationalist feminists for renouncing their ethnic identification, it seems that she actually admonished their absence of ‘loyalty to the [attacked] homeland’ – a formulation which she used elsewhere in the interview to describe her own positioning. Even more serious was her accusation regarding the treatment of refugee women. She implied, actually, that the feminists from the other cluster had harmed the direct war victims. They had not allowed them to say by whom they had been victimised and had, thereby, partially denied and silenced their victimisation.

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243 ‘Ko nas, bre, zavadi?’ in the original.

244 ‘Svi su oni isti’ in the original.

My questions about the designations ‘nationalist’ and ‘patriotic’ led to a lot of commotion in the interviews with the Zagreb so-called nationalist respondents. Their typical first reaction was rejection. Not only did nobody speak about these terms as their self-designations in the 1990s, some feminists even firmly contradicted this suggestion and clearly narrated how upset and hurt these names had made them feel. A common way to explain why they had been named ‘nationalist’ or ‘patriotic’, as well as to reject these ascriptions as unsubstantiated, stupid or mean imputations, was the reiteration of the claim that they had done nothing but state explicitly the facts. They found it particularly problematic to be referred to as ‘Tuđman’s fans’ since none of them had been a member of his party or had applauded his politics. Zagreb4N additionally emphasised her opposition by recalling that she had pulled down his party’s electoral posters and cried when he had won the elections in 1990.

Another interesting example of one’s distancing from the term ‘nationalist’ was the way in which Zagreb1N explicated the existence of two approaches to war violence among the Zagreb feminists. She named the approach in which war was seen as violence against women in general ‘international’ or ‘supranational’, but did not use any designation for the other approach, which was the one she had felt closer to. Instead, she descriptively referred to it as ‘paying attention to the context’ – a covert way of saying that it distinguished ethnically-marked perpetrators and victims. Thus, in describing the first approach Zagreb1N avoided the terms ‘antinationalist’ and ‘non-nationalist’ which the other cluster commonly employed to designate its positioning. Moreover, she was careful not to use the designation ‘national’ for classifying the second approach although this antonym seemed appropriate. In my view, both her manoeuvres had to do with her intention not to be in any way associated with the name ‘nationalist’.

The initial rejection of the two designations notwithstanding, in the course of the interviews it turned out that some so-called nationalist respondents could reluctantly concede to at least one of these terms. Zagreb13N expressed this concession in a slightly confusing manner. She said to be offended by my research project since it suggested a link between her and nationalism, although she had not wished any harm to the Belgrade feminists or anybody else. Related to this, she expressed her hope that I would revise those concepts (thus, implicitly, clear her name). Nevertheless, her narrative also contained a more positive conceptualisation of nationalism. Zagreb13N first contrasted this conceptualisation with chauvinism – a term which no other respondent used – only to employ it later for describing patriotism:

I simply cannot be a nationalist. *I cannot*. A nationalist – yes, but not a chauvinist. These two terms usually get mixed up...The difference between nationalism and chauvinism is that a nationalist is a person who strives for the identity and the rights of their people, but not at the cost of others. Those are chauvinists...[They] extol their people or nation at the cost of others...and, of course, produce the sense of being threatened among their own people. And how will they solve their problem? By killing the others...That is the difference according to me. Thus, nationalism is for me, yes, ok...[Patriotism] is maybe very close to the concept of nationalism; fighting for some... For one's country. It might be, actually, very similar to nationalism because you do everything possible so that your nation obtains the status each nation deserves (emphasis in the original).

Zagreb4N repeatedly rebuked the received name 'Croat nationalist' and insisted that one should not neglect the existence of Yugoslav nationalism which was, in fact, Serb nationalism. However, she also evoked the, in her use interchangeable, concepts of 'defensive nationalism' and 'healthy patriotism' in relation to the beginning of the war in Croatia. She affirmatively described these ideologies as benign, justified and necessary for mobilising people (including Croatian Serbs) into defending the attacked country. Still, even then Zagreb4N did not explicitly describe herself as this kind of nationalist or patriot. At the same time, she severely criticised the 'Croat aggressive nationalism'. In her words, this nationalism was manifested by Croatia's participation in the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the genocide against the Bosniaks and, later, Croatian Serbs.

Quite similarly to Zagreb11AN from the other Zagreb cluster, Zagreb16N rejected the designation 'patriotism' because of its relation to patriarchy and *pater familias*. Furthermore, she lashed out at some Croatian male academics for making a dichotomy between nationalism (negative) and patriotism (positive) since patriotism could never, in her view, be positive. The only way she could resign to being brought in connection to patriotism was if this term were to refer to the feeling of responsibility for the attacked territory. Zagreb16N seemingly understood this responsibility as an acknowledgement of the facts regarding the war: 'I really think that our houses were destroyed in Croatia, that those [presumably, the Yugoslav People's Army] came and that there *was* violence' (emphasis in the original). Along those lines was also the justification which Zagreb6N gave for her singular acceptance of 'patriotic':

I think that my motives were patriotic in the sense that it could really happen that I would be there [in the war zones] or my parents and that they would get hurt. And that it concerned my country.

And that somebody did not allow me to state whether I would like to remain married or not.<sup>245</sup> For me that was at that moment patriot[ic]... a question of loyalty to my homeland.

Zagreb1N, the last of the so-called nationalist respondents who addressed those terms, stated her two different conceptualisations of ‘patriotism’, each from a different time period. The earlier one, which she had created at the beginning of the war in Croatia, entailed the right to feel Croat and express that feeling without being derogatorily perceived as an Ustasha. It was this right to express one’s ethnic identification without facing any negative consequences which Zagreb6N – as I pointed out earlier – said the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists had infringed upon repeatedly. Zagreb1N’s later conceptualisation of patriotism was inspired by the essay of the Croatian philosopher Igor Primorac read at a conference in 2003.<sup>246</sup> In this understanding of patriotism, unique among all my respondents, the affective closeness to one’s country was intertwined with a critical distance from it. In her words, it allowed one ‘to be patriotic by expressing shame because of the dark sides of one’s own country’, ie ‘be patriotic, not nationalist, and criticise one’s own country at the same time’. The ‘dark sides’ were the war crimes of the Croat forces. Hereby she also alluded to the change of her previous positioning on this issue. Although still indirectly, Zagreb1N underlined this change by communicating her disapproval of another so-called nationalist feminist who had kept rejecting the possibility that defence forces (read: Croat soldiers) could commit such atrocities.

Concerning the depictions of concrete self-declared antinationalist feminists, the so-called nationalist ones took a more homogenising approach than the former, meaning that they mainly did not speak of individual feminists. To the limited extent that some of them did, it was usually to emphasise their reproof. One exception was the praise which Zagreb8NA and Zagreb13N addressed at one self-declared antinationalist feminist for her non-war-related work against men’s violence against women. Zagreb8NA also commended two more feminists from the other cluster, but this laudation referred to the late 1980s when they had worked together. Lastly, no so-called nationalist respondent questioned her (negative) perception of the self-declared antinationalist feminists or attended to the possible ‘mitigating circumstances’ behind one’s positioning, as some of the self-declared antinationalist feminists did.

The so-called nationalist respondents who addressed the process of naming did so by portraying themselves as wronged, marginalised and powerless activists

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245 This metaphor refers to Croatia’s unilateral secession from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It was also used in Kodrnja (2008 [1991]).

246 See footnote 60.

whose factual positionings had not been taken into account. Zagreb13N blamed the self-declared antinationalist feminists for having destroyed her and her colleagues and impeded their potential to achieve anything. A very similar accusation of silencing the dissenting voices through naming and a subsequent exclusion from the dialogue was articulated by Zagreb14N and Zagreb6N. In addition to this, Zagreb6N accentuated how this recurring practice had forced them to always first exonerate themselves before saying anything else. Zagreb14N spoke about it as a smear campaign which had been so psychologically aggressive that she had felt as if she had been raped by the other cluster. She regarded the ascription of names to the so-called nationalist feminists as benefiting the war goals of Milošević and Karadžić, and considered the self-declared antinationalist feminists as being manipulated into promoting these politicians' agenda.

Completely different was the explanation which Zagreb4N offered for the process of naming. She saw it as resulting from the inability to conceive of the aggregated category 'women' (or 'feminists') as consisting of individuals who shared the same gender, but had divergent biographies and, consequently, experiences and positionings. In her view, it was exactly this incapacity to conceptualise such a broader category which had led to the exclusion through naming of those who had been perceived as too dissimilar. Zagreb4N was, however, hesitant to unambiguously indicate who was excluding whom. Although she foremostly singled out the self-declared antinationalist feminists and their naming of the so-called nationalist ones, sometimes she spoke of the two clusters as equally doing this to one another. Nonetheless, only when she evoked the naming by the self-declared antinationalist feminists she referred to it as erroneous, *mala fide* and unfair. Moreover, she never explicitly portrayed the so-called nationalist feminists as unable to work with a broader conceptualisation of women (and feminists) and, therefore, compelled to exclude the other cluster.

Zagreb6N adopted the self-representation of a victimised agent even when she referred, as the only one of these respondents, to the ascription of names to the self-declared antinationalist feminists. She admitted to have been among those who had internally referred to the other feminists as 'Yugoslav women'<sup>247</sup> (read: pro-Yugoslav) for the purpose of delegitimising them as equal collocutors, but justified this designation as being born out of despair and helplessness. The so-called nationalist feminists had resorted to naming in reaction to the 'lies, falsifications and malice' of the feminists from the other cluster, and because of being unable to otherwise compete with their money streams and international media influence. Zagreb6N did not think,

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247 'Jugoslovenke' in the original.

though, that the terms 'pro-Yugoslav' and 'nationalist' were equally laden. Unlike the latter which – just like the designations 'right-wing' and 'fascist' – had denied access to 'some respectable circles', as she put it, 'pro-Yugoslav' had not had the power to disqualify somebody that much, especially not abroad. Omitting this term's deeply negative connotation in Croatia in the 1990s, she remarked that the current widespread Yugonostalgia aptly illustrated its benignity.

### **Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists**

The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist respondents were not unanimous about the intensity of the intra-feminist war-related divisions in Belgrade in the 1990s. Belgrade3AN and Belgrade14AN (the latter in an informal conversation during the fieldwork) decidedly warned against inferring that a split had occurred in Belgrade only because it had in Zagreb. In addition to this, Belgrade3AN denied that there had been a single Belgrade feminist who had become a nationalist and criticised the incorrect portrayals of private and leadership conflicts as being caused by nationalism.

Although the other self-declared antinationalist respondents depicted one or more feminists as so-called nationalist, the fact that some of them singled out only one such feminist indicates both the smaller extent and the more covert character of the divide in Belgrade when compared with Zagreb.<sup>248</sup> That is why no Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist uttered a sentence on Zagreb which would even remotely resemble that of Belgrade1ANA on Belgrade: '[I]f there are nationalists, then she would be one for sure'. The covert character of the Belgrade divisions was also visible in the (sometimes very explicitly communicated) preference of the majority of the self-declared antinationalist respondents for avoiding the personal names of the feminists with opposing war-related positionings. They spoke instead of eg 'some feminists' or 'certain women'.

It is further significant that with regard to the tensions among the Belgrade feminists, many self-declared antinationalist respondents (and several Sarajevo and Zagreb ones) spoke of two separate moments in time. They distinguished the divisions in Belgrade during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina from those at the time of the war in Serbia (ie the ground war in Kosovo and the NATO bombing). Therefore, in the following section I will address the two dynamics separately.

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248 Due to this, as well as the fact that the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists have never organised jointly, my treatment of them as a cluster should be seen as a semi-artificial aggregation which was needed for the analysis. See Chapter 1.

Although Belgrade5AN initially stated not to be familiar with any large split between the Belgrade feminists during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, later in the interview she implicitly suggested the existence of a distinctive differentiation. She recounted to have worked only with feminists with a 'totally clear' positioning (read: who accentuated the Serb responsibility):

Concerning the war in Croatia, it was clear that Serbia was the aggressor. There has been maybe some clash and split on that issue... Some sort of schism must have taken place regarding the war in Croatia, but I do not know. The war in Bosnia was clear as well: faced with Sarajevo, you were unable to really dispute. Little could you deviate [from the positioning that Serbia was the aggressor] before becoming a complete nationalist. There was not much space for debating...I do not remember, thus, conflicts regarding the war in Bosnia...I have not seen big incidents nor witnessed debates because I was, on the one hand, working with [name withheld] and, on the other, with Women in Black – I was focused on places which were totally clear (interview with Belgrade5AN).

Both Belgrade5AN and Belgrade14AN singled out the SOS Hotline as a Belgrade group which had at least some members who had not shared their positioning on Serb nationalism and responsibility. Belgrade14AN remarked further that due to this variety of positionings within the SOS Hotline, even the internal articulation of an overt criticism of Serb nationalism had been hampered. This had eventually led to her departure from the group: '[A]t one point I decided to go only to places where I could explicitly talk against war, nationalism and militarism, and where I could not talk against them very explicitly I did not want to go at all'. She gave one more indication of the different positionings among the Belgrade feminists by recalling that some activists had not participated in the vigils of Women in Black, but abstained from disclosing any names or other details.

One feminist spoke clearly and decidedly of the existence of two distinctive groupings of Belgrade feminists – both of which had been equally rigid regarding the righteousness of their positioning. The feminists whom Belgrade13AN named '(pro-) patriots' had prioritised the loyalty to one's ethnic group, whereas the cluster she belonged to had radically renounced this loyalty as murderous:

We, who were radically against nationalism, were of the opinion that it contributed to death, whereas the pro-patriots considered us traitors...Each of us thought that she was right and that it [her positioning] was the most important and best option, whereas the others were on the wrong track. We held that the patriots supported

nationalism, murders and wars, while they held that we had betrayed our ethnic group.

More commonly, though, the self-declared antinationalist respondents distinguished between themselves, who primarily addressed the Serb responsibility and the non-Serb victims of the Serb forces, and those who spoke of equal victimhood and responsibility of all ethnic groups, but accentuated the Serb victims of the military formations of other ethnic groups. However, some of them pointed to the importance of acknowledging the Serb victims as well. The cautious – and sometimes contradictory – way in which this positioning was articulated indicates the additional load of the issue of Serb victimhood among the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. They struggled to formulate their positioning while being aware of both Serbia's prime responsibility for the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, and the risk of losing legitimacy due to being seen as Serb (feminist) nationalists. For example,

There were very dear and close activists who went in the direction of Serb nationalism: that the Serbs must defend themselves, that they are in fact endangered... Unfortunately, that was also true, so when they would use those arguments, you were unable to say: 'No, there were no killed soldiers of YPA [Yugoslav People's Army]'. *When there were* (interview with Belgrade11AN, emphasis in the original), and

I think that there was not any difference among us; that we supported one another and encouraged each other's rage [regarding Serbia's politics]. I suppose, though, that some would not defend the Serbs even when they would be generally accused: 'They are guilty, full stop'. I would not [not defend them]...That [the statement that all Serbs are guilty] is simply not true (interview with Belgrade10AN).

The difficulty which the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists experienced when faced with the Serb victims was also noticeable in the narrative of Belgrade5AN. Even though she maintained the primacy of the Serb responsibility, she also mentioned her feeling of guilt vis-à-vis some family friends who had been, as Croatian Serbs, affected by the war in Croatia. Being focused on accentuating the Serb responsibility, she said not to have had the capacity to acknowledge and deal with their fears – some of which had stemmed from their experiences in World War II. Another respondent, whom I will anonymise here, told me in the interview that some feminists from this cluster could accuse her of Serb nationalism only because of mentioning the Serb victims. Upon sending me her authorised transcript, and even though I had already communicated that I would not quote anybody by her real name, she wrote:

One part of the interview is very sensitive, [that] where I speak of the Serb side. If you use [it], please send me the quotation you would place. If it is quoted in an unbalanced manner [read: only the elaboration of the Serb victimhood and not that of the Serb responsibility], I might look like a nationalist! (anonymised).

It seems, thus, that some self-declared antinationalist feminists had begun to gradually abandon their full support of the orthodox Belgrade feminist positioning on perpetrators and victims, but refrained from saying so publicly. Belgrade7ANA described this silent change and her reasons for it as follows:

[T]here were also many women both then and now who took a Serb side and wanted to say that there was also a Serb truth. A bit later I started as well. Not immediately at the beginning, I did not have such a Serb identity, but later it occurred to me that we were maybe putting too much burden on ourselves, that it was not exactly so that we were the only ones who had incited the war... The Serbs are not the only culpable ones for everything which has happened in Yugoslavia. One hard core of feminists persists that that [positioning] is not done: that we are guilty of everything, that there are no Serb victims and that that is only exaggeration by the press. But that is not so. We all know that there are Serb victims...I did not want to be like a mindless fool who did not want to see the facts...As time passed by, I approached more and more that Serb side, but not in the sense that I would enter into conflicts because of that.

However, despite this clear elaboration of the existence of two positionings on the Serb victims and non-Serb perpetrators, Belgrade7ANA portrayed this difference only as the secondary and much less significant reason for the conflicts between the feminists. Similarly to the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist Zagreb13N, Belgrade7ANA depoliticised these divisions by saying that the ideology had been subordinated to the struggle for power, funds and travels abroad. These benefits had been particularly lucrative given that Serbia had been under sanctions, but since it was socially undesirable among the feminists to admit this pursuit, the conflicts had been presented as having to do with eg the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina or the type of support to the women victims of violence. Still, unlike Zagreb13N who accused only the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists of such a camouflage, Belgrade7ANA spoke about it as a general practice among the Belgrade feminists.

The existence of personality, leadership and policy conflicts, as well as competition for foreign funds, was also addressed by Belgrade6AN. She evoked these conflicts as existing in addition to the political (read: war-related) disagreements and

not as being at their roots. Comparably to Belgrade7ANA, though, Belgrade6AN perceived the political divisions – and, consequently, some feminists' departure from the groups they were active in – as caused by the divergent positionings on the Serb victimhood and responsibility. The radical conceptualisation of Serbia and the Serb militaries purely as the aggressor had clashed with the positioning which inclined towards relativisation, ie equalisation of the responsibility and victimhood of all warring parties.

Some self-declared antinationalist respondents illuminated the two fragmentations which occurred among the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists during the war in Kosovo and the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The first fragmentation concerned the positioning on perpetrators and victims. These respondents recalled that there were self-declared antinationalist feminists who had started to predominantly address the Serb victimhood which had been generated by the Kosovar Albanians and, later, NATO. In other words, the positioning of those heretical self-declared antinationalist feminists approached that of the other Belgrade cluster:

[The positioning] was most shaky regarding Kosovo, especially when the bombing started. It [the bombing] incited existential fear and different reactions, so I think that on this issue there were women who would foolishly hit back because of it.

Me: Hit back?

They had some reflex not to understand that it was so horrible in Kosovo and that in Belgrade and Serbia it was incomparably easier. Some women whom I know, who had a totally clear antinationalist positioning regarding Croatia and Bosnia, got a bit lost regarding Kosovo because Kosovo and Serbia were during that process of attack like Siamese twins; you hit the one who is besides you...[T]here are big ethnic distances regarding the Albanians and regarding the Roma. That ethnic distance is based on racism. A total degradation of the other. That had not been so much [the case] regarding Bosnia and Croatia (interview with Belgrade5AN).

Actually, even before the bombing would start, as the situation in Kosovo worsened, there were not that many self-declared antinationalist feminists who were willing to declare their support to the Kosovar Albanians or at least to the Kosovar Albanian women. Belgrade7ANA explained this development as follows:

I think that in this people there is still a lot of love towards the Croats and the Bosnians [read: Bosniaks]. Many feminists have been led by it during those wars in the sense that there was never a great animosity. Towards Kosovo and the Albanians there has always been [a great animosity]. They have always been Šiptari,<sup>249</sup> an evil and misfortune...Only a narrow core [of feminists] [names withheld] thought that they [the Kosovar Albanians] were right, whereas the women here openly remonstrated and said: 'Šiptari? Forget it! They grab our land, dishonour us in the whole world!'

An external Sarajevo respondent who had worked around that time in Women in Black clearly recalled the dropping out from the group's weekly vigils:

When the Kosovo crisis set off, some women started to boycott the vigils...[There were] people who did not support us anymore then because their ethnic identification regarding Kosovo was strengthened and they did not want to... Even less so to come to the vigils [which declared that] 'Albanian women are our sisters'...[A] visible disagreement between us took place then.

Me: Do you remember their arguments?

No matter what, Kosovo is in some way Serbia (interview with Sarajevo1EXT).

The second fragmentation took place among the self-declared antinationalist feminists who continued stressing the Serb responsibility for the Kosovar Albanian victimhood. The feminists who had supported the bombing for the purpose of bringing an end to the Serb ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians and Milošević's politics had clashed more or less openly with those who had advocated the same outcome, but disapproved of the bombing as the method of achieving it. Belgrade1ANA was one of those who were for the bombing due to their saturation with anger and despair from witnessing year after year how Milošević started yet another war or ethnic cleansing, and managed to remain in power while bringing the country to the verge of economic collapse. She explained her positioning – due to which she had left her group – as follows:

I argued that it [the bombing] should have happened even earlier; that it was a shame that they had not bombed Serbia earlier because of Sarajevo. Excuse me, you have allowed them to strangle the besieged Sarajevo for more than three years...What now? Should

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249 See footnote 221.

have we waited till there was not a single Albanian left? It was obvious that Milošević needed it [the bombing]...They told him: 'If you do that, we will bomb'. And he does that and even adds a bit more, makes it more severe. And they say: 'If you continue to do this, we will bomb'. And he does exactly that and even worse...We were bankrupt, there was no petrol, everything was falling apart. He found his scapegoat in this way...Everybody looks at whom Milošević points at to blame, but nobody sees what he [Milošević] does...The methods of...Milošević's regime were totally the same from the start: from Croatia, through Bosnia, to Kosovo (interview with Belgrade1ANA).

Regardless of the shared resistance to Milošević, one Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist took issue with those who supported the bombing. Nevertheless, she was unable to disapprove of the bombing and the suffering of the people in Serbia without simultaneously expressing her awareness of the responsibility of the Serbian politics:

Look, that bombing was disgusting and only a fool can say: 'Great that they have bombed us because we had deserved it'. Although, of course, that was crossing my mind as well and it was then in particular that I understood Sarajevo. At the same time, Kosovo's horror was present in me, but the one did not block the other. Both were present (interview, name withheld).

An even stronger struggle between the acknowledgement of Serbia's responsibility and the acknowledgement of Serbia's victimisation by the bombing was present in the narrative of Belgrade6AN. She initially contrasted the positioning of those Belgrade feminists (she mentioned both so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist ones) who had considered the bombing the greatest crime against humanity and the Serb people with the positioning of the feminists like her who had supported the bombing because it had been deserved. However, later in the interview, when she did not compare her own positioning to that of the so-called nationalist feminists, she professed not to have actually approved of the bombing:

I personally thought that it [the bombing] served us right. Why haven't they bombed us earlier so that we could chase away the maniac? I did not really feel particularly endangered by the bombing of Belgrade because they were bombing everywhere...I cannot say that I was *really* for the bombing; I lived in the centre of Belgrade and each day I feared for my life and that of my family like crazy. It would be nonsense to say that I was for the bombing.

I am not for the bombing of anybody ever, but I cannot say that I was surprised. I knew what was happening on Kosovo; that they are displacing and ethnically cleansing the people there. Just as I knew about Srebrenica. Our government is not all that poor and innocent and [it was not] that somebody out of the blue bombed...[But] I am not a masochist to say: 'Kill me because somebody was killing in my name there'. It was not me [who was killing], after all (interview with Belgrade6AN, emphasis in the original).

This interview fragment shows the slippery ground on which the self-declared antinationalist feminists who criticised the bombing and felt victimised by it moved. Since the articulation of the Serb victimisation was also the positioning of the Serbian authorities and the so-called nationalist feminists, these self-declared antinationalist feminists went to great lengths to express this victimisation without endangering their own legitimacy as antinationalist opponents of Milošević. As I proposed in Chapter 4, this is the key for reading the annoyed reactions to the suggestion about the resemblance of the antinationalist vs nationalist split in Zagreb (1991–1995) to the divisions among the Belgrade feminists (1998–1999).

At the same time, as the following comment by an external Sarajevo respondent shows, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists who had endorsed the bombing had been in a difficult situation as well. She hinted that they had lost one part of their legitimacy:

[W]hen you live in a city which is bombed,...the situation of those who approve of it and do not raise their voices against the bombs and the bombing, while declaring themselves as antiwar and peace [oriented], is very, very sensitive...I know that Women in Black told me that they had reacted and been against the bombing, and they are paradigmatic of a peace, antinationalist, secular and left-wing movement (interview with Sarajevo3EXT).

None of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists addressed the process of naming, and the terms 'nationalist' and 'patriotic' were not often used for referring to other Belgrade feminists. The designation 'patriotic' was employed even less frequently than 'nationalist' and only as its synonym. Some respondents used 'nationalist' only to say that certain feminists were not nationalists. The use of descriptive, at times euphemistic, designations was often practiced. For example, some feminists were described as 'coquetting with mainstream politics', 'going in the direction of nationalism', 'having a blind spot for nationalism', 'without a completely defined antinationalism', 'with a lack of political clarity and sharpness regarding the war' and 'getting lost'.

Finally, the so-called nationalist feminists were sometimes contrasted to those who were 'radical (antinationalists)' or had a 'radical (antinationalist)' positioning. Although never openly articulated, the possibility that the so-called nationalist feminists could be also depicted as 'moderate antinationalists' was hereby suggested. This designation of the so-called nationalist cluster, regardless of its implicitness, markedly points to the contextual differences between Belgrade and Zagreb, ie the variations between the positionings and the designations of the feminists from the two cities.

As I have already pointed out, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists were reluctant to specify who the feminists were whom they considered nationalists. Therefore, whenever possible I tried to disturb the silence and acquire some clarity. I stated straightforwardly the names of the feminists who had been mentioned to me as nationalists in the preceding interviews or informal conversations and asked my respondents for their opinion. They answered similarly to their Zagreb counterparts. No consensus existed about who was a nationalist and some respondents refrained from making any statements on a particular feminist because of not knowing her at all or well enough. The name of one feminist emerged most often, but even regarding her there was no unanimity on whether she was a nationalist. Belgrade3AN, for example, negated this understanding and said that this feminist's attention for the Serb victims had simply stemmed from her extensive assistance to the Croatian Serb refugees which had escaped to Serbia.

Sometimes, after a concrete feminist had been named nationalist, this statement was softened by evoking her character traits to rationalise her positioning or she was praised for some segments of her work. Quite unlike in Zagreb, there were also situations in which the respondents were puzzled to hear that somebody was perceived as a nationalist. One surprised reaction was especially striking in light of this feminist's fervent articulation of the responsibility of Belgrade and Serbia's citizens for the (post-)Yugoslav wars. Not only did Belgrade1ANA say not to have noticed nationalist positionings coming from the so-called nationalist feminist in question, but she also highly commended the group which was led by this feminist and recalled to have even wanted to work in it, but was unable to because of not having the right qualifications.

Another significant moment illustrated the perseverance of the designations even after the reasons for them had been long forgotten. Belgrade4AN recollected that a particular feminist was considered a nationalist, but could not remember exactly why. When we got together for the second part of the interview, Belgrade4AN said: 'I was just talking to [name withheld] and I asked her why [name withheld] was marked

[as a nationalist]. She mentioned that there had been some meeting somewhere, she could not tell me precisely, but it was something concrete.’

### **Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists**

Unlike the respondents from the other clusters, none of the four Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists referred to herself in connection to the three other respondents from this cluster. The ‘we’ form was neither used to express a common positioning nor to distance an entity to which the speaker professed to have belonged from the self-declared antinationalist feminists and/or other peace activists. It is due to this that I will present their accounts here separately.

According to Belgrade2N, no nationalism-related conflicts had taken place in any Belgrade group in the early 1990s. Neither had the personal conflicts between individual women been caused by fundamental disagreements. Whereas she did not know of any Serb nationalist among the Belgrade feminists, Belgrade2N recalled that some women had indeed later dropped out, ‘maybe because of the ethnic, ethnonational... I do not know’. Different from this implicit suggestion of the possible war-related disagreements, when she commented upon another issue earlier in the interview, she clearly criticised some feminists for their antinationalist orientation. She considered their struggle against Serb nationalism pointless, societally irrelevant and particularly problematic because it took place in lieu of the really urgent improvement of the economic status of women:

[W]hen they need to lead the protests against Serb nationalism, they immediately show up at the Republic Square. I am really not a nationalist, but that does not have any point at all in a political sense. They simply work for their personal gain and are paid by those who pay them [sic]...I think that the women’s movement, which had performed very well in the beginning, very quickly acquired a certain antinationalist tone which even made sense during the war, but *after* the war? It is ridiculous to build the image of feminism on that issue in a totally impoverished country where people starve (interview with Belgrade2N, emphasis in the original).

The reference to the showing up at the Republic Square to protest against Serb nationalism was an allusion to the activists and supporters of Women in Black and their silent vigils in the centre of Belgrade. Belgrade2N covertly disapproved of this group’s lack of opposition to the nationalism of the other ethnic groups and its single focus on the Serbs, even though she acknowledged the partial Serb responsibility for the war

violence. At the same time, she did not see the need for accentuating this responsibility once the peace accords had been signed and considered the continuation of that positioning a *mala fide* endeavour funded from suspect sources. When I asked for more details, she professed not to want to say anything more because of not wanting to take the risk of being the whistleblower.

This respondent's wish to clearly distance herself from the self-declared antinationalist feminists could be further read from her depiction of the Belgrade feminist movement as unanimously neglecting economic issues. Belgrade2N did not mention the so-called nationalist feminist – with whom she had worked in at least one group – who was very engaged on the grassroots level with improving the economic situation of women. Her silence regarding this activist and her homogenisation of the rest of the feminist groups in Belgrade (which by no means gathered only self-declared antinationalist feminists or activists of Women in Black) are quite telling. They indicate the more profound split Belgrade2N wanted to communicate, albeit not all that explicitly: the one based on the positionings regarding the responsibility for and the victimisation in the (post-)Yugoslav wars.

When I asked Belgrade2N about the contingent divisions during the war in Kosovo and the NATO bombing, she spoke of two clearly defined blocks. The first one had consisted of activists, such as those around Women in Black, who had widely supported the Kosovar Albanians and absolutely approved of the bombing because of wanting to bring Milošević down. In the other block – with which Belgrade2N implied personal affiliation – there had been activists who had disliked that kind of support to the Kosovar Albanians and considered the idea of defeating Milošević by bombing crackbrained. They had neither wanted to assent to Milošević nor to the bombing, but no fertile soil had existed for such a middle path positioning in Serbia.

Belgrade15N did not disclose much on the divisions among the Belgrade feminists during the NATO bombing. She explained that she was unfamiliar with the situation because when the bombing had started, she had temporarily moved to another town in Serbia which she considered a safer location than Belgrade. While explicitly communicating her disapproval of the bombing, she only said that one particular human rights activist and 'some other [women]' had considered it a great thing. In fact, throughout the whole interview Belgrade15N gave such hints regarding the existence of war-related divisions among the Belgrade feminists, but never addressed them overtly.

At one moment, she implicitly pointed to the difference between her and the self-declared antinationalist feminists in emphasising Serb perpetrators and non-Serb victims. Belgrade15N objected to these feminists' selective criticism of nationalism.

They imposed guilt upon the inhabitants of Belgrade, ie accentuated Serb nationalism and responsibility, but simultaneously turned a blind eye to the nationalist positionings of the Kosovar Albanian feminists and those of other ethnic origin. She illustrated this selective criticism with the appearance of a self-declared antinationalist feminist in a television programme together with Alija Izetbegović – the then president of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Belgrade15N perceived that act as taking sides (read: the side of the Bosniaks) and giving consent to the warmongering politics of a war criminal. This was, in her view, totally inconsistent with the other feminist's declaration of pacifism.

Another way in which Belgrade15N dissociated herself from the other feminists was by distancing herself from the Western audiences and funders the self-declared antinationalist feminists interacted with. This positioning was intertwined with her firm belief in the Yugoslav project due to its interethnic and socialist fundament, and her criticism of (the support to) its dismembering. This was visible from her answer to my question what she thought of the fact that some feminists had not considered her to be antinationalist – the only respondent from this cluster whom I managed to ask this. She said to regard this classification as signalling the generation gap between her and the other Belgrade feminists. Different from them and due to her age (Belgrade15N depicted herself as anachronistic, like a dinosaur), she had been from early on strongly influenced by Marxism. This had enabled her to see the big picture of the political developments, while making her positioning quite a lonely one. In her view, the Western (American, in particular) support to the disintegration of Yugoslavia and to some positionings – including those of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists – was just a cover-up for the military expansion and the capitalist pursuit of new resources and markets.

To illustrate this, Belgrade15N evoked her choice to cease her participation in the Srebrenica vigils of Women in Black – the only vigils she had joined after her decision not to be involved with this group anymore. This earlier decision had been motivated by her disagreement with the group's absence of criticism of the military forces of the other ethnic groups and its treatment of the Yugoslav People's Army – read: the Serbs – as the sole responsible party for the (post-)Yugoslav wars. Nonetheless, she had endorsed the purpose of the Srebrenica vigils which was drawing attention in Serbia to the Bosniak victims of the (Bosnian) Serb forces:

I found it quite telling that the American Congress adopted a resolution on Srebrenica [in 2005]. In the American Congress there might be two or three people, probably originating from the Balkans, who would know where the Balkans and Bosnia and Herzegovina are, and no person would probably know where Srebrenica is.

When I read that about the American Congress, it was clear to me that that was not a humanitarian and a pacifist issue anymore, but a manipulative political one. From then on, I do not participate anywhere regarding that issue [Srebrenica]...That I no longer want to take part in the Srebrenica vigils is because I consider it a political manipulation with all those who stand, although it is possible that they do it honestly and fervently. That [positioning] is legitimate, but why would I participate in it when I see it differently? Just as I do not want to participate in [saying] that the Serbs are pitiful, endangered... I would not dream of it. That is not my story at all and that is also one form of manipulation. I cannot say: 'That is a manipulation, that is disgusting and I do not want that' and [accept] some other manipulations because some voice of political correctness has said that that was good (interview with Belgrade15N).

Belgrade15N's additional rejection of the perception of herself as a nationalist was implicitly articulated by her insistence on her continuous affiliation with Yugoslavia, socialism and the concept of brotherhood and unity, as in the following statement: "That is what I have learned in the League of Communists: that nationalism is a phenomenon which must not exist in our communist, socialist education and engagement". Towards the end of the interview, she denied the designation 'nationalist' more overtly. She also criticised thereby the process of naming for not corresponding to the factual positionings, but being a result of the rigidity of the self-declared antinationalist feminists. In a manner similar to the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist Zagreb4N, Belgrade15N saw the ascription of the name 'nationalist' as indicating these feminists' incapacity to broadly conceptualise the categories 'women' and 'feminists' so that they also include – instead of exclude – those with different positionings:

[T]hose stories about nationalism should not be taken seriously at all; they only mean that those women perceive themselves terribly seriously in their antinationalism. *We are so antinationalist that all who are unlike us are nationalists.* I love humanity so much, but [I want it] to consist of small versions of me (emphasis in the original).

Similarly to Belgrade15N, Belgrade16N said not to be acquainted with the debates among the Belgrade feminists on the NATO bombing. She explained her unfamiliarity by her residence abroad, even though she also professed to have spent six hours per day exchanging emails in her 'internet war against the bombardment' in that period. While it is possible that the Belgrade feminists did not discuss this issue per email at the time, in light of the several Belgrade publications which have appeared

since and give insight in the various positionings,<sup>250</sup> it is quite telling that she refrained from addressing this issue.

With regard to the wars in the first half of the 1990s, speaking interchangeably about the Belgrade feminist and peace movements, Belgrade16N criticised those who had not shown understanding for some people's vital affiliation with the Serb ethnic group. The statement also conveyed her implicit criticism of those activists' accent on the importance of distancing oneself from this ethnic collective. She rebuked further their repetitive emphasis on the greater Serb responsibility, which left no space for the expression and recognition of the fears and the suffering experienced by Serbs already in World War II as a result of interethnic atrocities. Hereby Belgrade16N precisely spotted the painful place which some self-declared antinationalist feminists have revealed themselves:

[War] is a very delicate period for any collective and [it] supposes that people gather out of fear and that even those who used to have a comparatively low level of ethnic identification, all of a sudden accept it because that is among other things a survival strategy. You cannot survive outside the ethnic group. At that moment we have groups which insist upon the culpability of the Serbs and thereby do not see that the Serbs are victims, too. That 'more' or 'less' [victims] is particularly delicate...I have written [once] that even one victim is too much. In general, to count the victims is problematic, but this might sound as if I take the Serb side. I consider the strategy which did not understand and recognise that there were victims, suffering and pain on all sides problematic on principle...Although I admire some people who had the courage, which I do not deny at all, it is simply absurd not to see that the trauma which the Serbs had after World War II was visible and palpable. The peace scene [read: activists] underestimated the impact of the Serb trauma and thereby additionally traumatised the Serbs. You cannot deny fear. Those are people who had their family members killed; one cannot deny that, it is not a fictional fear.

Although attractive to the Western audiences and funders, Belgrade16N considered this positioning of denial of the Serb victimisation – including that in Kosovo – just as extreme, exclusionary and conflictual as the one of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (which solely attended to and accentuated the Serb victimisation). She portrayed herself as being between a rock and a hard place and, thus, criticised and hushed up by the both sides. In this way, she not only implicitly

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250 See the last analysis in Chapter 4.

dissociated herself from the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists but also from the Serb nationalists.

Belgrade16N's repeated distancing from Serb nationalism should be also seen in light of the designation 'nationalist'. In referring to the process of naming – as the only other respondent from this cluster besides Belgrade15N who did so – she hinted that she had received this name from the 'allegedly non-nationalist' Belgrade feminists. Their aim was to disqualify her and hamper her access to Western (financial) rewards. However, although she presented those designations as not having to do with (anti) nationalism, but with the self-declared antinationalist feminists' pursuit of benefits, on several occasions she found it necessary to reject her supposed nationalism. To begin with, she partially removed nationalism from the equation of the (post-)Yugoslav wars by giving primacy to international power relations and economic causes (the economic crisis in Yugoslavia and the local and international war economy). Also similar to Belgrade15N's analysis was Belgrade16N's portrayal of the feminist peace movement as naive for not understanding the importance of the above factors. Unlike Belgrade15N, though, Belgrade16N spoke of herself as sharing that naïveté at first, ie as initially accepting the mainstream matrix of looking at these wars.

Another way in which she dissociated herself from nationalism was by criticising those with secessionist positionings during Yugoslavia and by commending that state for its protection of the rights of minority ethnic groups. She also expressed her horror of the Serbisation of Belgrade, which had made it quite unlike the 'Yugoslav and cosmopolitan' city she had grown up in and felt attached to. Finally, Belgrade16N spoke of her efforts to limit as much as possible her daughter's exposure to Serb nationalism:

[I]n order to protect my child from, among other things, Serb nationalism, from the limited view of one exclusionary and primitive version of patriotism, I made a strategy to spend more time abroad than inside [Serbia]. I was horrified by the idea that she might become 'a little Serb' – a person who would completely wrongly believe that the Serbs are superior or victims or extraterrestrials... When I was raising my child, that mental pollution was my greatest fear, actually. My child can think critically and that is what matters the most.

This quotation is also significant for the respondent's use of the term 'patriotism' – unlike any other feminist from this cluster – and her elaboration of it. Belgrade16N implied that there were at least two different types of patriotism. Besides the exclusive, narrow-minded and primitive version, which was synonymous with

Serb nationalism, there was a modern version. This version, whose conceptualisation and personal adherence to she only hinted at, encouraged critical thinking and was modern and inclusive (presumably vis-à-vis the other ethnic groups). Consistent with her avoidance throughout the interview of explicitly speaking of the Serbs (also as perpetrators, Belgrade16N did not say anything either on how the second form of patriotism related to the Serb war crimes. Still, considering her earlier quoted statement on the existence of ‘victims, suffering and pain on all sides’, it is plausible to assume that Belgrade16N’s patriotism – similarly to the overtly articulated one of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist Zagreb1N – entailed a critical distance from the perpetrating deeds of the members of her ethnic group.

Belgrade12N, the last respondent from this cluster, only addressed the (dis) similarities between the Belgrade feminists regarding their war-related positionings and did not attend to the process of naming or the different designations. In her view, the Belgrade feminists in the early 1990s had the opposition to Milošević and the war violence as their common denominator, but differed among each other in the extent of this criticism and its public articulation. Belgrade12N depicted herself as one of those who had not publicly expressed an outspoken criticism of Milošević:

[W]hen I entered that story [activism], the women’s movement was practically a movement of those who were against the war and Milošević’s politics. There might have been here and there some who were in some way... It was, in fact, more a question of the level of criticism than whether somebody was for or against. I cannot remember anybody from the women’s movement who was for Milošević. There were at that moment only few who had declared themselves publicly for one politics or another. We had [our] choices and were active in our spheres. I remember I had [in 1996] the chance to write quite critically on different issues in the domain of [area of expertise withheld] which did have political dimensions. My impression is that it [the difference between the feminists] was more a question of the awareness and the level of engagement in political debates...I did not...in the beginning of the 1990s participate in the political debates which took place in the women’s movement or in a broader setting. That was due to my personal circumstances.

This portrayal of the Belgrade feminists as being almost united in their criticism of Milošević overlapped somewhat with the depictions which one Ljubljana and one Zagreb external respondent gave in response to my question on the differences between Belgrade and Zagreb in the extent of the internal split among the feminists. These two respondents explained the greater homogeneity of the positionings of the

Belgrade feminists by unequivocally pointing to the responsibility of Serbia for the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia: 'Serbia was the attacker. It would not have been all that easy for the [Belgrade] feminists to take the side of the one who attacked' (Ljubljana3EXT) and 'The tanks departed from Belgrade. I would not expect a similar [as in Zagreb] dilemma there' (Zagreb19EXT). Different from them, though, Belgrade12N left the reason(s) behind this partial uniformity open.

Later in the interview she clearly distinguished her positioning from that of the other Belgrade feminists, particularly those in Women in Black. The, in her words, fundamental divergence – which had even led to her departure from this group – revolved around the attention for the Serb victims and the criticism of non-Serb nationalism. The other feminists had eyes only for the non-Serb victims and Serb nationalism, unlike her who wanted to articulate her reproof of all nationalism and the existence of victims on all sides, including the Serb one. At the same time, similarly to some Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, Belgrade12N was careful to point to the difference between the public statements and the concrete daily work. She considered the Belgrade groups not all that dissimilar in the provision of assistance and support. In other words, she implied that even the groups which had been in public focused more on the non-Serb victims had also helped the Serb ones and vice versa.

Just like Belgrade16N, Belgrade12N spoke of finding herself between two fires because of her positioning:

My idea is that we cannot get out of the war with the same methods which have led to the war since it was, in fact, exactly this exclusivism which has led to the war: the simplification of the reality and the pronouncement of some as perpetrators and others as victims. The media and the politics here declared the Serbs as the exclusive victims and the others as attackers, aggressors, whereas those others [the activists] did the opposite...I think that everything is more complicated than the story that the Serbs attacked and the others defended themselves...The consequences are terrible on all sides. Serbia is full of victims.

According to her, these divisions did not only exist in the 1990s but also in 2009 – at the time of interviewing. Whether they or some other cleavages had been in place specifically regarding the NATO bombing (and Kosovo) was left unaddressed. Belgrade12N indicated that in 2009 the divergent feminist positionings on victims and perpetrators manifested in the existence of two separate coalitions for dealing with the

past. She said to belong to the one which applied an inclusive approach by providing space for all voices.<sup>251</sup>

## Silence

### Zagreb feminists

Speaking about the ‘non-nationalist bloc’, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist Zagreb23AN implied that after the sides had been chosen, the membership in one of the clusters had imposed as it were the positionings which one was supposed to articulate: ‘Some talks stop: you are now that [non-nationalist]’. She immediately added, though, that she thought that the members of this cluster had been ‘very clean’ (read: politically impeccable), thereby correcting her earlier allusion and suggesting that there would not have been all that much to discuss anyway.

Although the unanimity and the absence of debates were also mentioned by Zagreb7AN, the order in which she stated them contradicted Zagreb23AN’s view: ‘There were no such conflicts, really. Actually, we did not discuss them’. The silence regarding the war-related disagreements within the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist cluster was also noticeable in the way in which Zagreb7AN proceeded with her answer.

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251 I close this part on the Belgrade feminists by mentioning the comments of my two external Prishtina respondents. Prishtina2EXT (a human rights activist) did not know any of the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists, while Prishtina1EXT (a feminist activist) knew only one and considered her to indeed have a nationalist positioning on Kosovo. According to Prishtina1EXT, the Belgrade feminist – due to her perception of Kosovo as a part of Serbia – had tried to prevent some Kosovar Serb women’s groups from joining the Kosova Women’s Network. I did not, however, explore this issue further because it was outside the scope of my research (it had taken place after 2000 – the end year for the data collection – and extensively involved the Prishtina feminists who were not in my focus). Nonetheless, I want to point very briefly why I find this example telling and thereby indicate a direction for further research efforts. One would expect that the two Prishtina respondents – being Kosovar Albanians – would spot more easily and quickly any positioning on Kosovo which might be designated as Serb nationalist and that they would be, therefore, more familiar with the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists. I propose that this was not the case due to the absence of communication between these two groupings of respondents. At the same time, the two Prishtina respondents recalled situations in their communication and work with the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists in which the former had felt profoundly misunderstood by the latter. While these comments cannot be explored here in more depth either, for the same reasons as mentioned above, they suggest that when there is interaction and struggle for legitimacy in (post-)war contexts, there is a greater likelihood that one might be accused of having a nationalist positioning.

She spoke of the non-war-related frictions which had taken place in these groups, only to repeat at the end that the war-related ones had never been talked over.

The so-called nationalist feminist Zagreb4N spoke about the break of the communication between her and her good friend from the other Zagreb cluster once faced with each other's dissimilar positionings on the war in Croatia. When the two of them had become aware of their discrepant views, they had stopped talking to one another. She said that at the beginning neither of them had the courage to discuss this difference, whereas later it had become too late to deal with it. Still, despite this allusion to the impossibility of resolving this unexpressed conflict, elsewhere in the interview Zagreb4N indicated that the lost friendship could and should be renewed: 'These losses are something agonising, unresolved, something which should be worked out in this lifetime'. Next to this, she indirectly pointed to the silence which existed among the Zagreb feminists regarding the war-related splits by saying that she had been surprised to hear about my research. She had thought that those issues had been long forgotten.

There were, however, many more Zagreb respondents who were not hopeful that the communication between the two clusters could be restored. Zagreb23AN thought that the time to do so and discuss the differences had long gone, and that the connection which had existed between the feminists had been lost. Zagreb7AN was also not very optimistic about the possibility of bridging this gap, but for a different reason. She did not believe that the so-called nationalist feminists could calmly debate the divergent positionings:

I wish that it would be possible to talk about these topics in such a free way [as during the interview]. That I would be able to say: 'That is my feeling' without having somebody attack me...All that can be discussed...But when somebody starts shouting, then the conversation stops (interview with Zagreb7AN).

The absence of communication between the two Zagreb clusters and the lack of confidence in its restoration was explained almost identically by the so-called nationalist feminist Zagreb14N. She accused the other cluster of the same, ie spoke of being unable to handle its extreme aggressiveness. According to Zagreb6N, another so-called nationalist feminist, the reason for the impossibility to communicate across the clusters was the dissimilarity of personal experiences which was based in the class and status differences between the feminists. She believed that they would be open to talking to, trusting and hearing one another only if they had comparable experiences. That the lapse of time had not made discussions of the war-related splits easier was also evident from Zagreb6N's example of the exchange she had had the year before

with one Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist. She said to have spoken to her for the first time – presumably since the early 1990s – and that each had tried very hard to avoid these issues. Some topics had been nonetheless touched upon, but only indirectly. It seems that that experience has not given Zagreb6N much hope for the future because she concluded: ‘These things are not discussed and will never be’.

One so-called nationalist feminist explicitly blamed both clusters for the creation and maintenance of silence. Without denying her support to one of the clusters, Zagreb1N distanced herself from everybody’s exclusivism which had driven her crazy and said not to have ever irrevocably engaged in a conflict with those with a different positioning. This had made her very much unlike all other feminists who were still fully positioned and did not talk to each other. Furthermore, she disapproved of the Zagreb feminists for simply parting ways instead of communicating the differences and rationally analysing them. This respondent, who was indeed seen by many feminists from the other cluster as moderate and building bridges, said to have managed to openly communicate her views with others despite the emotional pressure of those efforts. Although this had led to separation, she seemed content to have done it because it had removed the tensions which had formed a latent conflict between her and them.

Zagreb1N also addressed the implications of this silence for the newer generations of Zagreb feminists. She said that the younger feminists were burdened by this conflict as well. They knew that something had happened, but did not have much information about it.<sup>252</sup> Neither was the relation between feminism and nationalism debated in Zagreb. An attempt to organise a round table with several actors of the 1990s had failed due to the unwillingness of some of them to take part in such an encounter. For Zagreb5ANA – an additional self-declared antinationalist respondent – it was exactly this absence of discussions regarding the war-related positionings that indicated that there was something unresolved between the two clusters. She was not optimistic either about the chance of rapprochement. Not only were some women against it, but throughout the years many had already selected the associates they felt comfortable with and were unwilling to create space for others.

A disbelief in the repair of the broken bonds was also expressed by the self-declared antinationalist feminist Zagreb21ANA. In her view, each split between the Zagreb feminists (from the different clusters or from the same one) meant such a huge

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252 The transfer of the load of unresolved issues from the older to the younger feminists in Belgrade and Zagreb is not an issue which I have extensively examined in this research. Nonetheless, in informal conversations with younger feminists (born in the 1970s and 1980s) I collected anecdotal reports which suggested the existence of this phenomenon.

discontinuation of the cooperation and communication that very often the feminists in question would not even want to attend the same conferences. Even those who would agree to be in the same space would not be interested in any form of cooperation. Zagreb21ANA was quite worried about this development since it led to the loss of the qualities and efforts which each feminist had contributed till then to the joint activities.

Another self-declared antinationalist feminist addressed this discontinuation in a very similar manner. Although the consequences of the departure of some feminists – ie the diminution of the already not abundant feminist resources – had never been discussed, Zagreb12AN could feel that many feminists were not only angry but also sad about it. She stated that these divisions needed to be evaluated so that there would be more clarity on whether it would be possible for some feminists to come together again at least to eg distribute the same leaflets. However, her account of some feminists' intolerance towards being in the same space with concrete other feminists did not leave much hope about the feasibility of such evaluations and discussions. Earlier in the interview Zagreb12AN recollected the exchanges among some Belgrade, Ljubljana and Zagreb feminists which had taken place in the preceding years with the goal of figuring out the possibilities for celebrating the anniversaries of several important dates for Yugoslav feminism. The organisation of any large event had turned out to be impossible, partially because of the war-related split which was 'to some women still a real trauma, not only a cut injury'.<sup>253</sup>

The tensions between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were another issue which Zagreb12AN touched upon in her narrative. She

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253 A good illustration of this inability to find a way for convening such a broad gathering was the conference 'REDacting TransYugoslav Feminisms: Women's Heritage Revisited' which took place in Zagreb in October 2011. It was organised by the Zagreb Centre for Women's Studies, while the programme committee included prominent self-declared antinationalist feminists from Belgrade and Zagreb. Although it took place after my fieldwork, I mention this event here because it depicts well the silence and uneasiness about the conflicts (war-related or not) among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists. While the name of the conference suggested availability of space for different forms of feminism, the conference programme made clear that one of the organisers' intentions had been to map the resistance to nationalisms (*REDaktura knjiga*, October 2011; *REDaktura program*, n.d.). This excluded a priori the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists and their feminism. Consequently, none of them was announced in the programme. The apparent wish to avoid any possible confrontations caused by the various war-related positionings was further visible in the absence of any explicit attention in the programme to these differences. Lastly, the non-transparent invitation policy and the disclosure of the final programme – which did not include many important self-declared antinationalist feminists – only on the eve of the conference showed the ongoing perpetuation of the myth of sisterhood, whether or not through the metaphor of transgression of boundaries (see also the criticism of the Zagreb feminist Đurđa Knežević in *ZamirZine*, 30.09.2011 and that of the Sarajevo feminist Nada Ler Sofronić in *Zarez*, 10.11.2011).

alluded to it in the context of her very cautious comparison of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists regarding the (silence on the) war-related dynamics in each city in the early 1990s:

I think that the Croatian feminists would say – but since I have not been involved, I say this *relata refero* – that we have nonetheless named that anger and that we think that we have at least discussed those issues among ourselves or that we have at least split in two blocs, whereas in Belgrade the women might have never discussed their own nationalism. And since you have always somebody who is angry with somebody else because of something, because we have wonderful friends there, if they can say to us: ‘You should have talked matters over with these [the so-called nationalist feminists]’, so we also say sometimes: ‘Have the women in Belgrade ever discussed their nationalism?’ because it had happened to them. We all know the story of the Croatian split, but nobody talks about the Serbian one: whether there has been one or not. And whether the nationalists have stayed together with...those who are non-nationalists, whether some fusion has taken place, some melting pot, so that it [the split] is not talked about anymore. Whereas here a split has remained, a tectonic rift, but it has been named. I know that one of the girls [the Zagreb feminists, presumably the self-declared antinationalist ones] has said recently: ‘The girls in Belgrade have never said anything at all on the nationalism-related clashes there, but we know of some women since we have recognised them here, [we know] that there are nationalists there as well’ (interview with Zagreb12AN).

Four important issues catch the eye here with regard to the laden silences on the war-related conflicts. The first one is Zagreb12AN’s simultaneous distancing from and transmission of the comments which, according to her, had been made by other feminists from her cluster regarding divisions which she had not witnessed personally. Although this respondent became a feminist activist only in early 1993 and has, therefore, indeed missed the previously occurred conflicts and splits, I do not see her indirect way of communicating these issues as witnessing her unfamiliarity with them, but as showing her uneasiness to openly articulate them in the interview. I doubt her unfamiliarity because, despite her later involvement, she had quickly become very engaged not only in the core activities of her group, but also by way of speaking at conferences abroad, communicating with the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists and, last but not least, writing on war and nationalism, including the different positionings among the Zagreb feminists.

Second, Zagreb12AN spoke in a contradictory manner about the conflicts in Belgrade and Zagreb and thereby avoided making a definite claim. She both wondered

whether there had been any nationalism-related divisions in Belgrade, and answered this question affirmatively. As to Zagreb, this respondent said both that the feminists had talked about their differences, and that the clear-cut fissure had been acknowledged but not discussed. Third, she suggested that the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists had sometimes criticised their Zagreb counterparts for not resolving the conflicts with the other Zagreb cluster. Even less overtly formulated was her statement on the objections by the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists to the secrecy and denial with which their Belgrade counterparts had handled the nationalism in their own ranks. Zagreb12AN left it open whether these Zagreb feminists had actually expressed their objections to the Belgrade feminists or only thought that they had had the right to do so. Fourth, she softened these comments on the presence of tensions between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists by pointing to the wonderful friendships between them.

Zagreb7AN evoked the existence of (unexpressed) differences between the two self-declared antinationalist clusters as well, but spoke about them slightly more explicitly than Zagreb12AN. Zagreb7AN regretted that the Medulin meeting<sup>254</sup> had never been repeated although 'terribly many things' had remained unarticulated. She particularly referred to the unresolved issues regarding the war in Croatia and recalled having admonished the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists for 'switching too quickly to Bosnia', ie for not paying more attention to the war in Croatia. However, while clearly expressing her need for more political discussions between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, Zagreb7AN did not specify the topics which she had in mind. Based on the rest of her narrative, I assume that she referred to these Belgrade feminists' positioning on Serbia's role in the war in Croatia (ie the not always explicitly enunciated primacy of the Serb responsibility), their resistance towards the expression of ethnic belonging, their maritime nostalgia and their statements echoing Yugoslav (read: Serb) unitarisation.<sup>255</sup>

### **Belgrade feminists**

The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist Belgrade1ANA spoke about the recurring silent way of departing from one's group without communicating one's decision and reasons. This had been the case in her group even with some otherwise very articulate feminists. Although she alluded to being very surprised about this secrecy,

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254 See Chapter 4.

255 All these issues were addressed in Chapter 4.

her elaboration also contained an undertone of disapproval. This criticism regarding the hushing up of the real reasons was more easily noticeable when she evoked coming across a text stating that she had left the group due to fatigue. Belgrade1ANA said that she had burst into laughter upon reading that, not only because of her excellent health, but also because she had made a point of communicating to the rest of the group her motive for the departure: a difference regarding the positioning on the NATO bombing in 1999 which she had been unable to compromise with.

The lack of transparency on the conflicts was also reproved by Belgrade7ANA – another self-declared antinationalist feminist. When I asked her whether she was familiar with any written sources on the tensions among the Belgrade feminists regarding the NATO bombing and the Kosovar Albanians, she said not to believe that there would be any such document – neither regarding the other contentious issues:

They have never wanted those things to be made public, just like with the money theft. The feminist movement wants to maintain the aura of ideological impeccability and was hiding the dirty linen...Now, whether those things are published somewhere... They are not since those publications are theirs and [therefore] always ideologically and politically correct, whereas others [eg mainstream media] did not know. What was happening in the feminist movement was unimportant to them (interview with Belgrade7ANA).

One of the external respondents, Sarajevo1EXT, was also displeased by this avoidance of disclosing the disagreements in public. She recalled being angry at two Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists for not wanting to react to the published criticism which another feminist from the same cluster had directed at them. Sarajevo1EXT implied that their wish ‘not to rock the boat’ was damaging since the readers ‘would not know the other side of the story’ and the great things which these two activists had done.

The same feminist whose written criticism Sarajevo1EXT disapproved of was herself unhappy with the lack of reactions to her writings. The issue which Belgrade3AN evoked did not concern the two Belgrade feminists, but her interaction with a Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist at the time of the NATO bombing. Belgrade3AN felt wronged by this Zagreb feminist’s apparent denial and glossing over of her experiences under the bombs. This was, in Belgrade3AN’s view, the same strategy which men applied to women’s experiences. She seemed to have fought against this strategy by mentioning the episode in one of her published texts. Despite being made public, the issue had, nonetheless, remained unresolved. The Zagreb feminist had refrained from responding to it either in written form or in a direct conversation.

Belgrade3AN further shared her disappointment in several Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists due to their avoidance of meeting and discussing the conflicts from the early 1990s.

Sometimes the choice not to say anything and thereby perpetuate the silence was not inspired by impression management or the wish to prevent upheaval, but by the preference for protecting oneself. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Belgrade2N, a so-called nationalist feminist, did not want to share her criticism of the war-related positionings of Women in Black. She sought to stay away from any troubles she might get into by being the whistleblower. I did not ask Belgrade2N which specific troubles she was worried about because I did not feel that there was space for that question. Possibly they had to do (at least) with the emotional pressure which those exchanges might bring. Zagreb1N recalled such an experience referring to Zagreb, and the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist Belgrade13AN spoke about this pressure in Belgrade (in the fragment which I already quoted in Chapter 4):

It is a fact that for many years nationalism was not discussed *at all* in the Women's Studies [Centre]...None of us was capable in the beginning to articulate her standpoint and to confront her friend who thought differently. Those were not differences in thoughts and standpoints; lives were in question. Nationalism killed. To my knowledge, in those years we *never* talked about nationalism in any women's group, not only in the Women's Studies [Centre]. That was such an emotional issue to everybody that we could not distance ourselves and discuss it. Not in Belgrade. Each of us was defending herself, totally emotionally. I have always thought that we had to discuss it, but I did not know how...The Belgrade feminists have talked *only* about [the nationalism of] a third person (emphasis in the original).

This absence of designating somebody or her positionings as 'nationalist' in a direct conversation was also addressed by the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist Belgrade15N. Wondering why nobody had ever named her 'nationalist' to her face but only in her absence, she seemed to be more disturbed by this practice of talking behind her back than by the designation itself:

Nobody has ever said anything to me, even though they could have done so, just as you are saying to me. Did I get angry? Why would I get angry?...I do not reproach anyone for anything, although I always wonder why nobody says anything to me and I only hear it in this way [from others] (interview with Belgrade15N).

Belgrade15N did not say anything, though, about trying herself to raise the issue in a face-to-face communication. The self-declared antinationalist feminist Belgrade6AN was more explicit about her contribution to the maintenance of silence. In the gatherings with feminists from other post-Yugoslav republics, she had sometimes had the impression that those feminists had too strongly taken the side of their men. Unlike her, for whom feminism had priority, they had supported the official state-building politics of their states. Belgrade6AN found this problematic due to the patriarchal character of these politics – something which they had in common with the politics of the Serb men and the Serbian state. Nonetheless, she had chosen not to express her criticism of the positionings of the other (ie non-Serb) feminists. As somebody from Serbia who acknowledged Serbia's greater responsibility for the war violence and the treatment of the ethnic Others, she did not feel comfortable raising this sensitive issue. At the same time, she hinted – and this particular implicitness is very significant – that the articulation of her positioning had been impossible also in view of the presence of several feminists from the same Belgrade cluster who had been very radically against Serb nationalism and the Serb leaders. Belgrade6AN's narrative revealed, thus, the existence of silence and latent tensions not only between Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists and feminists from other Yugoslav successor states, but also within this Belgrade cluster.

## **Conclusion**

The respondents differed among each other in their perception of other feminist activists as (not) being authentic feminists, but no consensus existed on the criteria for establishing which feminists were genuine. There were also respondents who were undecided about their own conceptualisation of real feminism and gave contradictory statements. A feminist's recognition or dismissal of another activist's feminism was sometimes – but not necessarily – related to the resemblance of, or the difference between, the war-related positionings of the two feminists. The greatest correspondence between the dismissal of one's feminism and the difference in positioning was found among the Zagreb so-called nationalist respondents.

In referring to the other Zagreb cluster, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondents usually conceptualised feminism as being incompatible with nationalism or patriotism due to these ideologies' different understanding of gender-based solidarity. There were also those with a less strict view on this incompatibility for whom the adherence to such positionings did not diminish the value of one's feminism. That

some feminists from this cluster apparently considered feminism as also incompatible with non-pacifism was not directly communicated; it resurfaced in the narrative of a Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondent with an opposite view.

Unlike these respondents, the Zagreb so-called nationalist ones did not make any explicit links between feminism, on the one hand, and nationalism, patriotism or pacifism, on the other. A minority did not question anybody's feminism in Zagreb, whereas the others denied that of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. The latter so-called nationalist feminists accused those from the other Zagreb cluster of not being genuinely interested in improving the lives of women but only being motivated by the personal (financial) gains which they could obtain from feminism. Some even criticised the self-declared antinationalist feminists for harming women through eg not opposing pornography or not moving beyond theoretical discussions on how to stop the factually happening war rapes. In addition, the Zagreb so-called nationalist respondents portrayed themselves as the victimised underdog. They spoke about never having received the recognition and the (financial) rewards from the West which the other Zagreb cluster had, despite the daily practical manifestation of their authentic commitment to helping women which was free from any other interests.

The Belgrade self-declared antinationalist respondents were, similarly to their Zagreb counterparts, generally inclined to see authentic feminism as impossible to combine with nationalism and ethnic affiliation. Nevertheless, not all of them saw this issue as being salient in Belgrade. Different from the Zagreb respondents from both clusters, who did not pronounce themselves on anybody's feminism in Belgrade, few Belgrade self-declared antinationalist respondents criticised some feminists from Zagreb (and Ljubljana) for abandoning their allegiance to the feminist gender-based solidarity and affiliating with nation-building projects. Two of these Belgrade respondents also rebuked fellow members of the same Belgrade cluster for not practicing true feminism. For the one, such feminism required a deconstruction of one's own patriarchal patterns of knowing and doing, while for the other it entailed abandoning gender essentialism and positioning oneself also on issues which involved male victims, like the Serb ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians. The latter feminist's criticism was implicitly directed to Belgrade feminists from both clusters.

The quality of the feminism of at least some of those with different war-related positionings was questioned by a majority of the Belgrade so-called nationalist respondents. Their remarks regularly involved a disapproval of the attained personal (financial) rewards whose pursuit – often under the guise of antinationalism – meant that the feminists in question did not engage themselves with what truly mattered to women, such as the improvement of their economic and societal positions. These

respondents' criticism was additionally similar to that of their Zagreb counterparts for leaving out the issue of the (in)compatibility of nationalism and feminism. At the same time, unlike most of their Zagreb counterparts, the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists implicitly allowed that even activists with different war-related positionings could be considered authentic feminists.

The comparison of the perceptions of the war-related divisions, ascribed-to designations, the process of naming and the authenticity of the (anti)nationalism of concrete feminists revealed significant differences both between Belgrade and Zagreb and between the clusters in each city. To begin with, whereas all but one Zagreb respondent confirmed the existence of a split in Zagreb, the Belgrade respondents were more inclined to speak of dissimilar positionings without any mention of a split. Moreover, the disagreements the Zagreb feminists referred to only concerned the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Nobody mentioned additional tensions related to the NATO bombing and the war in Kosovo, as some Belgrade respondents did. Finally, the Zagreb respondents were more comfortable with speaking about concrete feminists and calling them by name. The Belgrade respondents preferred not to state any names and instead used phrases like 'some feminists'.

The narratives of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondents showed that these feminists had left the split in the 1990s further behind than the feminists from the other Zagreb cluster. Consequently, the former respondents were more often able to approach those dynamics also from a different angle and critically reassess their own positionings from the 1990s. They portrayed the two clusters as employing divergent positionings on the (sexual) perpetrators and victims, disagreeing about the cooperation with the Belgrade feminists, using a broader or narrower form of gender-based solidarity, and being differently treated by the Croatian pro-state media. At the same time, some Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondents wondered about the extent of the actual gap between the Zagreb clusters compared to that which was suggested by the designations 'antinationalist' and 'nationalist'. These respondents intimated that at least some so-called nationalist feminists might have not actually been that nationalist and had war-related positionings which resembled those of the self-declared antinationalist cluster.

This suggestion of a larger proximity between the Zagreb clusters was confirmed by the doubts of a majority of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists regarding the appropriateness of the terms 'nationalist' and 'patriotic' (which they admitted to have ascribed to the other cluster), as well as by their depictions of individual so-called nationalist feminists. The varied perceptions of the extent and authenticity of one's nationalism often appeared to be influenced by the personal

interactions between the respondent and the feminist in question and not only based on the latter's war-related positionings. Some respondents even avoided pronouncing themselves on concrete so-called nationalist feminists by explaining that they did not know them well enough. In addition, one's choice of a so-called nationalist positioning was not always seen as stemming from a deep ideological affiliation, but from fear or jealousy. The critical approach which many Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists adopted towards their past actions was also visible in their awareness of the function of naming in the competition for resources, their acknowledgment of the laden character of the terms 'nationalist' and 'patriotic', and in the fact that only a minority of these respondents spoke about their victimisation by the laden names (eg 'pro-Yugoslav' and 'pro-Serb') which they had received from the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist cluster.

Unlike for the other Zagreb feminists, the dynamics of the 1990s turned out to be still quite present in the narratives of most of the so-called nationalist respondents. This was generally visible in the bare repetition of their positionings of the 1990s without any critical self-reflection. They resolutely denied that the occurred split had been one between feminists with nationalist and those with antinationalist positionings and mainly spoke of a difference between empirical and political positionings. The former positionings were their own ones: grounded in the reality of the (sexual) war violence and, therefore, detached from all politics, including those of the Croatian state. The latter positionings were those of the other cluster. They were seen as following the politics of the Serbian state and neglecting the facts about the unequal guilt and victimisation of all warring sides. However, this was only seldom explicitly communicated. It was instead commonly alluded to by the designation 'pro-Yugoslav' which was given to these feminists and their positionings.

Another dichotomy expressed by the Zagreb so-called nationalist respondents was the one between themselves, who cared about the well-being of the (raped) refugee women and the ending of the (sexual) war violence, and the feminists from the other cluster, who chased individual benefits. The Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were depicted as contemplating nationalism and feminism at home and at conferences abroad, and cooperating with the Belgrade feminists. This was seen as due both to their personal pursuits and the resources which they had at their disposal – some stemming from the times of Yugoslavia, others from the war-related post-1991 Western donations. The so-called nationalist feminists justified their non-engagement in such a way by portraying themselves as too immersed in concrete and practical work with (raped) refugee women to have the time, funds or interest for those other activities.

Initially, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists fervently rejected the designations 'nationalist' and 'patriotic' as false and mean imputations which had harmed them in more than one way. Nonetheless, these feminists turned out to be able to concede at least one of those designations – more often 'patriotic'. The acceptable conceptualisation generally included some form of fighting injustice, such as through defending one's country or speaking out about its destruction. When talking about the feminists from the other Zagreb cluster, these respondents usually referred to them as a collective. If they mentioned an individual feminist, it was not to offer a reconciliatory explanation for her war-related positionings, but mainly to criticise her. The process of naming was addressed equally uncritically. The so-called nationalist feminists regularly addressed the harm which they had been subjected to by the other cluster and portrayed themselves as the wronged, powerless and silenced ones who had been excluded from dialogue and access to resources. One so-called nationalist respondent attended to the reversed process of naming, too, but only to underline their own victimisation. She justified the naming as a self-defence tool against the power of the other cluster and remained silent about the harm which the employed designation 'pro-Yugoslav' might have brought to somebody in Croatia in the 1990s.

Just like the narratives of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, those of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist ones were devoid of critical reassessments of the positionings from the 1990s. Furthermore, the 1990s appeared to be also for the latter respondents very much present at the time of interviewing. At the same time, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist respondents held divergent opinions about the extent of the war-related intra-feminist frictions in Belgrade. Some negated the existence of such a split, others spoke of some kind of split, and yet others indicated a clear-cut split. The number of feminists who were considered so-called nationalists varied as well: from none or one to several. This bore witness not only to the less profound war-related tensions among the Belgrade feminists, but also to the greater silence which surrounded this issue, compared to Zagreb. The respondents who acknowledged that a differentiation had occurred usually spoke of two distinctive moments in time: the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, and the ground war in Kosovo and the NATO bombing.

While there were Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists who mentioned the pursuit of personal privileges – such as travels and grants – as a source of tension during the first period (1991–1995), the main evoked dichotomy was that between themselves, who accentuated the Serb perpetrators and their non-Serb victims, and the so-called nationalist feminists, who accentuated the equal guilt of all warring sides but focused on the Serb victims of non-Serb perpetrators. Among the

former feminists there were also those who found it important to pay attention to the Serb victims, but did not say so in public. This particularly silenced issue was due both to the heavy legacy of Serbia's war involvement and one's goal not to (partially) lose one's legitimacy as a self-declared antinationalist.

The narratives on the second period (1998–1999) revealed the appearance of frictions among the self-declared antinationalist feminists. Some of these feminists had been unwilling to stand against the Serb-induced victimisation of the Kosovar Albanians, and begun to chiefly discuss the Serb victimisation by the NATO bombing. They resembled, thereby, the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists. Others had stuck to condemning the Serb ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians, but disagreed among each other over whether the bombing was the right method to bring an end to it and to Milošević's politics in general. Just like with the issue of Serb victimisation in the previous period, those who disapproved of Milošević and the NATO bombing alike struggled to find a way to articulate their positioning without being perceived as nationalists.

None of the feminists from this cluster referred to the process of naming. Even the scarce respondents who attended to the power struggles between feminists did not say anything about their own involvement and strategies. In line with the more laden and more covert character of the divisions in this city, the designations 'nationalist' and 'patriotic' were not commonly employed. Some respondents used descriptive designations, such as 'having a blind spot for nationalism', and there was a great reluctance to call the feminists with opposed positionings by name. The instances when a particular feminist was (eventually) mentioned by name – or when I explicitly asked about somebody – revealed the absence of unanimity on whether she was a nationalist. Similarly to their Zagreb counterparts, these Belgrade respondents sometimes refrained from speaking about the war-related positionings of a particular feminist because of not knowing her sufficiently.

The Belgrade so-called nationalist respondents did not use a 'we' form to express a common positioning. Neither did they articulate any awareness of the existence of other feminists in Belgrade with similar positionings (even though they knew each other). However, in spite of the 'I' form which all so-called nationalist respondents used, there were many commonalities among them. To begin with, just like the other Belgrade cluster, these respondents preferred to speak about 'they' and 'other feminists' without disclosing the names of those whom they criticised. Another resemblance to the other cluster was the absence of critical distance from the positionings and dynamics of the 1990s.

All Belgrade so-called nationalist respondents contrasted their war-related positionings with those of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists and disagreed with them. Each of the former portrayed herself as a lone voice in the wilderness, ie attended to the unavailability of space in Serbia for her positioning of equal victimisation and responsibility of all warring sides. Next to this, the respondents repeatedly distanced themselves in different ways from Serb nationalism. Equally recurrently they insisted on refraining from selectively criticising only that particular nationalism and on the importance of condemning non-Serb nationalism, too, as well as paying attention to all victims, including the Serb ones. These feminists avoided speaking of the other Belgrade feminists as ‘antinationalists’ or ‘non-nationalists’, and nobody employed the term ‘nationalist’ to describe her own positionings. Only one Belgrade so-called nationalist respondent hinted that she might consider herself patriotic. That concerned the version of patriotism which entailed critical thinking, also regarding one’s ethnic group, and a cosmopolitan attitude and openness towards those of different ethnicity.

A majority discarded the choices of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists as not being driven by antinationalism. In their view, the other cluster’s incorrect depiction of its pursuit as ‘antinationalism’ was a result of the various rewards which the (capitalism-driven) Western audiences and funders gave to those who articulated such positionings. The respondents who addressed the process of naming, ie the designation ‘nationalist’ which had been ascribed to them by the other cluster, explained it either by this same pursuit or by the others’ need to exclude those with a dissimilar positioning due to the inability to work with a heterogeneous category of ‘feminists’ and ‘women’.

Unlike the feminists from the other Belgrade cluster, only one so-called nationalist feminist spoke about two different dynamics in the early and late 1990s. The other respondents in one way or another avoided addressing the divisions during and regarding the war in Serbia – an indication of the even more laden and silenced character of these divisions, compared to those on the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. None of these respondents approved of the bombing and all expressed their disapproval of Milošević’s politics in general. Still, although they spoke of equal attention for all victims, none of them addressed the Serb ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians during the NATO bombing.

Lastly, the ways in which the Belgrade and Zagreb respondents addressed the silence surrounding the divisions among and between them in the 1990s showed both differences and similarities between the two cities. The less intense and more concealed war-related divisions among the Belgrade feminists manifested in a

noticeable dissimilarity between their accounts of this phenomenon and those of the Zagreb respondents. The latter were more often and more extensively articulated about the existence of silence, whereas it was more common for the Belgrade feminists only to (remotely) allude to it.

At the same time, the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists alike usually addressed (ie alluded to) the silence about the conflicts within their own city and less often referred to the silenced tensions between them and the feminists from the other city or another post-Yugoslav successor state. The silence on the tensions within one's cluster was mentioned even less commonly. The narratives of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists were similar in a few other ways, too. The respondents were almost unanimous in their assessment of the as good as total absence of any discussions of the divisions. Sometimes they (also) spoke of silences which were not related to factual conflicts, but to discerned disagreements which had never escalated. There was further a general lack of optimism in both cities about the chances of bridging the gap to discuss the laden divisions of the 1990s and/or reestablish any cooperation. This lack of optimism and/or willingness to change the situation was also visible in the general – albeit not complete – absence of accounts on the respondents' personal attempts to alter the situation.

Various reasons were given for this silence or avoidance of discussing the disagreements: irrelevance because of the time distance, the emotional pressure which those attempts at reconciliation or at least conversation entailed, inability of the members of the other cluster to listen and react in a non-aggressive manner, lack of empathy because of the class and status differences among the feminists, Serbia's war legacy which hampered the articulation of criticism of the nationalism of non-Serb feminists, impression management – ie the need to present oneself to the public in a favourable light – and the wish to avoid personal troubles, as well as prevent even larger conflicts from emerging.

The respondents were, however, aware of the damage which was caused by the unresolved and not discussed conflicts. They created a burden which was continuously carried by the affected feminists. Moreover, each break of the communication and cooperation led to a loss of the qualities, knowledge and endeavours which the activist(s) in question brought to the feminist group (or the feminist field, in the instances of complete departure from feminist activism). Finally, the individual and collective feminist history disappeared by the virtual absence of written records of the frictions. Even the few published accounts of conflicts were generally not reacted upon, leading to a lack of other perspectives and more insight on the issues at stake. The feminist history also vanished as a result of the inability to mark the important

dates of (post-)Yugoslav feminism in a comprehensive way and with a large attendance of feminists. This was not only due to the unwillingness of many to work with concrete other feminists on, inter alia, such memorial and evaluative projects, but also to the even more detrimental refusal to be in the same space with one another.

My response to these unfortunate developments, ie my contribution towards the disclosure and preservation of one part of the history of the (post-)Yugoslav feminism – the war-related positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the 1990s – will be summarised in the next and final chapter of this dissertation.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **Conclusion**

This final and concluding chapter consists of four sections. I begin by summarising once more the research topic and the employed analytical framework. In the second section I elaborate upon the key findings and link them to the main biases and lacunae in the existing scholarship. Thereby I illuminate the multilayered contribution which this research makes to the present scholarly knowledge on the Belgrade and Zagreb war-related feminism in the 1990s, and the epistemological questions which it raises regarding this knowledge. The third section contains my suggestions for further research projects. I address several topics which have been generated by this study and which I find important to examine in the future. I close the chapter by shortly reflecting about this research effort and its hoped-for relevance.

#### **What was this research about?**

This dissertation contains the results of my qualitative socio-historical comparison of the development and contents of the war-related positionings, ie discourses and activities, of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists in the period 1991–2000: a decade of profound and largely violent societal changes in the region which between 1945 and 1991 constituted the Yugoslav federation. I analysed two sorts of war-related positionings – those regarding the (post-)Yugoslav wars, and those towards the feminists from the same and the other city with whom the respondents had convergent or divergent positionings on these wars.

In order to better understand and explain the differences and similarities between the positionings in question, as well as the emotions which accompanied them, I inquired extensively into the (post-)Yugoslav contexts in which these feminists produced and reproduced or changed their positionings. I also paid significant attention to the struggle for legitimacy between and among the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists: their strategies for establishing themselves as the only legitimate feminist agents who held the correct definitions of the situation (ie the events and those involved) and acted correspondingly. In addition, I compared the life stories of the main producers of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminist positionings. The goal of that analysis was, first, to check what

were the biographical similarities and differences (both war-related and not) between the activists from the two cities, as well as among the activists in each city. Second, I wanted to find out whether those differences and similarities were anyhow related to the participation in one cluster or another. Lastly, I explored how the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists spoke at the time of interviewing about the war-related clustering in the 1990s.

The lens which I employed for observing and understanding the war-related dynamics among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists was foremostly created by the work of Pierre Bourdieu and supplemented with insights on memory and myth. This framework has enabled me to look at the contention between these feminists from a broader angle than the one which has been commonly suggested in the scholarship. Instead of understanding the tensions as being purely based in war-related ideological differences, ie as only resulting from the conflict between (so-called) nationalist and (self-declared) antinationalist feminists after the beginning of the war violence, I was able to replace this simplified portrayal with a much more complex one. Without neglecting, denying or minimising the war-related political divergences, I discerned the context-based (or: field-based) power dissimilarities between the feminists – some of which originated from the pre-war period – and their related efforts to maintain or increase their own legitimacy and decrease that of other feminists. The discovery of these efforts is very significant since the legitimacy which the feminists aimed at was directly related to access to grants, information, networks, trainings and travel opportunities. The chosen approach proved very suitable also for a critical analysis of the relevant scholarship. I could see how the different authors (local and Western alike) did not produce neutral, disinterested and objective knowledge, but were themselves intertwined with and often openly took sides in these struggles for legitimacy.

In short, using the Bourdieuan lens, this research tells the story of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists who in the 1990s vigorously articulated their war-related positionings in the feminist field in their respective city and in those abroad. Already during Yugoslavia's existence, despite the country's official ideology of equality of all, there were differences among some of these agents in the amount of cultural, economic and social capital which they had at their disposal. Besides this, there were sometimes disagreements among them regarding the correct feminist positioning on certain societal practices. Each feminist aimed at increasing her symbolic feminist capital, ie at being perceived as somebody who accurately understood the manifestations of the gender-based power disparities in the Yugoslav society, and knew the right ways

to correct them. In other words, each activist put effort into being recognised as a legitimate feminist agent in the feminist field.

This already existing struggle for legitimacy changed its form and significantly intensified after the outburst of the war violence. Two clusters of feminists were formed in each city, albeit not at the same time and with the same clear-cut dividing line. One cluster was made up of the feminists who maintained the strictly gender-based feminist positioning on (domestic, sexual and war) violence that had been established before the war. This positioning entailed that women (and children), regardless of ethnicity, were victims of the violence committed by men, regardless of ethnicity, by reason of the latter's greater gender-based power in society. The other cluster gathered the feminists who challenged this positioning by adding ethnicity to it, ie by underlining that the ethnic origin of the perpetrators and the victims was not to be neglected, given the differences in military power and politics between the ethnically-marked warring sides. Both feminist clusters – but especially the Zagreb ones – fought with each other in the respective city and even more so at the gatherings and in the (academic) media in Western countries to establish themselves as legitimate political entities which were made up of feminists with a shared correct definition of the situation and an unambiguous common agenda for ending the war violence and relieving its consequences.

To this purpose, as well as to bring some clarity and stability into the chaotic and confusing reality which the war violence created by virtue of its power to constitute new meanings and change allegiances between people, the feminists from each cluster resorted to three strategies. They created an affirmative myth for themselves, gave favourable names to their own cluster and unfavourable ones to their feminist opponents, and questioned the latter's (feminist) agency by *inter alia* misrecognising their own (personal) interests in this political struggle and critically illuminating those of the other side. The endeavour to enlarge one's own and one's cluster's symbolic feminist capital was particularly visible at the meetings abroad and in the texts which were written for foreign audiences. These occasions increased one's chances of converting this capital into other forms: cultural (eg trainings, conferences or books), economic (eg funds for activities and at least some remuneration for the activists) and/or social (eg publicity and access to new networks of feminist and peace activists). Additionally, each converted capital was potentially again transformable into symbolic feminist capital for the purpose of further increasing the legitimacy of the concrete feminists and their positionings. Finally, when asked in 2009 or 2010 to reflect upon their own war-related positionings in the 1990s and those of their

feminist allies and opponents, each feminist's narrative was not only influenced by the malleability of memory and her past and present position in the feminist field, but also by the developments in the politics of Croatia and Serbia, ie her past and present position in the political field of the respective country.

### **How do the findings of this research enrich the existing scholarship?**

Next to benefitting from the chosen theoretical framework, this research was able to pay heed to several serious scholarly lacunae and biases, also thanks to its attention for the contextual embedment of the war-related positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, the exhaustive scholarship review, the use of comprehensive semi-structured interviews and the systematic exploration of a broad range of original documents from the entire analysed decade. To begin with, the inquiry into the scholarly works on the wars which were waged on the territory of Yugoslavia revealed a large gender bias in terms of the analysed research subjects. Most of this general scholarship on the (post-) Yugoslav wars dealt with active men: politicians, military leaders, intellectuals, soldiers or members of non-governmental initiatives. Women were the focus of the specific gender scholarship and mainly present as passive victims of the sexual war violence. The feminist activists who are the subject of my research have, thus, repeatedly fallen between two stools. They have not been seen as sufficiently important political agents to be asked about their standpoints and actions, and they were not raped refugee women either whose victimisation could be explored.

Still, even though these feminists have not waged the (post-)Yugoslav wars – with the exception of the short military experience of one Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondent – they have played a very important role in them. So-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists alike have provided psychosocial and other assistance to (raped) refugee women in times when state support was either missing or insufficient and largely inadequate. Feminists from both clusters have, furthermore, advocated in the respective country and abroad the end of the wars (and the war rapes in particular) and the bringing to justice of perpetrators, supported draft evaders, informed very diverse Western audiences about the daily war realities and – next to all of this – continued locally with their pre-war work on combating male domestic violence against women and educating the general public about the war-related and non-war-related gender-based power inequalities in the society.

This substantial lacuna in the scholarship on the (post-)Yugoslav wars becomes even larger when the contributions which do address the Belgrade and/

or Zagreb feminists are examined thoroughly. In spite of the important novel information which some of these works contain, this scholarship remains dominated by many biases, empty spaces and further unsubstantiated bare reproductions of the same few earlier analyses. All these problematic issues have thus far remained virtually unattended by scholars, including the local Belgrade and Zagreb ones, some of whom have themselves belonged to or cooperated with the self-declared antinationalist or the so-called nationalist feminist cluster in the respective city.

The scholarship is also politically biased. Deliberately or not, it was a part of and used in the varied efforts to inform the (Western) audiences about the war realities, including the war rapes, as well as about the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists who were engaged in assisting the survivors. These contributions did not only aim at cessation of the (sexual) war violence and penalisation of its perpetrators, but also at securing (financial) resources for the local feminists whose war-related positionings were approved of by the author in question. Different strategies were used in those texts to indicate which feminists were worthy of support: use of laudatory formulations for them and derogatory ones for the others, complete omission to mention the latter as also being engaged in war-related feminist activism, or a choice to ignore their self-designation 'feminists' and instead refer to them as 'women's activists,' while preserving the term 'feminists' only for the like-minded activists. The existence of such a bias has remained, however, virtually unattended to, making the scholarship appear as not privileging any feminist activists or positionings but only providing disinterested information on the situation on the ground.

Another problematic point in the scholarship concerns the designations which are used to describe the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists and their positionings. The most common terms – 'antinationalist', 'nationalist', 'non-nationalist' and 'patriotic' – are those which were typically employed by the self-declared antinationalist feminists from each city. However, these names have been uncritically transferred to scholarly works, whose authors have failed to point to their origin and meaning and explain why they have chosen to employ exactly them and not others. The same absence of explanation of one's choice of terminology can be observed also regarding the less commonly employed and quite diverse other designations – some originating from local feminists, others proposed by scholars (the partial overlap between these two categories notwithstanding).

As my addition of the adjective 'self-declared' indicates, the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists named themselves 'antinationalist' (less often: 'non-nationalist'), while ascribing the designation 'nationalist' (less often: 'patriotic') to the feminists from the same city who did not share their war-related

positionings. Hence my use of the adjective ‘so-called’ for the latter feminists. This adjective, just like the previous one, serves in this dissertation first to shed light upon this thus far concealed power discrepancy in naming between the self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists. Second, by continuously employing these adjectives, I also point to the caution with which the designations ‘antinationalist’ and ‘nationalist’, saturated with meaning as they are, need to be approached when looking at the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the warring 1990s. Although these terms seem at face value clear and helpful enough to distinguish between the feminists with a (supposedly) greater or smaller distance from a nation-building ideology, one’s country and/or ethnic group, as has become clear in this work, they are also partially misleading.

The Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists overtly used the terms ‘antinationalist’ and ‘non-nationalist’ as self-designations, whereas they ascribed – often implicitly – ‘nationalist’ and ‘patriotic’ to the feminists from the other cluster in the respective city. Such explicit self-designations of one’s war-related positionings were not used by the so-called nationalist cluster in either city. The self-designations of these Zagreb feminists – ‘anticommunist’ (‘non-communist’), ‘concrete’, ‘genocide acknowledgers’, ‘partisan’ and ‘anti-Yugoslav’ – are only to be inferred from the explicit names which they employed for the other Zagreb cluster: ‘communist’, ‘abstract’, ‘genocide revisionists’, ‘neutral’ and ‘pro-Yugoslav’, respectively. In the same manner, it cannot be directly learned that the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists referred to themselves as ‘moderate antinationalists’ and ‘sensitive to the suffering of Serbs’. It can only be derived from these feminists’ explicitly stated depictions of the other Belgrade cluster as practicing ‘antinational radicalism’ or ‘extreme antinationalism’, as well as being ‘insensitive to the suffering of Serbs’.

Since these (implicit) self-ascribed and ascribed-to designations are not indisputable, it is of utmost importance to not simply reproduce them further in the scholarship and, thereby, perpetuate the political bias from the 1990s. None of these names were neutral descriptions of one’s war-related positionings. Being intrinsically connected to the efforts to stop the (sexual) war violence and the intra-feminist struggle for legitimacy, these terms were impregnated with normative claims regarding the correct form of feminist war-related engagement. For example, when the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists called the other Zagreb cluster ‘abstract’, they criticised the self-declared antinationalist feminists for not speaking of concrete, ie ethnically-marked, perpetrators and victims. According to the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, stating explicitly that the Serbs were the perpetrators and the Croats (and,

later, Bosniaks) the victims was the only way to mobilise the international community to apply the right policies to end the war violence in Croatia (and Bosnia and Herzegovina). The Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists had the same goal, but their strategy of achieving it was not by repeating the Croatian state's simplified portrayal of perpetrators and victims, but by not exempting any warring party from its responsibility. Hence their self-designations 'antinationalist' and 'non-nationalist'.

These two strategies of self-designation and ascription were also used in Belgrade, with the difference that in that city it was the self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster which ended up speaking of ethnically-marked perpetrators and victims, whereas the so-called nationalist one attended to the shared responsibility of all sides. To distribute the responsibility for the war violence in a situation where Serbia had a principal share in it was, according to the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists, to turn a blind eye to Serbia's politics and, therefore, a nationalist or patriotic positioning. At the same time, this insisting on the primacy of Serbia's responsibility was seen by the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists as an act of wearing sackcloth and ashes, whereby the extreme attention for the Serb perpetrating deeds prevented the other Belgrade cluster from seeing the war violence in all its complexity. Being themselves critical of Serbia's politics and the state's depiction of the Serbs purely as victims, the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists considered their positioning as 'moderate antinationalism' and that of the other Belgrade cluster as 'radical' or 'extreme'.

As I pointed out in the first section, the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, besides using designations to classify themselves and the activists from the city's other cluster, also challenged the latter's (feminist) agency. This was done by portraying them as not being genuinely interested in the well-being of (raped) women, but actually pursuing other agendas (those of Western funders, local and/or Western politicians, and/or purely personal ones, such as career gains) which were sometimes even detrimental to women. Finally, the feminists from each cluster communicated a myth about themselves. All myths which were used – feminists as sisters who cooperate with one another despite and across state and ethnic boundaries (used by the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists alike), feminists whose analyses of and positionings on the (sexual) war violence are comprehensive, non-partisan and objective (used by the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists), and feminists who are the sole genuine advocates and supporters of the Bosniak and Croat women who have been raped by Serbs (used by the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists) – illuminated only part of the reality. Therefore, these myths, just like the designations and the denials

of agency, should not be seen outside of their contextual embedding, ie the struggle for legitimacy which was carried out in the proximity of war violence.

More precisely, the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists did not only cross the imposed dividing lines, but created new ones, too: some between each other, and others between themselves and the other cluster from the respective city. The positioning of the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists, which also addressed the Serb victims of the non-Serb perpetrators as well as the responsibility of the non-Serb (state) actors for the war violence, was indeed less black-and-white than that of the other Belgrade cluster. Still, the absence of attention for the foremost responsibility of Serbia's politics and militaries made this positioning as politically coloured as that of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. Lastly, the efforts of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists were not purely directed at assisting the rape survivors and advocating the criminalisation of Serbia's war politics, but were also oriented towards increasing these feminists' legitimacy and decreasing that of the self-declared antinationalist ones.

This dissertation additionally corrects and supplements the existing scholarship by examining the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, whose work and voices have remained until now largely absent from it. One reason for this empty space is the previously mentioned political component of this scholarship, combined with the predominance of scholars whose positionings towards the (post-) Yugoslav wars have stood closer to those of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. Next to this, while the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were often themselves the authors of relevant contributions, the feminists from the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist clusters were not. Although most of the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists were academics, they did not publish extensively about the war-related positionings and dynamics among the Belgrade feminists, but infrequently and to a very limited extent (a few sentences at most) mentioned them in their elaborations of other themes. The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists did not publish much in general. The scarce approving records of their positionings have been chiefly produced by two American scholars who cooperated with them. These reasons have also contributed to the domination of the designations which were used by the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists.

Even the scholarship which has been produced after 2000 – and sometimes pretends to analyse the whole decade of the 1990s – mainly does not go beyond late 1995, when the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia officially ended. This means that the tensions which developed among the Belgrade feminists during the

intensified war in Kosovo (1998–1999) and the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (spring of 1999) are largely omitted. There is also a worrying absence of critical analyses of the already existing scholarship on the war-related feminist activism in Belgrade and Zagreb. In other words, the veracity of the often only implicitly made claims has remained unquestioned. Nonetheless, this has not prevented their multiple reproductions by scholars.

Due to this absence of evaluative studies, the scholarship very often mistakenly suggests that the beginning of the war violence in 1991 affected the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists equally, ie that in both Belgrade and Zagreb the up to then jointly working feminists divided in the same way into (self-declared) antinationalists and (so-called) nationalists and ceased all cooperation with one another. Also incorrect is the additional (implicit) suggestion that the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist positionings have not differed in content, just like the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist ones. This view of Belgrade and Zagreb as interchangeable locations regarding the war-related intra-feminist dynamics in the 1990s has been promoted by eg using examples only from Zagreb and framing them as if they illustrated the situation in both cities. However, the dynamics among the Belgrade feminists in the 1990s should not be treated as analogous to those among the Zagreb feminists in the same decade. In late 1991 – early 1992 the Zagreb feminists split into self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists. In the struggle to communicate and obtain legitimacy for its definition of the profound violent societal changes which were taking place – first in Croatia and then in Bosnia and Herzegovina – each of these two Zagreb clusters used very clearly articulated war-related positionings. Such a profound divide never emerged in Belgrade. The conflicts among the feminists there were both less present and less prominently articulated. In the remainder of this section I will elaborate upon these far from negligible differences between Belgrade in Zagreb in more detail.

The Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists refrained from reproducing the Croatian state's portrayal of Croatia as an innocent victim of the aggression by the Yugoslav People's Army and the Croatian Serbs. Instead, these feminists took the risk of speaking in more balanced terms about the responsibility of all warring sides, advocated a restoration of peace through non-violent methods, such as peace talks, and decided to maintain the cooperation with the Belgrade feminists. The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists supported Croatia's right to armed self-defence, adopted the Croatian state's black-and-white positioning on Croat victims and Serb perpetrators and extended the latter category to the Belgrade feminists. One part of these Zagreb feminists even openly accused the Belgrade ones of supporting the politics of the Serbian state.

The presence of ethnic markers in the positionings of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists and their absence in those of the other Zagreb cluster were initially also observable in the positionings on the mass war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia which were disclosed in the summer of 1992. The so-called nationalist feminists spoke exclusively about Serb men who raped Bosniak and Croat women as part of the Serb politics of ethnic cleansing (or genocide – a term some of these feminists insisted upon), whereas the self-declared antinationalist feminists accentuated the gender component of all rapes, including the war ones which were committed by soldiers against civilians. This strict gender-based positioning was slightly altered in late 1992 – early 1993, due to the appearance of more reliable data on the war rapes. While still criticising the use of unverified and exaggerated war rape accounts and figures, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists also started pointing out that the Serb forces were committing most of the rapes and that the majority of the victims were non-Serb women. This was, however, not always very explicitly said and brought in connection to the Serb war strategy.

The early acknowledgment of Croatia's partial responsibility for the war violence and the possibility that the Croat forces might be committing war crimes, too, enabled the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists to openly condemn the war crimes of the (Bosnian) Croat militaries during the Bosniak-Croat war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (spring 1993 – winter 1994). Unlike this cluster, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, who were trying to obtain legitimacy based on their dichotomy of Serb perpetrators and non-Serb victims, could not afford to speak about Croat perpetrators without risking the loss, or at least decrease, of this legitimacy. Consequently, they remained silent on this issue. That this time they disagreed with Croatia's state politics and refused to see the Bosniaks as the enemy was to be inferred only from the continuity of their work with and assistance to (raped) Bosniak refugee women.

All these efforts of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists notwithstanding, they never succeeded in broadly establishing themselves as the more or the only legitimate Zagreb feminists – neither in Zagreb nor abroad. After 1993 the struggle for legitimacy between the two Zagreb clusters was gradually losing momentum and importance. On the one hand, the war rapes, which were the key topic in this strife, were progressively disappearing from the political and media agenda. On the other hand, each cluster established its own contacts and networks of (financial) support, and the feminists with different positionings did not participate in the same events. The latter was also due to the fact that the profound split between the Zagreb feminists became common knowledge among the Western feminists and nobody tried to bring the two clusters together anymore.

In 1999, during the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Zagreb clusters once more expressed divergent positionings in public. The self-declared antinationalist feminists demanded an end to the bombing and the Serb policy of ethnic cleansing, while reminding the international community of the existence of antiwar activists in Serbia who had opposed its politics throughout the 1990s. The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists approved of the bombing and saw it as the correct response to the continuous Serb genocidal politics against non-Serbs. Whereas the Belgrade feminists (and other Belgrade antiwar activists) were not openly depicted as complicit with these politics, these activists' existence was not at all mentioned. However, as the public struggle for legitimacy between the two Zagreb clusters had by that time become as good as obsolete, these different positionings confirmed the existence of two clusters, but did not revive the split.

Quite different was the situation in Belgrade. After the beginning of the war in Croatia the Belgrade feminists in general distanced themselves from the Serbian state's positioning on the Serb exclusive victimisation by the other – exclusively perpetrating – ethnic groups. These feminists spoke of equal responsibility and victimhood of all warring parties, and their positioning on the war rapes was free of any ethnic markers and strictly gender-based. Thus, unlike in Zagreb, where the so-called nationalist feminists shunned Croatia's responsibility for the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, that was not the case with any Belgrade feminist. All feminists in the latter city acknowledged that Serbia was at least partially responsible for the war violence. Nevertheless, from early 1993 onward, some Belgrade feminists began altering their ethnicity-free positioning and accentuating the Serb-induced (sexual) victimisation of Bosniaks and Croats. The change was not only due to the appearance of more trustworthy war rape figures which showed the large extent of the Serb war rapes, but also to these feminists' interactions with the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists at conferences abroad.

Zagreb feminists from both clusters disagreed with the Belgrade feminists' positioning of equal guilt and victimisation and demanded from them to be more clearly pronounced about the greater responsibility of Serbia and the Serb forces. The Belgrade feminists were sometimes offended by this non-recognition of their positioning's dissenting and risky character in the Serbian context. Moreover, they were angered by the guilt which they felt was being imposed upon them by the Zagreb feminists – especially by the so-called nationalist ones – and displeased with the Zagreb feminists' insufficient to absent attention for Croat nationalism and Croatia's war responsibility. One side but related issue added fuel to the fire. The emotional affiliation with the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea and the by that time already

defunct Yugoslavia, which many Belgrade feminists continued to voice, had become in the meantime outdated and problematic for the Zagreb feminists. Still, despite this additional irritation and the feeling of being misunderstood and treated unfairly, a number of Belgrade feminists began to realise the graver Serbian war legacy and to emphasise the foremost Serb responsibility and non-Serb victimhood. These were the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. Their positioning on (sexual) perpetrators and victims ended up resembling that of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists.

So, unlike in Zagreb, where the heretical challengers in the feminist field were the so-called nationalist feminists, the Belgrade feminists who abandoned the orthodox gender-based and ethnicity-free positioning on the (sexual) war violence were the self-declared antinationalist ones. Their position in the Belgrade feminist field did not remain heretical for a long time, however. Compared to the Belgrade feminists who maintained the up to then orthodox positioning, the self-declared antinationalist ones were numerically stronger and had more extensive interactions with the Western (funding) audiences. Thanks to this, their initially heretical positioning soon became the orthodox one in the Belgrade feminist field, and abroad the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists became the legitimate Belgrade feminists with regard to war-related topics. The so-called nationalist feminists – who ended up, thus, as heretical challengers – kept speaking about equal responsibility and victimhood, but began focusing on the non-Serb-induced Serb suffering. This was a topic which the other Belgrade cluster preferred not to address.

The Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists did not publicly position themselves against the cooperation with the feminists from the other city – as their Zagreb counterparts did – but did not put much effort into incarnating such cooperation either. This was quite different from the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists, who not only struggled hard to maintain the contacts with the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, but also used this endeavour to communicate a clear political statement. The two Belgrade clusters were not, however, engaged in such a severe struggle for legitimacy as the Zagreb ones. This made it possible for feminists with divergent positionings to work together in the Belgrade Women's Studies Center – a cooperation which was impossible to undertake in Zagreb.

Another important difference between Belgrade and Zagreb was that the Belgrade so-called nationalist cluster was not a cluster in the same sense as the other three. Different from the remaining respondents, the Belgrade so-called nationalist ones had never produced a joint (war-related) positioning. The closest some of them had come to expressing a shared positioning was by writing the introductory chapter

to or positively reviewing each other's works (some of which on war-related topics). Furthermore, during the interviews none of these feminists showed any awareness of the existence of other Belgrade feminists with similar war-related positionings, even though all of them knew each other well.

Finally, whereas in Zagreb the intra-feminist split which was caused by the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia was not exacerbated or disturbed by the NATO bombing in 1999, the Belgrade feminist field in that period – and shortly before it – underwent another reorganisation. Some self-declared antinationalist feminists abandoned their previously held positioning on the foremost Serb responsibility for the war violence and their accentuation of the Serb atrocities against non-Serbs, and started focusing only on the violence against Serbs which was committed by NATO. These feminists' positioning on the Serb victimhood in and responsibility for the war in Serbia overlapped, thus, with that of the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists. At the same time, the remaining Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists disagreed regarding the justification of the bombing as a method of stopping the Serb politics of ethnic cleansing which were practiced throughout the 1990s. Some agreed with the intervention by saying that there was no other way of removing Milošević from power, while others insisted on a neither/nor option whereby these detrimental politics were to be halted without bringing harm to the civilian population. Nonetheless, even these changes in the positionings on victims and perpetrators did not lead to such a profound and publicly expressed schism in Belgrade as previously in Zagreb.

How can this divergence in the war-related intra-feminist dynamics between Belgrade and Zagreb be explained? The first part of the explanation is contained in the contextual differences between Croatia and Serbia and the power of violence to constitute new meanings. Serbia's (at least partial) responsibility for the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia was far too obvious for the Belgrade feminists to leave any space for denial. In addition, different from Croatia, Serbia did not experience a war on its territory in the first half of the 1990s. The first time such a direct war danger became imminent, during the NATO bombardment in 1999, the positionings of the Belgrade feminists diversified and the differences became more prominently articulated. These dynamics were supported by the fact that no minimal consensus regarding Milošević's politics on Kosovo existed among the Belgrade feminists. Due to the greater social distance, the support which many Belgrade feminists were willing to offer to the Bosniak and Croat population, women in particular, largely exceeded that which existed for the Kosovar Albanian women (and men).

The second part of the explanation concerns the pre-war non-war-related similarities and differences in capital among the feminists in each city and the

accompanying (absence of a substantial) struggle for legitimacy among them – a struggle which was not in any way linked to differences and similarities in age, ethnic and religious affiliation or motivation for feminist activism. The majority of the women who became the first Zagreb feminists during socialism were established or rising star professionals whose parents were, moreover, well ranked in the – officially non-existent – hierarchy of the socialist society. One part of the younger women who came (shortly) afterwards were students from less privileged backgrounds whose families had experienced grievances by the partisan or, later, communist authorities. Thus, already the first Zagreb feminist initiatives gathered women with varied cultural, economic and social capital (partly transmitted from their parents and partly obtained personally).

The future Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were typically those with more capital, whereas the future so-called nationalist feminists usually had less capital. The latter feminists' efforts to establish themselves as legitimate Zagreb feminists regardless of their unfavourable position in the socialist society manifested in disagreements regarding the right type of feminist engagement: more academic (theoretical) or more activist (grassroots and hands-on). These pre-war tensions were echoed in the war-time strife – in Zagreb and abroad – about the right definition of the war violence and its perpetrators and victims. The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, as the heretical challengers of the orthodox gender-based feminist positioning on (war) violence, tried to obtain legitimacy for their ethnicity-based positioning also by delegitimising the (re)producers of the orthodox positioning, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, as privileged insiders in the socialist society.

Such a pre-war non-war-related struggle for symbolic feminist capital did not exist in Belgrade. Different from the first Zagreb feminist group which was established as a formal academic subdivision of the professional association of sociologists of Croatia, the first Belgrade feminist group was an informal and loose initiative which was oriented towards reaching out to a broader public. Besides this, there were neither significant differences in the cultural, economic and social capital among the Belgrade feminists, nor such divergent familial histories with regard to the interactions with the partisan and communist authorities. The Belgrade heretical challengers of the orthodox gender-based feminist positioning on (war) violence already had legitimacy as feminist actors both in Belgrade and abroad. Therefore, even when they started to articulate a different positioning and distance themselves from the so-called nationalist feminists, they did not need to put so much effort into depicting the latter as less legitimate feminists.

Being numerically superior, better connected with and more interested in communicating with the Western (funding) audiences, the heretical position of the self-declared antinationalist feminists in the Belgrade feminist field was only of a temporary character. After the short transitional phase they became once more the (re)producers of the orthodox Belgrade feminist positioning on war violence, whereas the so-called nationalist feminists ended up as the heretical challengers. Even then, however, the so-called nationalist feminists seem not to have struggled much with the other Belgrade cluster to obtain legitimacy for their own war-related positionings. Due to Serbia's war legacy and the importance which the Belgrade feminists attached to the maintenance of a broad feminist expertise within the Belgrade Women's Studies Center, the feminists with divergent positionings appear to have chosen to refrain as much as possible from publicly confronting and challenging one another. Nonetheless, as my interviews with the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists showed – see the following section – it was not the case that these feminists were fully uninterested in establishing themselves as the legitimate Belgrade feminists regarding war-related issues.

### **How did the respondents revisit the 1990s?**

The interviews which I conducted in 2009 and 2010 showed that the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were able to critically look not only at their own positionings from the 1990s, but also at the whole dynamics between them and the other Zagreb cluster, and partially link those positionings and dynamics to the competition for resources and legitimacy. Consequently, these feminists were also able to question and sometimes even reject, at least somewhat, the designations 'nationalist' and 'patriotic' which they had used for the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists.

This type of critical distance from one's discourses and activities from the 1990s and recognition of one's then interests were not observable in the narratives of the feminists from the remaining three clusters. While the 1990s were still quite alive for them and the denial of one's interests was widely present in their accounts, that was especially true for the majority of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. What was also particular to the latter feminists was their fervent accusatory tone vis-à-vis the feminists from the other Zagreb cluster and the use of the same vocabulary for denouncing them as that which had been employed in the 1990s. Summarised, this criticism entailed that the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists had never pursued an authentic (antinationalist) feminist agenda and, in lieu of working on

improving the position of women, had been only concerned with obtaining personal gains (ie, in Bourdieu's terms, increasing their different types of capital).

The Belgrade interviews chiefly revealed how silenced the war-related divisions among the Belgrade feminists were. These interviews were the ones which required the most extensive reading between the lines in order to discern the alluded to meanings and feminists who had not been mentioned by name. This phenomenon was not present in the interviews with the Zagreb respondents who – consistent with the significantly larger public records of their split – usually openly mentioned the names of the feminists whom they rebuked. It turned out that the Serb victimisation in the wars of the 1990s was an especially laden and silenced topic for the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. Some admitted to no longer approve of their previous insufficient public attention for the Serb victimisation and their chief focus on the Serb responsibility, but did not want to declare this openly to the fellow feminists from the same cluster in order not to be seen as nationalists or lesser antinationalists.

Whereas the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists in general – just like their Zagreb counterparts – did not seem interested in comparing the individual gains which they and the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists had obtained from the war-related feminist engagement, that was not the case with the latter feminists. Similarly to the corresponding Zagreb cluster (albeit to a smaller extent), the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists were much more critical of the other Belgrade cluster and accused its members of being driven not by their positionings, but by the pursuit of individual benefits through their acquiescence to the Western donors' agendas. Thus, different from the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists who rebuked only the war-related positionings of the other feminists from the respective city, the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists tended much more often to convey a double delegitimation of the feminists from the city's other feminist cluster. They disapproved not only of the war-related politics of the self-declared antinationalist feminists, but also of their work strategies which were seen as securing personal instead of collective benefits.

To explain the above findings one should look both at the political contexts of Croatia and Serbia and at the position of the individual activists in the feminist field in Belgrade and Zagreb at the time of interviewing. In 2009 (or 2010) Croatia was much more a post-war society than Serbia: the war violence in Croatia officially ended in late 1995 (as opposed to the spring of 1999 in the case of Serbia), Croatia was not involved in any territorial dispute over an area over which it had waged war (as Serbia was and still is regarding Kosovo), and the Croatian president and prime minister – the latter a member of Tudman's party – have started to overtly acknowledge, condemn

and apologise in public for the Croat war crimes, as well as denounce the post-war expressions of interethnic hatred by Croats. To a smaller extent, the Serbian president has also embarked on such a reconciliation mission. His recognition of the Serb war crimes was, however, only stated implicitly, through his statements on the existence of victims on all sides. Finally, while Croatia was much less troubled by its responsibility for the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia, Serbia was additionally burdened by the political murder of its prime minister in 2003 – a politician who was seen by many (feminist) antiwar activists as Serbia's hope for breaking away from its heavy war legacy of the 1990s.

So, at the time of interviewing it was safe for the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists to scrutinise their war-related positionings from the 1990s and attend to the power struggles of that time, first because their positionings had been given, as it were, legitimacy by the Croatian state. Second, these feminists – even if they were no longer (actively) involved with any feminist group – had after 1995 remained active in feminist groups which had continued to be (financially) supported, ie given legitimacy, by Western donors much longer than the so-called nationalist ones. Unlike them, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists had lost much of the legitimacy which they had been given by the Croatian media and state during the war years and were, moreover, unable to secure Western funds for their groups in the post-war period. Consequently, their groups and they themselves have, unlike those from the other cluster, largely disappeared from the Zagreb feminist field. Being brought back to this field and to the 1990s by virtue of my (Western) research, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists seemed to attempt in the interviews to restore their past legitimacy. To achieve this, they used the same vocabulary and positionings which had given them some legitimacy in the 1990s.

The Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists, whose war-related positionings became the heretical ones in the Belgrade feminist field and had been generally given less legitimacy also in the Western feminist fields, have – similarly to the corresponding Zagreb cluster – used the interview setting to correct this power disparity. These feminists were, therefore, much more inclined than the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist ones to compare themselves with the latter for the purpose of delegitimising the latter's (war-related) feminist activism. At the same time, given that the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists have obtained legitimacy in the academic field – of which the majority of them was part – as well as within the Belgrade feminist field but on non-war-related issues, these feminists were less engaged than their Zagreb counterparts in delegitimising those from the other cluster.

The smaller intensity of such criticism was also due to the fact that, different from Croatia, Serbia's official war-related positionings overlapped much more with those of the so-called nationalist feminists. Nevertheless, the feminists from both Belgrade clusters appeared to be similarly burdened by Serbia's war legacy: so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists alike used (highly) implicit language to refer to the war-related tensions and refrained from mentioning other feminists by name. As a result of the weight of this responsibility, even the self-declared antinationalist feminists whose symbolic feminist capital was firmly established were unable to reassess their war-related positionings in the same manner as their Zagreb counterparts. Lastly, the same war legacy – and the related fear of losing one's legitimacy as an antinationalist feminist – silenced the overt expression of critical positionings within the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist cluster.

### **How could this research be followed up?**

I would like to propose five directions for developing research which will supplement the portrayal of the war-related dynamics among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists which is presented in this dissertation. First, given the intertwining of the Western (funding) audiences with the struggle for legitimacy among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, it is important to focus on this third party – funders, conference organisers, editors of (academic) publications etc – and explore in much more detail its influence on those dynamics. It is to be expected that such an exploration will additionally challenge the mainstream scholarly portrayal of the dynamics as only driven by the ideological disagreements between the local feminists. Second, one could analyse the post-2000 interactions between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. Such research would explore the impact of the absence of direct war violence on those interactions, including the war-related struggle for legitimacy between these two clusters and their strategic usage of the myth of transgression of (ethnic and state) boundaries.

A third research programme could shed much more light on the quite covert war-related tensions in Belgrade by paying exclusive attention to the feminists in this city and particularly focusing on the dynamics within the Belgrade Women's Studies Center – a group which gathered both self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists. An important question which such a research programme could answer is how the activists of this group managed to continue working together after starting to employ different positionings regarding the issue of Serb responsibility

and victimisation. A fourth research endeavour could concentrate on Belgrade as well and explore in more depth the Belgrade feminists' positionings with regard to the war in Kosovo and the (threat of the) NATO bombing. One of the issues which this research could illuminate is the related differentiation within the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster. These positionings and dynamics could be additionally compared to those regarding the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in order to further analyse the impact of the different type of warfare and the greater social distance between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians, compared to that between Serbs and Croats, and that between Serbs and Bosniaks.

Fifth and final, following the history of the relations between Kosovo and Serbia, as well as Serbia's continuous non-recognition of Kosovo's declaration of independence of 2008, one could analyse the establishment and development of the interaction between the Belgrade and Prishtina feminists – women who did not have a legacy of cooperation during Yugoslavia like the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists. Hereby special attention should be paid to the exploration of the mutual accusations of Serb or Kosovar Albanian nationalism which have been implicitly communicated to me by some respondents (also regarding feminists who are self-declared antinationalists). Keeping in mind the contextual embedment of these interactions, this research programme could also look at the struggle for legitimacy between the Belgrade and Prishtina feminists and compare it with that between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists.

### **Closing words**

As I indicated at the beginning of the dissertation, I hope that this research endeavour will both enrich the scholarship on (post-)Yugoslav feminism and be meaningful to my respondents – the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, in particular. From very early on during the fieldwork I started becoming increasingly aware of the fantastic opportunities for data collection which were offered to me by the (feminist) activists whom I approached in search for information. This awareness of the great value of the obtained exceptionally rich interview material – some stemming from activists whose voices have hardly been present in the scholarship – and the often very rare organisational documents and published (scholarly) texts grew even more rapidly in the course of the data analysis. In order to extract as much relevant information as possible from those precious sources, I decided subsequently to dedicate a lot of time and effort to that part of the research process.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

The contribution which I have created will, hopefully, prove to be valuable not only as a historical document on the war-related activism of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the 1990s, but also as a sociological examination of the associated intra-feminist dynamics and, to a smaller extent, the scholarship about it. In addition, these insights are potentially relevant beyond their immediate context, too. They can help increase the understanding of the (analyses of the) intra-feminist dynamics in other regions of the world which are dominated by nationalism and war violence, and where the work of the local feminists is closely intertwined with – and often dependent on – these activists' contacts with foreign academic, funding and/or political institutions.

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## Summary

This socio-historical doctorate research explores the positionings – discourses and activities – of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists vis-à-vis the (post-)Yugoslav wars and one another in the period between 1991 and 2000. Primarily applying a Bourdieuan framework and based on a comprehensive review of the relevant scholarship, extensive semi-structured qualitative interviews, and a thorough examination of various types of organisational documents and printed media articles, this analysis attends to a number of biases, lacunae and incorrect or insufficiently precise (recurring) information in the literature. In this way, this thesis not only enriches the existing historiographic and sociological knowledge on the war-related feminist activism in Belgrade and Zagreb in the 1990s, but it also raises several pressing epistemological questions about this knowledge. In short, I challenge the common suggestion that the outbreak of the war violence in 1991 led to exactly the same reorganisation of the feminist field both in Belgrade and in Zagreb: The feminists in each city, who had up until then worked together without tensions, divided into antinationalists and nationalists and began clashing with each other because of the different war-related positionings.

The first significant finding of this research is that the names ‘antinationalist’ (or, the less often used, ‘non-nationalist’) and ‘nationalist’ (or, the less often used, ‘patriotic’) should not be seen as completely value-free, objective descriptions of dissimilar ideological positionings, as the scholarship implies by not attending to the origin, meaning, and consequences of these terms. The designations in question were, instead, an essential part of the diverse local and international efforts to stop the (sexual) war violence, and of the struggle for legitimacy among the feminists in each city – endeavours in which many Western (feminist) academics, activists, and funders were involved, too.

Furthermore, a power disparity existed between the two sets of designations. ‘Antinationalist’ and ‘non-nationalist’ were the self-designations of some feminists, whereas ‘nationalist’ and ‘patriotic’ were the names which these feminists gave to the feminists from the same city whose war-related positionings departed from theirs. In addition, the classification employed by the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists who were seen as nationalists is by far less prevalent in the scholarship than the above classification which the other feminists used. Thus in this thesis I speak of self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist clusters, feminists and positionings.

Another important finding of this research is that Belgrade and Zagreb should not be considered as interchangeable locations with regard to the intra-feminist dynamics and the war-related feminist positionings in the 1990s. The split in Zagreb

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happened earlier (late 1991–early 1992) and was much more articulated and public. Throughout the 1990s it remained essentially intact, even though it started to become gradually less visible after late 1993. Such a clearly delineated split has never taken place in Belgrade. From early 1993 onward the existence of dissimilar war-related positionings among the Belgrade feminists began to crystallise, but quite unlike in Zagreb, these differences were hardly ever publicly articulated and some feminists with divergent positionings continued to work together in the same feminist groups. A slightly more noticeable and deeper division took place in Belgrade in 1998 and 1999, when an additional differentiation occurred in the self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster.

On the eve of the outbreak of the war violence the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists alike employed a purely gender-based positioning on domestic, sexual, and war violence, which regarded men as the perpetrators and women as the victims. However, faced with the (sexual) war violence in Croatia (1991–1995) and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1995), the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists abandoned this orthodox positioning and created a new, heretical positioning which was ethnicity-based. In this new positioning Serbs were the perpetrators, while Bosniaks and Croats were the victims. Thus, it was impossible for Serbs to be victims of (sexual) war violence committed by Bosniaks and/or Croats. The Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists used categories which were more open. They maintained their pre-war gender-based positioning, but made it less strict by partially adding ethnicity to it. While underlining the fact that all warring sides committed (sexual) war violence, these feminists recognised Serbia's greater responsibility for it and the dominance of the Serb (sexual) war crimes. This modification occurred, though, only after the appearance of more reliable reports on these crimes.

A few years later, in the spring of 1999, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists approved of the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. They saw it as the appropriate way to end Serbia's continuous policy of ethnic cleansing of non-Serbs, which was, at that time, aimed at the Kosovar Albanians and earlier at Bosniaks and Croats. The feminists from the other Zagreb cluster disapproved both of the bombing as a method and of the Serb ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians, but did not make a link between the latter and the previous wars.

All Belgrade feminists initially maintained the gender-based positioning on violence and spoke of a shared responsibility and victimisation of all warring sides. Nevertheless, as a result of the emergence of more trustworthy information on the perpetrators and victims of the (sexual) war violence, as well as of the interactions with Zagreb feminists at gatherings in third countries, the future Belgrade self-declared

antinationalist feminists changed their positioning radically. They began to accentuate Serbia's greatest responsibility for and participation in the (sexual) war violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, as well as to condemn Serbia's politics of ethnic cleansing of non-Serbs. The gender-based positioning was not abandoned, but it was subordinated to the new and heretical ethnicity-based one. The other Belgrade feminists, the future so-called nationalist ones, continued to employ the orthodox gender-based positioning on (sexual) war violence and to talk of a shared responsibility and victimisation of all warring sides, but started to pay more attention to the Serb victimisation. Soon afterwards, though, the ethnicity-based positioning of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists became the orthodox positioning in the Belgrade feminist field, whereas the gender-based positioning ended up as heretical.

During the NATO bombing and the intensified war in Kosovo the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists condemned the Serb victimisation by NATO, but they remained silent about the Serb ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians. This positioning on victims and perpetrators was shared by some Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. The other feminists from the latter cluster openly criticised this instance of ethnic cleansing but held opposing views on whether the bombing was the right means to bring an end to Serbia's long-standing politics of violence against non-Serbs.

Each of these different positionings served, on the one hand, to communicate a specific definition of the war situation – including the designation of perpetrators and victims – and to indicate the needed mechanisms for cessation of the (sexual) war violence. On the other hand, these positionings were closely intertwined with the struggle for legitimacy between the two clusters in each city, ie the efforts to establish oneself and the like-minded feminists as those who appropriately perceived the war situation and suggested the most viable strategies for restoring peace. This aspect of the dynamics among the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists has remained thus far fully omitted from the scholarship.

That the strife for legitimacy was especially observable in the interactions with Western audiences and was much more pronounced among the Zagreb feminists should be seen, foremost, in light of the differences in their symbolic feminist capital. The Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were typically those who enjoyed a larger legitimacy (symbolic feminist capital) in the West and had, consequently, better access to Western funds, training, networks, and media, which further increased their symbolic feminist capital. In addition, they came more often from more privileged backgrounds in socialist Yugoslavia, and their gender-based positioning on

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perpetrators and victims was the orthodox one in the Zagreb feminist field. Therefore, the Zagreb heretical challengers, the so-called nationalist feminists, had to put a great deal of effort into their attempts to delegitimise the feminists from the other cluster and to become recognised as the legitimate Zagreb feminists.

The situation in Belgrade was, once more, somewhat different. Whereas the encounters with Western audiences often caused a comparable struggle for legitimacy among the Belgrade feminists, this struggle was less common and less intense than that in Zagreb. Unlike in Zagreb, there were no large pre-war differences in cultural, economic, social, and symbolic feminist capital among the Belgrade feminists. Furthermore, the ultimate Belgrade heretical challengers, the so-called nationalist feminists, were numerically inferior and did not engage that much in challenging the legitimacy of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist cluster, but focused on their other (often academic) interests. Finally, contrary to their Zagreb counterparts' implicit denial of any Croat responsibility, the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists acknowledged the Serb partial responsibility for the (sexual) war violence. Since the latter was not the case regarding the NATO bombing and the war in Kosovo, the struggle for legitimacy increased somewhat around that time, but did not reach the same intensity as earlier in Zagreb.

At the time of interviewing in 2009 (or, in few cases, 2010) it turned out that the divisions between the feminists and the struggle for legitimacy were still very emotionally and politically charged topics for the respondents and were, therefore, hardly ever addressed. The only respondents who were partially able to observe critically both their positionings from the 1990s and the dynamics of the time between the two clusters were the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. The narratives of the majority of the Zagreb so-called nationalist respondents were quite at odds. The war-related positionings that these feminists articulated and the vocabulary that they used to delegitimise the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were virtually the same as those from the 1990s. This difference between the clusters was due to the fact that the positioning on perpetrators and victims, which was used in the Croatian official politics in 2009 (2010), stood closer to that of the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, as well as to the fact that these activists have remained the established Zagreb feminists – both in the West and in the Zagreb feminist field. The 1990s were, thus, a much less distant past for the Zagreb so-called nationalist respondents.

A more intense presence of the 1990s was visible also in the narratives of the Belgrade feminists regardless of cluster, but for different reasons: the greater temporal proximity of the war violence which took place in Serbia, the ongoing strife between

Belgrade and Prishtina regarding Kosovo's independence, the awareness of Serbia's at least partial responsibility for the wars, and the political murder of the Serbian prime minister in 2003. Different from their Zagreb counterparts, the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists, despite remaining the legitimate Belgrade feminists with regard to war-related topics in the Belgrade feminist field and in the West alike, could not afford to openly question their positionings from the 1990s. This absence of a critical perspective was strengthened by Serbia's official positioning on victims and perpetrators in 2009 (2010), which spoke of a shared responsibility and victimisation of all warring sides, but underlined the Serb victimisation – a positioning which overlapped with that of the other Belgrade feminist cluster. At the same time, given this overlap, as well as the legitimacy which the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists enjoyed regarding non-war-related issues, they were less inclined than their Zagreb counterparts to delegitimise the self-declared antinationalist feminists. When they, nonetheless, did so – in order to increase the legitimacy of their own war-related positionings – their speech was less fervent and accusatory than that of the corresponding Zagreb feminists. This had also to do with the fact that the struggle for legitimacy between the Belgrade clusters in the 1990s was less pronounced and severe than that in Zagreb.



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Dit socio-historisch onderzoek verkent de positioneringen – discoursen en activiteiten – van de Belgradose en Zagrebse feministen aangaande de (post-)Joegoslavische oorlogen en elkaar in de periode tussen 1991 en 2000. Vooral gebruikmakend van een Bourdieuaanse benadering en gebaseerd op een veelomvattende bestudering van de relevante literatuur, uitgebreide semi-gestructureerde kwalitatieve interviews en een uitvoerige exploratie van verschillende soorten organisatorische documenten en artikelen uit gedrukte media, schenkt de analyse aandacht aan een aantal vertekeningen, lacunes en onjuiste of onvoldoende nauwkeurige (terugkerende) informatie in de literatuur. Daarbij verrijkt deze dissertatie niet alleen de bestaande historiografische en sociologische kennis over het oorlogsgelateerde feministische activisme in Belgrado en Zagreb in de jaren 1990, maar werpt zij ook enkele dringende epistemologische vragen op met betrekking tot deze kennis. Kort gezegd betwist ik de gangbare suggestie dat de uitbarsting van het oorlogsgeweld in 1991 heeft geleid tot precies dezelfde reorganisatie van het feministische veld zowel in Belgrado als in Zagreb: in beide steden hebben de feministen, die tot dat moment hadden samengewerkt zonder spanningen, zich gesplitst in antinationalisten en nationalisten en begonnen zij met elkaar te strijden wegens de verschillende oorlogsgelateerde positioneringen.

De eerste significante bevinding van dit onderzoek is dat de namen ‘antinationalistisch’ (of, de minder vaak gebruikte, ‘niet-nationalistisch’) en ‘nationalistisch’ (of, de minder vaak gebruikte, ‘patriottisch’) niet moeten worden gezien als volledig waardevrije, objectieve beschrijvingen van uiteenlopende ideologische positioneringen, zoals de literatuur impliceert door geen aandacht te besteden aan de oorsprong, betekenis en gevolgen van deze termen. In plaats daarvan waren de benamingen in kwestie een essentieel onderdeel van de diverse lokale en internationale inspanningen om het (seksuele) oorlogsgeweld te beëindigen, en van de legitimatiestrijd onder de feministen in beide steden – ondernemingen waar ook veel westerse (feministische) academici, activisten en financiers bij betrokken waren.

Verder bestond een machtsverschil tussen de twee namensets. ‘Antinationalistisch’ en ‘niet-nationalistisch’ waren de zelf-benamingen van sommige feministen, terwijl ‘nationalistisch’ en ‘patriottisch’ de benamingen waren die deze feministen hebben gegeven aan de feministen in dezelfde stad wier oorlogsgelateerde positioneringen verschilden van de hunne. Bovendien is de classificatie die werd toegepast door de Belgradose en Zagrebse feministen die werden gezien als nationalistes aanzienlijk minder gebruikelijk in de literatuur dan de bovengenoemde classificatie die de andere feministen gebruikten. Daarom spreek ik in deze dissertatie

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van zelfverklaarde antinationalistische en zogenaamd nationalistische clusters, feministen en positioneringen.

Een andere belangrijke bevinding van dit onderzoek is dat Belgrado en Zagreb niet moeten worden beschouwd als uitwisselbare locaties met betrekking tot de intrafeministische dynamiek en de oorlogsgelateerde positioneringen in de jaren 1990. De splitsing in Zagreb gebeurde eerder (eind 1991–begin 1992) en was veel meer gearticuleerd en openbaar. Zij bleef door de jaren 1990 zo goed als intact, alhoewel zij langzamerhand minder zichtbaar begon te worden na eind 1993. Zo'n duidelijk afgebakende tweedeling heeft nooit plaatsgevonden in Belgrado. Vanaf begin 1993 begon het bestaan van ongelijke oorlogsgelateerde positioneringen tussen de Belgradose feministen te kristalliseren, maar heel anders dan in Zagreb werden deze verschillen nauwelijks gearticuleerd in het openbaar en bleven sommige feministen met uiteenlopende positioneringen samenwerken in dezelfde feministische groepen. Een enigszins merkbaarder en diepere scheiding vond plaats in Belgrado in 1998 en 1999, toen een additionele differentiatie zich voordeed binnen de zelfverklaarde antinationalistische feministische cluster.

Aan de vooravond van de uitbarsting van het oorlogsgeweld gebruikten zowel de Belgradose als de Zagrebse feministen een volledig gender-gebaseerde positionering aangaande huiselijk, seksueel en oorlogsgeweld, die mannen als de daders en vrouwen als de slachtoffers beschouwde. Echter, geconfronteerd met het (seksuele) oorlogsgeweld in Kroatië (1991–1995) en in Bosnië-Herzegovina (1992–1995), verlieten de Zagrebse zogenaamd nationalistische feministen deze orthodoxe positionering en creëerden een nieuwe, heretische positionering die was gebaseerd op etniciteit. In deze nieuwe positionering waren Serviërs de daders, terwijl Bosniakken en Kroaten de slachtoffers waren. Het was dus onmogelijk voor Serviërs om slachtoffers te zijn van door Bosniakken en/of Kroaten gepleegd (seksueel) oorlogsgeweld. De Zagrebse zelfverklaarde antinationalistische feministen hanteerden categorieën die meer open waren. Ze hielden hun vooroorlogse gender-gebaseerde positionering vol, maar hebben hem minder strikt gemaakt door er gedeeltelijk etniciteit aan toe te voegen. Terwijl ze onderstreepten het feit dat alle strijdende partijen (seksueel) oorlogsgeweld pleegden, erkenden deze feministen de Servische grotere verantwoordelijkheid daarvoor en het overwicht van de Servische (seksuele) oorlogsmisdaden. Deze verandering gebeurde echter pas na de verschijning van betrouwbaardere verslagen over deze misdaden.

Enkele jaren later, in de lente van 1999, keurden de Zagrebse zogenaamde nationalistische feministen het NAVO-bombardement op de Federale Republiek Joegoslavië goed. Ze zagen het als de geschikte manier om een eind te maken aan het

Servische onophoudelijke beleid van etnische zuivering van niet-Serviërs dat op dat moment was gericht op de Kosovaarse Albanezen, en eerder op Bosniakken en Kroaten. De feministen uit de andere Zagrebse cluster keurden zowel het bombardement als methode als de Servische etnische zuivering van de Kosovaarse Albanezen af, maar legden geen verband tussen deze en de eerdere oorlogen.

Alle Belgradose feministen handhaafden aanvankelijk de gender-gebaseerde positionering aangaande geweld en spraken van een gedeelde verantwoordelijkheid en slachtofferschap van alle strijdende partijen. Niettemin, ten gevolge van de opkomst van geloofwaardigere informatie over de daders en slachtoffers van het (seksuele) oorlogsgeweld, evenals van de interacties met Zagrebse feministen op vergaderingen in derde landen, veranderden de toekomstige Belgradose zelfverklaarde antinationalistische feministen hun positionering radicaal. Ze begonnen de grootste verantwoordelijkheid van Servië voor en deelname aan het (seksuele) oorlogsgeweld in Bosnië-Herzegovina en Kroatië te accentueren, en de Servische politiek van etnische zuivering van niet-Serviërs te veroordelen. De gender-gebaseerde positionering werd niet verlaten, maar ondergeschikt gemaakt aan de nieuwe en heretische die was gebaseerd op etniciteit. De andere Belgradose feministen, de toekomstige zogenaamd nationalistische, bleven de orthodoxe gender-gebaseerde positionering aangaande (seksueel) oorlogsgeweld gebruiken en praten over een gedeelde verantwoordelijkheid en slachtofferschap van alle strijdende partijen, maar begonnen meer aandacht te besteden aan het Servische slachtofferschap. Echter, kort daarna werd de etniciteit-gebaseerde positionering van de Belgradose zelfverklaarde antinationalistische feministen de orthodoxe positionering in het Belgradose feministische veld, terwijl de gender-gebaseerde eindigde als heretisch.

Tijdens het NAVO-bombardement en de geïntensiveerde oorlog in Kosovo veroordeelden de Belgradose zogenaamd nationalistische feministen het Servische slachtofferschap door de NAVO, maar bleven zij zwijgen over de Servische etnische zuivering van de Kosovaarse Albanezen. Deze positionering aangaande slachtoffers en daders werd gedeeld door enkele Belgradose zelfverklaarde antinationalistische feministen. De andere feministen uit de tweede cluster bekritiseerden openlijk dit geval van etnische zuivering, maar hadden tegenovergestelde opvattingen over het bombardement als de gepaste manier voor het beëindigen van de Servische langdurige politiek van geweld tegen niet-Serviërs.

Elke van deze verschillende positioneringen diende aan de ene kant om een specifieke definitie van de oorlogssituatie te communiceren – inclusief de benaming van daders en slachtoffers – en om de nodige mechanismen voor de beëindiging van het (seksuele) oorlogsgeweld aan te duiden. Aan de andere kant waren deze

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positioneringen nauw vervlochten met de legitimatiestrijd tussen de twee clusters in beide steden, namelijk de inspanningen om zichzelf en de gelijkdenkende feministen te vestigen als degenen die de oorlogssituatie juist waarnamen en de haalbaarste strategieën suggereerden om vrede te herstellen. Dit aspect van de dynamiek tussen de feministen in Belgrado en in Zagreb is tot nu toe volledig overgeslagen in de literatuur.

Dat de legitimatiestrijd vooral te merken was in de interacties met westers publiek en veel meer uitgesproken was onder de Zagrebse feministen moet voornamelijk worden gezien in het licht van de verschillen in hun symbolische feministische kapitaal. De Zagrebse zelfverklaarde antinationalistische feministen waren doorgaans degenen die genoten van een grotere legitimatie (symbolisch feministisch kapitaal) in het Westen en die daarom een betere toegang hadden tot westerse fondsen, training, netwerken en media, wat hun symbolische feministische kapitaal verder vergrootte. Bovendien kwamen ze vaker uit meer geprivilegieerde achtergronden in socialistisch Joegoslavië en was hun gender-gebaseerde positionering aangaande daders en slachtoffers de orthodoxe in het Zagrebse feministische veld. Om die reden moesten de Zagrebse heretische uitdagers, de zogenaamd nationalistische feministen, zich zeer inspannen in hun pogingen om de feministen uit de andere cluster te delegitimeren en erkend te worden als de legitieme Zagrebse feministen.

Wederom was de situatie in Belgrado enigszins anders. Terwijl de ontmoetingen met westers publiek vaak een vergelijkbare legitimatiestrijd veroorzaakten onder de Belgradose feministen, was deze strijd minder gebruikelijk en minder intensief dan die in Zagreb. Anders dan in Zagreb waren er geen grote vooroorlogse verschillen in cultureel, economisch, sociaal en symbolisch feministisch kapitaal tussen de Belgradose feministen. Daarenboven waren de uiteindelijke Belgradose heretische uitdagers, de zogenaamd nationalistische feministen, kleiner in aantal en hielden ze zich minder bezig met het aanvechten van de legitimatie van de Belgradose zelfverklaarde antinationalistische cluster, maar focusten ze zich op hun andere (vaak academische) interesses. Tot slot, in tegenstelling tot de impliciete ontkenning van enige Kroatische verantwoordelijkheid door hun Zagrebse tegenhangers, erkenden de Belgradose zogenaamd nationalistische feministen de Servische gedeeltelijke verantwoordelijkheid voor het (seksueel) oorlogsgeweld. Aangezien het laatstgenoemde niet het geval was met betrekking tot het NAVO-bombardement en de oorlog in Kosovo, nam de legitimatiestrijd rond die tijd iets toe, maar bereikte niet dezelfde intensiteit als eerder in Zagreb.

Op het moment van interviewen in 2009 (of, in enkele gevallen, 2010) bleek dat de splittingsen tussen de feministen en de legitimatiestrijd nog steeds zeer emotioneel en politiek geladen onderwerpen waren voor de respondenten en daarom

nauwelijks aan de orde werden gesteld. De enige respondenten die deels in staat waren om hun positioneringen uit de jaren 1990 en de toenmalige dynamiek tussen de twee clusters kritisch te bekijken, waren de Zagrebse zelfverklaarde antinationalistische feministen. Tamelijk tegenovergesteld waren de narratieven van de meerderheid van de Zagrebse zogenaamd nationalistische feministen. De oorlogsgelateerde positioneringen die deze feministen articuleerden en het vocabulaire dat zij gebruikten om de Zagrebse zelfverklaarde antinationalistische feministen te delegitimeren waren praktisch dezelfde als die uit de jaren 1990. Dit verschil tussen de clusters kwam door het feit dat de positionering aangaande daders en slachtoffers die werd gehanteerd in de Kroatische officiële politiek in 2009 (2010) dichterbij die van de Zagrebse zelfverklaarde antinationalistische feministen stond, alsmede het feit dat deze activisten de gevestigde Zagrebse feministen waren gebleven – zowel in het Westen als in het Zagrebse feministische veld. De jaren 1990 waren dus een veel minder ver verleden voor de Zagrebse zogenaamd nationalistische respondenten.

Een intensere aanwezigheid van de jaren 1990 was zichtbaar ook in de narratieven van de Belgradose feministen, ongeacht de cluster, maar om andere redenen: de grotere temporele nabijheid van het oorlogsgeweld dat plaatsvond in Servië, de voortdurende strijd tussen Belgrado en Pristina over de onafhankelijkheid van Kosovo, het besef van de ten minste gedeeltelijke Servische verantwoordelijkheid voor de oorlogen, en de politieke moord van de Servische minister-president in 2003. In tegenstelling tot hun Zagrebse tegenhangers konden de Belgradose zelfverklaarde antinationalistische feministen, ondanks hun aanhoudende legitimatie met betrekking tot oorlogsgelateerde onderwerpen in het Belgradose feministische veld en in het Westen, zich niet permitteren om hun positioneringen uit de jaren 1990 openlijk te betwijfelen. Deze afwezigheid van een kritisch perspectief werd versterkt door de Servische officiële positionering aangaande slachtoffers en daders in 2009 (2010) die sprak van een gedeelde verantwoordelijkheid en slachtofferschap van alle strijdende partijen, maar het Servische slachtofferschap onderstreepte – een positionering die overlapte met die van de andere Belgradose feministische cluster. Tegelijkertijd, gezien deze overlapping, alsook de legitimatie die de Belgradose zogenaamd nationalistische feministen genoten met betrekking tot niet-oorlogsgelateerde vraagstukken, waren ze minder geneigd dan hun Zagrebse tegenhangers om de zelfverklaarde antinationalistische feministen te delegitimeren. Toen ze dat desalniettemin deden – om de legitimatie van hun eigen oorlogsgelateerde positioneringen te vergroten – was hun vertoog minder vurig en beschuldigend dan dat van de overeenkomstige Zagrebse feministen. Dit had ook te maken met het feit dat de legitimatiestrijd tussen de Belgradose clusters in de jaren 1990 minder uitgesproken en ernstig was dan die in Zagreb.

## APPENDIX A

### Names of the mentioned Belgrade and Zagreb groups

Translation of the name in English	Original name in Croatian/Serbian
Antiwar Campaign Croatia (Zagreb)	Antiratna kampanja Hrvatske
Association for Women's Initiative (Belgrade)	Asocijacija za žensku inicijativu
Association of Autonomous Women's Initiatives (Belgrade)	Asocijacija autonomnih ženskih inicijativa
Autonomous Women's Center Against Sexual Violence (Belgrade)	Autonomni ženski centar protiv seksualnog nasilja
Autonomous Women's House Zagreb	Autonomna ženska kuća Zagreb
B.a.B.e. Women's Human Rights Group (Zagreb)	B.a.B.e. Grupa za ženska ljudska prava
Belgrade Circle	Beogradski krug
Belgrade Women's Lobby (or Women's Lobby Belgrade)	Beogradski ženski lobi (or Ženski lobi Beograd)
BISER International Initiative of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Zagreb)	BISER Internacionalna inicijativa žena Bosne i Hercegovine
Center for Women War Victims (Zagreb)	Centar za žene žrtve rata
Center for Women's Studies, Research and Communication (Belgrade)	Centar za ženske studije, istraživanja i komunikaciju
Centre for Antiwar Action (Belgrade)	Centar za antiratnu akciju
Centre for Peace Studies (Zagreb)	Centar za mirovne studije
Centre for Women's Studies (Zagreb)	Centar za ženske studije
Croatian Background Front (Zagreb)	Hrvatska pozadinska fronta
Croatian Population Movement (Zagreb)	Hrvatski populacijski pokret
Croatian Woman (Zagreb)	Hrvatska žena
Group for Women Raped in War (Belgrade)	Grupa za žene silovane u ratu
Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia (Belgrade)	Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji
Independence (Belgrade)	Nezavisnost
Independent Union of Women (Zagreb)	Nezavisni savez žena
Kareta, ie Radical Feminist Group Kareta (Zagreb)	Kareta, ie Radikalna feministička grupa Kareta
Network of Multicultural Help (Zagreb)	Mreža multikulturalne pomoći

Nona, ie Multimedia Women's Centre Nona (Zagreb)	Nona, ie Multimedijski ženski centar Nona
Only the Serb Woman Saves the Serb Man (Belgrade)	Samo Srpkinja Srbina spasava
O-zona Women's Line (Zagreb)	O-zona ženska linija
Rampart of Love (Zagreb)	Bedem ljubavi
SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence (Belgrade)	SOS telefon za žene i djecu žrtve nasilja
Union of Women of Croatia (Zagreb)	Savez žena Hrvatske
We – For Our Guard (Zagreb)	Mi – za našu gardu
Woman and Society (Belgrade and Zagreb)	Žena i društvo
Women B&H Women's Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Zagreb)	Žene BIH Udruženje žena Bosne i Hercegovine
Women in Black (Belgrade)	Žene u crnom
Women's Group Trešnjevka (Zagreb)	Ženska grupa Trešnjevka
Women's Help Now – SOS Hotline (Zagreb)	Ženska pomoć sada – SOS Telefon
Women's Infoteka (Zagreb)	Ženska infoteka
Women's Lobby Zagreb (or Zagreb Women's Lobby)	Ženski lobby Zagreb (or Zagrebački ženski lobby)
Women's Network Croatia (Zagreb)	Ženska mreža Hrvatske
Women's Party (Belgrade)	Ženska stranka
Women's Studies and Gender Research Center (Belgrade)	Centar za ženske studije i istraživanje roda
Women's Studies Center (Belgrade)	Centar za ženske studije
Zagreb Group for Women's Human Rights	Zagrebačka grupa za ljudska prava žena

## APPENDIX B

### List of conducted interviews

Interview with	Description	Date
Zagreb1N	main Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist	20.01.2009
Zagreb2AN (withdrawn)	main Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	22.01.2009
Zagreb3AN	main Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	03.02.2009
Zagreb4N	main Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist	05.02.2009
Zagreb5ANA	additional Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	07.02.2009
Zagreb6N	main Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist	13.02.2009
Zagreb7AN	main Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	18.02.2009
Zagreb8NA	additional Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist	19.02.2009
Zagreb9AN	main Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	21.02.2009
Zagreb10ANA	additional Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	23.02.2009
Zagreb11AN	main Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	26.02.2009
Zagreb12AN (1 <sup>st</sup> part)	main Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	27.02.2009
Zagreb13N	main Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist	04.03.2009
Zagreb14N	main Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist	05.03.2009
Zagreb15N	main Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist	06.03.2009
Zagreb16N	main Zagreb so-called nationalist feminist	07.03.2009
Zagreb12AN (2 <sup>nd</sup> part)	main Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	10.03.2009
Zagreb17ANA	additional Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	12.03.2009
Zagreb18ANA	additional Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	13.03.2009
Zagreb19EXT	external Zagreb respondent	16.03.2009
Zagreb20EXT	external Zagreb respondent	17.03.2009
Zagreb21ANA	additional Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	18.03.2009
Zagreb22EXT	external Zagreb-based American respondent	18.03.2009
Zagreb23AN	main Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	22.03.2009
Zagreb24AN	main Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist	09.04.2009
Belgrade1ANA	additional Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	01.06.2009

Belgrade2N	main Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist	02.06.2009
Belgrade3AN	main Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	03.06.2009
Belgrade4AN	main Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	04.06.2009
Ljubljana1EXT and Ljubljana2EXT	external Ljubljana respondents	05.06.2009
Belgrade5AN	main Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	08.06.2009
Belgrade6AN	main Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	11.06.2009
Ljubljana3EXT	external Ljubljana respondent	15.06.2009
Belgrade7ANA	additional Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	17.06.2009
Belgrade8AN (withdrawn)	main Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	18.06.2009
Sarajevo1EXT (1 <sup>st</sup> part)	external Sarajevo respondent	29.06.2009
Sarajevo2EXT	external Sarajevo respondent	29.06.2009
Belgrade9EXT	external Belgrade respondent	02.07.2009
Belgrade10AN	main Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	09.07.2009
Belgrade11AN (1 <sup>st</sup> part)	main Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	10.07.2009
Belgrade12N	main Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist	23.07.2009
Belgrade13AN	main Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	25.07.2009
Belgrade14AN	main Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	27.07.2009
Prishtina1EXT	external Prishtina respondent	06.08.2009
Prishtina2EXT	external Prishtina respondent	06.08.2009
Sarajevo1EXT (2 <sup>nd</sup> part)	external Sarajevo respondent	11.08.2009
Sarajevo3EXT	external Sarajevo respondent	14.09.2009
Belgrade15N	main Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist	04.09.2010
Belgrade11AN (2 <sup>nd</sup> part)	main Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist	08.09.2010
Belgrade16N	main Belgrade so-called nationalist feminist	09.09.2010

