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Taking a stand in times of violent societal changes: Belgrade and Zagreb feminists' positionings on the (post-)Yugoslav wars and each other (1991-2000)

Miškovska Kajevska, A.

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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 1992,²³⁰ 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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as still holding a completely different view of the war.²³¹ 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...

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.²³²

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

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 1990,²³³ 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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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 1992,²³⁴ 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

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.²³⁵ 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.

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,²³⁶ 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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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.²³⁷ 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

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.²³⁸ 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.

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.²³⁹

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.

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.²⁴⁰ 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

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. They²⁴¹ defined themselves in one way, these²⁴² 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

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?’²⁴³ and ‘They are all the same.’²⁴⁴...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.

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 ‘Tudman’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.²⁴⁵ 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 2003.²⁴⁶ 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

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'²⁴⁷ (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,

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.²⁴⁸ 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.

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,²⁴⁹ 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

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,²⁵⁰ 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

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.²⁵¹

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.

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.²⁵² 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

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'.²⁵³

The tensions between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were another issue which Zagreb12AN touched upon in her narrative. She

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 meeting²⁵⁴ 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.²⁵⁵

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,

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.