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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)

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

This final and concluding chapter consists of four sections. I begin by summarising once more the research topic and the employed analytical framework. In the second section I elaborate upon the key findings and link them to the main biases and lacunae in the existing scholarship. Thereby I illuminate the multilayered contribution which this research makes to the present scholarly knowledge on the Belgrade and Zagreb war-related feminism in the 1990s, and the epistemological questions which it raises regarding this knowledge. The third section contains my suggestions for further research projects. I address several topics which have been generated by this study and which I find important to examine in the future. I close the chapter by shortly reflecting about this research effort and its hoped-for relevance.

What was this research about?

This dissertation contains the results of my qualitative socio-historical comparison of the development and contents of the war-related positionings, ie discourses and activities, of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists in the period 1991–2000: a decade of profound and largely violent societal changes in the region which between 1945 and 1991 constituted the Yugoslav federation. I analysed two sorts of war-related positionings – those regarding the (post-)Yugoslav wars, and those towards the feminists from the same and the other city with whom the respondents had convergent or divergent positionings on these wars.

In order to better understand and explain the differences and similarities between the positionings in question, as well as the emotions which accompanied them, I inquired extensively into the (post-)Yugoslav contexts in which these feminists produced and reproduced or changed their positionings. I also paid significant attention to the struggle for legitimacy between and among the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists: their strategies for establishing themselves as the only legitimate feminist agents who held the correct definitions of the situation (ie the events and those involved) and acted correspondingly. In addition, I compared the life stories of the main producers of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminist positionings. The goal of that analysis was, first, to check what

were the biographical similarities and differences (both war-related and not) between the activists from the two cities, as well as among the activists in each city. Second, I wanted to find out whether those differences and similarities were anyhow related to the participation in one cluster or another. Lastly, I explored how the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists spoke at the time of interviewing about the war-related clustering in the 1990s.

The lens which I employed for observing and understanding the war-related dynamics among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists was foremostly created by the work of Pierre Bourdieu and supplemented with insights on memory and myth. This framework has enabled me to look at the contention between these feminists from a broader angle than the one which has been commonly suggested in the scholarship. Instead of understanding the tensions as being purely based in war-related ideological differences, ie as only resulting from the conflict between (so-called) nationalist and (self-declared) antinationalist feminists after the beginning of the war violence, I was able to replace this simplified portrayal with a much more complex one. Without neglecting, denying or minimising the war-related political divergences, I discerned the context-based (or: field-based) power dissimilarities between the feminists – some of which originated from the pre-war period – and their related efforts to maintain or increase their own legitimacy and decrease that of other feminists. The discovery of these efforts is very significant since the legitimacy which the feminists aimed at was directly related to access to grants, information, networks, trainings and travel opportunities. The chosen approach proved very suitable also for a critical analysis of the relevant scholarship. I could see how the different authors (local and Western alike) did not produce neutral, disinterested and objective knowledge, but were themselves intertwined with and often openly took sides in these struggles for legitimacy.

In short, using the Bourdieuan lens, this research tells the story of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists who in the 1990s vigorously articulated their war-related positionings in the feminist field in their respective city and in those abroad. Already during Yugoslavia's existence, despite the country's official ideology of equality of all, there were differences among some of these agents in the amount of cultural, economic and social capital which they had at their disposal. Besides this, there were sometimes disagreements among them regarding the correct feminist positioning on certain societal practices. Each feminist aimed at increasing her symbolic feminist capital, ie at being perceived as somebody who accurately understood the manifestations of the gender-based power disparities in the Yugoslav society, and knew the right ways

to correct them. In other words, each activist put effort into being recognised as a legitimate feminist agent in the feminist field.

This already existing struggle for legitimacy changed its form and significantly intensified after the outburst of the war violence. Two clusters of feminists were formed in each city, albeit not at the same time and with the same clear-cut dividing line. One cluster was made up of the feminists who maintained the strictly gender-based feminist positioning on (domestic, sexual and war) violence that had been established before the war. This positioning entailed that women (and children), regardless of ethnicity, were victims of the violence committed by men, regardless of ethnicity, by reason of the latter's greater gender-based power in society. The other cluster gathered the feminists who challenged this positioning by adding ethnicity to it, ie by underlining that the ethnic origin of the perpetrators and the victims was not to be neglected, given the differences in military power and politics between the ethnically-marked warring sides. Both feminist clusters – but especially the Zagreb ones – fought with each other in the respective city and even more so at the gatherings and in the (academic) media in Western countries to establish themselves as legitimate political entities which were made up of feminists with a shared correct definition of the situation and an unambiguous common agenda for ending the war violence and relieving its consequences.

To this purpose, as well as to bring some clarity and stability into the chaotic and confusing reality which the war violence created by virtue of its power to constitute new meanings and change allegiances between people, the feminists from each cluster resorted to three strategies. They created an affirmative myth for themselves, gave favourable names to their own cluster and unfavourable ones to their feminist opponents, and questioned the latter's (feminist) agency by *inter alia* misrecognising their own (personal) interests in this political struggle and critically illuminating those of the other side. The endeavour to enlarge one's own and one's cluster's symbolic feminist capital was particularly visible at the meetings abroad and in the texts which were written for foreign audiences. These occasions increased one's chances of converting this capital into other forms: cultural (eg trainings, conferences or books), economic (eg funds for activities and at least some remuneration for the activists) and/or social (eg publicity and access to new networks of feminist and peace activists). Additionally, each converted capital was potentially again transformable into symbolic feminist capital for the purpose of further increasing the legitimacy of the concrete feminists and their positionings. Finally, when asked in 2009 or 2010 to reflect upon their own war-related positionings in the 1990s and those of their

feminist allies and opponents, each feminist's narrative was not only influenced by the malleability of memory and her past and present position in the feminist field, but also by the developments in the politics of Croatia and Serbia, ie her past and present position in the political field of the respective country.

How do the findings of this research enrich the existing scholarship?

Next to benefitting from the chosen theoretical framework, this research was able to pay heed to several serious scholarly lacunae and biases, also thanks to its attention for the contextual embedment of the war-related positionings of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, the exhaustive scholarship review, the use of comprehensive semi-structured interviews and the systematic exploration of a broad range of original documents from the entire analysed decade. To begin with, the inquiry into the scholarly works on the wars which were waged on the territory of Yugoslavia revealed a large gender bias in terms of the analysed research subjects. Most of this general scholarship on the (post-) Yugoslav wars dealt with active men: politicians, military leaders, intellectuals, soldiers or members of non-governmental initiatives. Women were the focus of the specific gender scholarship and mainly present as passive victims of the sexual war violence. The feminist activists who are the subject of my research have, thus, repeatedly fallen between two stools. They have not been seen as sufficiently important political agents to be asked about their standpoints and actions, and they were not raped refugee women either whose victimisation could be explored.

Still, even though these feminists have not waged the (post-)Yugoslav wars – with the exception of the short military experience of one Zagreb self-declared antinationalist respondent – they have played a very important role in them. So-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists alike have provided psychosocial and other assistance to (raped) refugee women in times when state support was either missing or insufficient and largely inadequate. Feminists from both clusters have, furthermore, advocated in the respective country and abroad the end of the wars (and the war rapes in particular) and the bringing to justice of perpetrators, supported draft evaders, informed very diverse Western audiences about the daily war realities and – next to all of this – continued locally with their pre-war work on combating male domestic violence against women and educating the general public about the war-related and non-war-related gender-based power inequalities in the society.

This substantial lacuna in the scholarship on the (post-)Yugoslav wars becomes even larger when the contributions which do address the Belgrade and/

or Zagreb feminists are examined thoroughly. In spite of the important novel information which some of these works contain, this scholarship remains dominated by many biases, empty spaces and further unsubstantiated bare reproductions of the same few earlier analyses. All these problematic issues have thus far remained virtually unattended by scholars, including the local Belgrade and Zagreb ones, some of whom have themselves belonged to or cooperated with the self-declared antinationalist or the so-called nationalist feminist cluster in the respective city.

The scholarship is also politically biased. Deliberately or not, it was a part of and used in the varied efforts to inform the (Western) audiences about the war realities, including the war rapes, as well as about the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists who were engaged in assisting the survivors. These contributions did not only aim at cessation of the (sexual) war violence and penalisation of its perpetrators, but also at securing (financial) resources for the local feminists whose war-related positionings were approved of by the author in question. Different strategies were used in those texts to indicate which feminists were worthy of support: use of laudatory formulations for them and derogatory ones for the others, complete omission to mention the latter as also being engaged in war-related feminist activism, or a choice to ignore their self-designation 'feminists' and instead refer to them as 'women's activists,' while preserving the term 'feminists' only for the like-minded activists. The existence of such a bias has remained, however, virtually unattended to, making the scholarship appear as not privileging any feminist activists or positionings but only providing disinterested information on the situation on the ground.

Another problematic point in the scholarship concerns the designations which are used to describe the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists and their positionings. The most common terms – 'antinationalist', 'nationalist', 'non-nationalist' and 'patriotic' – are those which were typically employed by the self-declared antinationalist feminists from each city. However, these names have been uncritically transferred to scholarly works, whose authors have failed to point to their origin and meaning and explain why they have chosen to employ exactly them and not others. The same absence of explanation of one's choice of terminology can be observed also regarding the less commonly employed and quite diverse other designations – some originating from local feminists, others proposed by scholars (the partial overlap between these two categories notwithstanding).

As my addition of the adjective 'self-declared' indicates, the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists named themselves 'antinationalist' (less often: 'non-nationalist'), while ascribing the designation 'nationalist' (less often: 'patriotic') to the feminists from the same city who did not share their war-related

positionings. Hence my use of the adjective ‘so-called’ for the latter feminists. This adjective, just like the previous one, serves in this dissertation first to shed light upon this thus far concealed power discrepancy in naming between the self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists. Second, by continuously employing these adjectives, I also point to the caution with which the designations ‘antinationalist’ and ‘nationalist’, saturated with meaning as they are, need to be approached when looking at the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the warring 1990s. Although these terms seem at face value clear and helpful enough to distinguish between the feminists with a (supposedly) greater or smaller distance from a nation-building ideology, one’s country and/or ethnic group, as has become clear in this work, they are also partially misleading.

The Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists overtly used the terms ‘antinationalist’ and ‘non-nationalist’ as self-designations, whereas they ascribed – often implicitly – ‘nationalist’ and ‘patriotic’ to the feminists from the other cluster in the respective city. Such explicit self-designations of one’s war-related positionings were not used by the so-called nationalist cluster in either city. The self-designations of these Zagreb feminists – ‘anticommunist’ (‘non-communist’), ‘concrete’, ‘genocide acknowledgers’, ‘partisan’ and ‘anti-Yugoslav’ – are only to be inferred from the explicit names which they employed for the other Zagreb cluster: ‘communist’, ‘abstract’, ‘genocide revisionists’, ‘neutral’ and ‘pro-Yugoslav’, respectively. In the same manner, it cannot be directly learned that the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists referred to themselves as ‘moderate antinationalists’ and ‘sensitive to the suffering of Serbs’. It can only be derived from these feminists’ explicitly stated depictions of the other Belgrade cluster as practicing ‘antinational radicalism’ or ‘extreme antinationalism’, as well as being ‘insensitive to the suffering of Serbs’.

Since these (implicit) self-ascribed and ascribed-to designations are not indisputable, it is of utmost importance to not simply reproduce them further in the scholarship and, thereby, perpetuate the political bias from the 1990s. None of these names were neutral descriptions of one’s war-related positionings. Being intrinsically connected to the efforts to stop the (sexual) war violence and the intra-feminist struggle for legitimacy, these terms were impregnated with normative claims regarding the correct form of feminist war-related engagement. For example, when the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists called the other Zagreb cluster ‘abstract’, they criticised the self-declared antinationalist feminists for not speaking of concrete, ie ethnically-marked, perpetrators and victims. According to the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, stating explicitly that the Serbs were the perpetrators and the Croats (and,

later, Bosniaks) the victims was the only way to mobilise the international community to apply the right policies to end the war violence in Croatia (and Bosnia and Herzegovina). The Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists had the same goal, but their strategy of achieving it was not by repeating the Croatian state's simplified portrayal of perpetrators and victims, but by not exempting any warring party from its responsibility. Hence their self-designations 'antinationalist' and 'non-nationalist'.

These two strategies of self-designation and ascription were also used in Belgrade, with the difference that in that city it was the self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster which ended up speaking of ethnically-marked perpetrators and victims, whereas the so-called nationalist one attended to the shared responsibility of all sides. To distribute the responsibility for the war violence in a situation where Serbia had a principal share in it was, according to the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists, to turn a blind eye to Serbia's politics and, therefore, a nationalist or patriotic positioning. At the same time, this insisting on the primacy of Serbia's responsibility was seen by the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists as an act of wearing sackcloth and ashes, whereby the extreme attention for the Serb perpetrating deeds prevented the other Belgrade cluster from seeing the war violence in all its complexity. Being themselves critical of Serbia's politics and the state's depiction of the Serbs purely as victims, the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists considered their positioning as 'moderate antinationalism' and that of the other Belgrade cluster as 'radical' or 'extreme'.

As I pointed out in the first section, the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, besides using designations to classify themselves and the activists from the city's other cluster, also challenged the latter's (feminist) agency. This was done by portraying them as not being genuinely interested in the well-being of (raped) women, but actually pursuing other agendas (those of Western funders, local and/or Western politicians, and/or purely personal ones, such as career gains) which were sometimes even detrimental to women. Finally, the feminists from each cluster communicated a myth about themselves. All myths which were used – feminists as sisters who cooperate with one another despite and across state and ethnic boundaries (used by the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists alike), feminists whose analyses of and positionings on the (sexual) war violence are comprehensive, non-partisan and objective (used by the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists), and feminists who are the sole genuine advocates and supporters of the Bosniak and Croat women who have been raped by Serbs (used by the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists) – illuminated only part of the reality. Therefore, these myths, just like the designations and the denials

of agency, should not be seen outside of their contextual embedding, ie the struggle for legitimacy which was carried out in the proximity of war violence.

More precisely, the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists did not only cross the imposed dividing lines, but created new ones, too: some between each other, and others between themselves and the other cluster from the respective city. The positioning of the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists, which also addressed the Serb victims of the non-Serb perpetrators as well as the responsibility of the non-Serb (state) actors for the war violence, was indeed less black-and-white than that of the other Belgrade cluster. Still, the absence of attention for the foremost responsibility of Serbia's politics and militaries made this positioning as politically coloured as that of the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. Lastly, the efforts of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists were not purely directed at assisting the rape survivors and advocating the criminalisation of Serbia's war politics, but were also oriented towards increasing these feminists' legitimacy and decreasing that of the self-declared antinationalist ones.

This dissertation additionally corrects and supplements the existing scholarship by examining the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, whose work and voices have remained until now largely absent from it. One reason for this empty space is the previously mentioned political component of this scholarship, combined with the predominance of scholars whose positionings towards the (post-) Yugoslav wars have stood closer to those of the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. Next to this, while the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were often themselves the authors of relevant contributions, the feminists from the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist clusters were not. Although most of the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists were academics, they did not publish extensively about the war-related positionings and dynamics among the Belgrade feminists, but infrequently and to a very limited extent (a few sentences at most) mentioned them in their elaborations of other themes. The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists did not publish much in general. The scarce approving records of their positionings have been chiefly produced by two American scholars who cooperated with them. These reasons have also contributed to the domination of the designations which were used by the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists.

Even the scholarship which has been produced after 2000 – and sometimes pretends to analyse the whole decade of the 1990s – mainly does not go beyond late 1995, when the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia officially ended. This means that the tensions which developed among the Belgrade feminists during the

intensified war in Kosovo (1998–1999) and the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (spring of 1999) are largely omitted. There is also a worrying absence of critical analyses of the already existing scholarship on the war-related feminist activism in Belgrade and Zagreb. In other words, the veracity of the often only implicitly made claims has remained unquestioned. Nonetheless, this has not prevented their multiple reproductions by scholars.

Due to this absence of evaluative studies, the scholarship very often mistakenly suggests that the beginning of the war violence in 1991 affected the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists equally, ie that in both Belgrade and Zagreb the up to then jointly working feminists divided in the same way into (self-declared) antinationalists and (so-called) nationalists and ceased all cooperation with one another. Also incorrect is the additional (implicit) suggestion that the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminist positionings have not differed in content, just like the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist ones. This view of Belgrade and Zagreb as interchangeable locations regarding the war-related intra-feminist dynamics in the 1990s has been promoted by eg using examples only from Zagreb and framing them as if they illustrated the situation in both cities. However, the dynamics among the Belgrade feminists in the 1990s should not be treated as analogous to those among the Zagreb feminists in the same decade. In late 1991 – early 1992 the Zagreb feminists split into self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists. In the struggle to communicate and obtain legitimacy for its definition of the profound violent societal changes which were taking place – first in Croatia and then in Bosnia and Herzegovina – each of these two Zagreb clusters used very clearly articulated war-related positionings. Such a profound divide never emerged in Belgrade. The conflicts among the feminists there were both less present and less prominently articulated. In the remainder of this section I will elaborate upon these far from negligible differences between Belgrade in Zagreb in more detail.

The Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists refrained from reproducing the Croatian state's portrayal of Croatia as an innocent victim of the aggression by the Yugoslav People's Army and the Croatian Serbs. Instead, these feminists took the risk of speaking in more balanced terms about the responsibility of all warring sides, advocated a restoration of peace through non-violent methods, such as peace talks, and decided to maintain the cooperation with the Belgrade feminists. The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists supported Croatia's right to armed self-defence, adopted the Croatian state's black-and-white positioning on Croat victims and Serb perpetrators and extended the latter category to the Belgrade feminists. One part of these Zagreb feminists even openly accused the Belgrade ones of supporting the politics of the Serbian state.

The presence of ethnic markers in the positionings of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists and their absence in those of the other Zagreb cluster were initially also observable in the positionings on the mass war rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia which were disclosed in the summer of 1992. The so-called nationalist feminists spoke exclusively about Serb men who raped Bosniak and Croat women as part of the Serb politics of ethnic cleansing (or genocide – a term some of these feminists insisted upon), whereas the self-declared antinationalist feminists accentuated the gender component of all rapes, including the war ones which were committed by soldiers against civilians. This strict gender-based positioning was slightly altered in late 1992 – early 1993, due to the appearance of more reliable data on the war rapes. While still criticising the use of unverified and exaggerated war rape accounts and figures, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists also started pointing out that the Serb forces were committing most of the rapes and that the majority of the victims were non-Serb women. This was, however, not always very explicitly said and brought in connection to the Serb war strategy.

The early acknowledgment of Croatia's partial responsibility for the war violence and the possibility that the Croat forces might be committing war crimes, too, enabled the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists to openly condemn the war crimes of the (Bosnian) Croat militaries during the Bosniak-Croat war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (spring 1993 – winter 1994). Unlike this cluster, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, who were trying to obtain legitimacy based on their dichotomy of Serb perpetrators and non-Serb victims, could not afford to speak about Croat perpetrators without risking the loss, or at least decrease, of this legitimacy. Consequently, they remained silent on this issue. That this time they disagreed with Croatia's state politics and refused to see the Bosniaks as the enemy was to be inferred only from the continuity of their work with and assistance to (raped) Bosniak refugee women.

All these efforts of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists notwithstanding, they never succeeded in broadly establishing themselves as the more or the only legitimate Zagreb feminists – neither in Zagreb nor abroad. After 1993 the struggle for legitimacy between the two Zagreb clusters was gradually losing momentum and importance. On the one hand, the war rapes, which were the key topic in this strife, were progressively disappearing from the political and media agenda. On the other hand, each cluster established its own contacts and networks of (financial) support, and the feminists with different positionings did not participate in the same events. The latter was also due to the fact that the profound split between the Zagreb feminists became common knowledge among the Western feminists and nobody tried to bring the two clusters together anymore.

In 1999, during the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Zagreb clusters once more expressed divergent positionings in public. The self-declared antinationalist feminists demanded an end to the bombing and the Serb policy of ethnic cleansing, while reminding the international community of the existence of antiwar activists in Serbia who had opposed its politics throughout the 1990s. The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists approved of the bombing and saw it as the correct response to the continuous Serb genocidal politics against non-Serbs. Whereas the Belgrade feminists (and other Belgrade antiwar activists) were not openly depicted as complicit with these politics, these activists' existence was not at all mentioned. However, as the public struggle for legitimacy between the two Zagreb clusters had by that time become as good as obsolete, these different positionings confirmed the existence of two clusters, but did not revive the split.

Quite different was the situation in Belgrade. After the beginning of the war in Croatia the Belgrade feminists in general distanced themselves from the Serbian state's positioning on the Serb exclusive victimisation by the other – exclusively perpetrating – ethnic groups. These feminists spoke of equal responsibility and victimhood of all warring parties, and their positioning on the war rapes was free of any ethnic markers and strictly gender-based. Thus, unlike in Zagreb, where the so-called nationalist feminists shunned Croatia's responsibility for the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, that was not the case with any Belgrade feminist. All feminists in the latter city acknowledged that Serbia was at least partially responsible for the war violence. Nevertheless, from early 1993 onward, some Belgrade feminists began altering their ethnicity-free positioning and accentuating the Serb-induced (sexual) victimisation of Bosniaks and Croats. The change was not only due to the appearance of more trustworthy war rape figures which showed the large extent of the Serb war rapes, but also to these feminists' interactions with the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists at conferences abroad.

Zagreb feminists from both clusters disagreed with the Belgrade feminists' positioning of equal guilt and victimisation and demanded from them to be more clearly pronounced about the greater responsibility of Serbia and the Serb forces. The Belgrade feminists were sometimes offended by this non-recognition of their positioning's dissenting and risky character in the Serbian context. Moreover, they were angered by the guilt which they felt was being imposed upon them by the Zagreb feminists – especially by the so-called nationalist ones – and displeased with the Zagreb feminists' insufficient to absent attention for Croat nationalism and Croatia's war responsibility. One side but related issue added fuel to the fire. The emotional affiliation with the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea and the by that time already

defunct Yugoslavia, which many Belgrade feminists continued to voice, had become in the meantime outdated and problematic for the Zagreb feminists. Still, despite this additional irritation and the feeling of being misunderstood and treated unfairly, a number of Belgrade feminists began to realise the graver Serbian war legacy and to emphasise the foremost Serb responsibility and non-Serb victimhood. These were the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. Their positioning on (sexual) perpetrators and victims ended up resembling that of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists.

So, unlike in Zagreb, where the heretical challengers in the feminist field were the so-called nationalist feminists, the Belgrade feminists who abandoned the orthodox gender-based and ethnicity-free positioning on the (sexual) war violence were the self-declared antinationalist ones. Their position in the Belgrade feminist field did not remain heretical for a long time, however. Compared to the Belgrade feminists who maintained the up to then orthodox positioning, the self-declared antinationalist ones were numerically stronger and had more extensive interactions with the Western (funding) audiences. Thanks to this, their initially heretical positioning soon became the orthodox one in the Belgrade feminist field, and abroad the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists became the legitimate Belgrade feminists with regard to war-related topics. The so-called nationalist feminists – who ended up, thus, as heretical challengers – kept speaking about equal responsibility and victimhood, but began focusing on the non-Serb-induced Serb suffering. This was a topic which the other Belgrade cluster preferred not to address.

The Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists did not publicly position themselves against the cooperation with the feminists from the other city – as their Zagreb counterparts did – but did not put much effort into incarnating such cooperation either. This was quite different from the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists, who not only struggled hard to maintain the contacts with the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, but also used this endeavour to communicate a clear political statement. The two Belgrade clusters were not, however, engaged in such a severe struggle for legitimacy as the Zagreb ones. This made it possible for feminists with divergent positionings to work together in the Belgrade Women's Studies Center – a cooperation which was impossible to undertake in Zagreb.

Another important difference between Belgrade and Zagreb was that the Belgrade so-called nationalist cluster was not a cluster in the same sense as the other three. Different from the remaining respondents, the Belgrade so-called nationalist ones had never produced a joint (war-related) positioning. The closest some of them had come to expressing a shared positioning was by writing the introductory chapter

to or positively reviewing each other's works (some of which on war-related topics). Furthermore, during the interviews none of these feminists showed any awareness of the existence of other Belgrade feminists with similar war-related positionings, even though all of them knew each other well.

Finally, whereas in Zagreb the intra-feminist split which was caused by the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia was not exacerbated or disturbed by the NATO bombing in 1999, the Belgrade feminist field in that period – and shortly before it – underwent another reorganisation. Some self-declared antinationalist feminists abandoned their previously held positioning on the foremost Serb responsibility for the war violence and their accentuation of the Serb atrocities against non-Serbs, and started focusing only on the violence against Serbs which was committed by NATO. These feminists' positioning on the Serb victimhood in and responsibility for the war in Serbia overlapped, thus, with that of the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists. At the same time, the remaining Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists disagreed regarding the justification of the bombing as a method of stopping the Serb politics of ethnic cleansing which were practiced throughout the 1990s. Some agreed with the intervention by saying that there was no other way of removing Milošević from power, while others insisted on a neither/nor option whereby these detrimental politics were to be halted without bringing harm to the civilian population. Nonetheless, even these changes in the positionings on victims and perpetrators did not lead to such a profound and publicly expressed schism in Belgrade as previously in Zagreb.

How can this divergence in the war-related intra-feminist dynamics between Belgrade and Zagreb be explained? The first part of the explanation is contained in the contextual differences between Croatia and Serbia and the power of violence to constitute new meanings. Serbia's (at least partial) responsibility for the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia was far too obvious for the Belgrade feminists to leave any space for denial. In addition, different from Croatia, Serbia did not experience a war on its territory in the first half of the 1990s. The first time such a direct war danger became imminent, during the NATO bombardment in 1999, the positionings of the Belgrade feminists diversified and the differences became more prominently articulated. These dynamics were supported by the fact that no minimal consensus regarding Milošević's politics on Kosovo existed among the Belgrade feminists. Due to the greater social distance, the support which many Belgrade feminists were willing to offer to the Bosniak and Croat population, women in particular, largely exceeded that which existed for the Kosovar Albanian women (and men).

The second part of the explanation concerns the pre-war non-war-related similarities and differences in capital among the feminists in each city and the

accompanying (absence of a substantial) struggle for legitimacy among them – a struggle which was not in any way linked to differences and similarities in age, ethnic and religious affiliation or motivation for feminist activism. The majority of the women who became the first Zagreb feminists during socialism were established or rising star professionals whose parents were, moreover, well ranked in the – officially non-existent – hierarchy of the socialist society. One part of the younger women who came (shortly) afterwards were students from less privileged backgrounds whose families had experienced grievances by the partisan or, later, communist authorities. Thus, already the first Zagreb feminist initiatives gathered women with varied cultural, economic and social capital (partly transmitted from their parents and partly obtained personally).

The future Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were typically those with more capital, whereas the future so-called nationalist feminists usually had less capital. The latter feminists' efforts to establish themselves as legitimate Zagreb feminists regardless of their unfavourable position in the socialist society manifested in disagreements regarding the right type of feminist engagement: more academic (theoretical) or more activist (grassroots and hands-on). These pre-war tensions were echoed in the war-time strife – in Zagreb and abroad – about the right definition of the war violence and its perpetrators and victims. The Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists, as the heretical challengers of the orthodox gender-based feminist positioning on (war) violence, tried to obtain legitimacy for their ethnicity-based positioning also by delegitimising the (re)producers of the orthodox positioning, the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists, as privileged insiders in the socialist society.

Such a pre-war non-war-related struggle for symbolic feminist capital did not exist in Belgrade. Different from the first Zagreb feminist group which was established as a formal academic subdivision of the professional association of sociologists of Croatia, the first Belgrade feminist group was an informal and loose initiative which was oriented towards reaching out to a broader public. Besides this, there were neither significant differences in the cultural, economic and social capital among the Belgrade feminists, nor such divergent familial histories with regard to the interactions with the partisan and communist authorities. The Belgrade heretical challengers of the orthodox gender-based feminist positioning on (war) violence already had legitimacy as feminist actors both in Belgrade and abroad. Therefore, even when they started to articulate a different positioning and distance themselves from the so-called nationalist feminists, they did not need to put so much effort into depicting the latter as less legitimate feminists.

Being numerically superior, better connected with and more interested in communicating with the Western (funding) audiences, the heretical position of the self-declared antinationalist feminists in the Belgrade feminist field was only of a temporary character. After the short transitional phase they became once more the (re)producers of the orthodox Belgrade feminist positioning on war violence, whereas the so-called nationalist feminists ended up as the heretical challengers. Even then, however, the so-called nationalist feminists seem not to have struggled much with the other Belgrade cluster to obtain legitimacy for their own war-related positionings. Due to Serbia's war legacy and the importance which the Belgrade feminists attached to the maintenance of a broad feminist expertise within the Belgrade Women's Studies Center, the feminists with divergent positionings appear to have chosen to refrain as much as possible from publicly confronting and challenging one another. Nonetheless, as my interviews with the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists showed – see the following section – it was not the case that these feminists were fully uninterested in establishing themselves as the legitimate Belgrade feminists regarding war-related issues.

How did the respondents revisit the 1990s?

The interviews which I conducted in 2009 and 2010 showed that the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists were able to critically look not only at their own positionings from the 1990s, but also at the whole dynamics between them and the other Zagreb cluster, and partially link those positionings and dynamics to the competition for resources and legitimacy. Consequently, these feminists were also able to question and sometimes even reject, at least somewhat, the designations 'nationalist' and 'patriotic' which they had used for the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists.

This type of critical distance from one's discourses and activities from the 1990s and recognition of one's then interests were not observable in the narratives of the feminists from the remaining three clusters. While the 1990s were still quite alive for them and the denial of one's interests was widely present in their accounts, that was especially true for the majority of the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists. What was also particular to the latter feminists was their fervent accusatory tone vis-à-vis the feminists from the other Zagreb cluster and the use of the same vocabulary for denouncing them as that which had been employed in the 1990s. Summarised, this criticism entailed that the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists had never pursued an authentic (antinationalist) feminist agenda and, in lieu of working on

improving the position of women, had been only concerned with obtaining personal gains (ie, in Bourdieu's terms, increasing their different types of capital).

The Belgrade interviews chiefly revealed how silenced the war-related divisions among the Belgrade feminists were. These interviews were the ones which required the most extensive reading between the lines in order to discern the alluded to meanings and feminists who had not been mentioned by name. This phenomenon was not present in the interviews with the Zagreb respondents who – consistent with the significantly larger public records of their split – usually openly mentioned the names of the feminists whom they rebuked. It turned out that the Serb victimisation in the wars of the 1990s was an especially laden and silenced topic for the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists. Some admitted to no longer approve of their previous insufficient public attention for the Serb victimisation and their chief focus on the Serb responsibility, but did not want to declare this openly to the fellow feminists from the same cluster in order not to be seen as nationalists or lesser antinationalists.

Whereas the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminists in general – just like their Zagreb counterparts – did not seem interested in comparing the individual gains which they and the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists had obtained from the war-related feminist engagement, that was not the case with the latter feminists. Similarly to the corresponding Zagreb cluster (albeit to a smaller extent), the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists were much more critical of the other Belgrade cluster and accused its members of being driven not by their positionings, but by the pursuit of individual benefits through their acquiescence to the Western donors' agendas. Thus, different from the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists who rebuked only the war-related positionings of the other feminists from the respective city, the Belgrade and Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists tended much more often to convey a double delegitimation of the feminists from the city's other feminist cluster. They disapproved not only of the war-related politics of the self-declared antinationalist feminists, but also of their work strategies which were seen as securing personal instead of collective benefits.

To explain the above findings one should look both at the political contexts of Croatia and Serbia and at the position of the individual activists in the feminist field in Belgrade and Zagreb at the time of interviewing. In 2009 (or 2010) Croatia was much more a post-war society than Serbia: the war violence in Croatia officially ended in late 1995 (as opposed to the spring of 1999 in the case of Serbia), Croatia was not involved in any territorial dispute over an area over which it had waged war (as Serbia was and still is regarding Kosovo), and the Croatian president and prime minister – the latter a member of Tudman's party – have started to overtly acknowledge, condemn

and apologise in public for the Croat war crimes, as well as denounce the post-war expressions of interethnic hatred by Croats. To a smaller extent, the Serbian president has also embarked on such a reconciliation mission. His recognition of the Serb war crimes was, however, only stated implicitly, through his statements on the existence of victims on all sides. Finally, while Croatia was much less troubled by its responsibility for the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia, Serbia was additionally burdened by the political murder of its prime minister in 2003 – a politician who was seen by many (feminist) antiwar activists as Serbia's hope for breaking away from its heavy war legacy of the 1990s.

So, at the time of interviewing it was safe for the Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists to scrutinise their war-related positionings from the 1990s and attend to the power struggles of that time, first because their positionings had been given, as it were, legitimacy by the Croatian state. Second, these feminists – even if they were no longer (actively) involved with any feminist group – had after 1995 remained active in feminist groups which had continued to be (financially) supported, ie given legitimacy, by Western donors much longer than the so-called nationalist ones. Unlike them, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists had lost much of the legitimacy which they had been given by the Croatian media and state during the war years and were, moreover, unable to secure Western funds for their groups in the post-war period. Consequently, their groups and they themselves have, unlike those from the other cluster, largely disappeared from the Zagreb feminist field. Being brought back to this field and to the 1990s by virtue of my (Western) research, the Zagreb so-called nationalist feminists seemed to attempt in the interviews to restore their past legitimacy. To achieve this, they used the same vocabulary and positionings which had given them some legitimacy in the 1990s.

The Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists, whose war-related positionings became the heretical ones in the Belgrade feminist field and had been generally given less legitimacy also in the Western feminist fields, have – similarly to the corresponding Zagreb cluster – used the interview setting to correct this power disparity. These feminists were, therefore, much more inclined than the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist ones to compare themselves with the latter for the purpose of delegitimising the latter's (war-related) feminist activism. At the same time, given that the Belgrade so-called nationalist feminists have obtained legitimacy in the academic field – of which the majority of them was part – as well as within the Belgrade feminist field but on non-war-related issues, these feminists were less engaged than their Zagreb counterparts in delegitimising those from the other cluster.

The smaller intensity of such criticism was also due to the fact that, different from Croatia, Serbia's official war-related positionings overlapped much more with those of the so-called nationalist feminists. Nevertheless, the feminists from both Belgrade clusters appeared to be similarly burdened by Serbia's war legacy: so-called nationalist and self-declared antinationalist feminists alike used (highly) implicit language to refer to the war-related tensions and refrained from mentioning other feminists by name. As a result of the weight of this responsibility, even the self-declared antinationalist feminists whose symbolic feminist capital was firmly established were unable to reassess their war-related positionings in the same manner as their Zagreb counterparts. Lastly, the same war legacy – and the related fear of losing one's legitimacy as an antinationalist feminist – silenced the overt expression of critical positionings within the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist cluster.

How could this research be followed up?

I would like to propose five directions for developing research which will supplement the portrayal of the war-related dynamics among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists which is presented in this dissertation. First, given the intertwining of the Western (funding) audiences with the struggle for legitimacy among and between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, it is important to focus on this third party – funders, conference organisers, editors of (academic) publications etc – and explore in much more detail its influence on those dynamics. It is to be expected that such an exploration will additionally challenge the mainstream scholarly portrayal of the dynamics as only driven by the ideological disagreements between the local feminists. Second, one could analyse the post-2000 interactions between the Belgrade and Zagreb self-declared antinationalist feminists. Such research would explore the impact of the absence of direct war violence on those interactions, including the war-related struggle for legitimacy between these two clusters and their strategic usage of the myth of transgression of (ethnic and state) boundaries.

A third research programme could shed much more light on the quite covert war-related tensions in Belgrade by paying exclusive attention to the feminists in this city and particularly focusing on the dynamics within the Belgrade Women's Studies Center – a group which gathered both self-declared antinationalist and so-called nationalist feminists. An important question which such a research programme could answer is how the activists of this group managed to continue working together after starting to employ different positionings regarding the issue of Serb responsibility

and victimisation. A fourth research endeavour could concentrate on Belgrade as well and explore in more depth the Belgrade feminists' positionings with regard to the war in Kosovo and the (threat of the) NATO bombing. One of the issues which this research could illuminate is the related differentiation within the Belgrade self-declared antinationalist feminist cluster. These positionings and dynamics could be additionally compared to those regarding the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in order to further analyse the impact of the different type of warfare and the greater social distance between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians, compared to that between Serbs and Croats, and that between Serbs and Bosniaks.

Fifth and final, following the history of the relations between Kosovo and Serbia, as well as Serbia's continuous non-recognition of Kosovo's declaration of independence of 2008, one could analyse the establishment and development of the interaction between the Belgrade and Prishtina feminists – women who did not have a legacy of cooperation during Yugoslavia like the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists. Hereby special attention should be paid to the exploration of the mutual accusations of Serb or Kosovar Albanian nationalism which have been implicitly communicated to me by some respondents (also regarding feminists who are self-declared antinationalists). Keeping in mind the contextual embedment of these interactions, this research programme could also look at the struggle for legitimacy between the Belgrade and Prishtina feminists and compare it with that between the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists.

Closing words

As I indicated at the beginning of the dissertation, I hope that this research endeavour will both enrich the scholarship on (post-)Yugoslav feminism and be meaningful to my respondents – the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists, in particular. From very early on during the fieldwork I started becoming increasingly aware of the fantastic opportunities for data collection which were offered to me by the (feminist) activists whom I approached in search for information. This awareness of the great value of the obtained exceptionally rich interview material – some stemming from activists whose voices have hardly been present in the scholarship – and the often very rare organisational documents and published (scholarly) texts grew even more rapidly in the course of the data analysis. In order to extract as much relevant information as possible from those precious sources, I decided subsequently to dedicate a lot of time and effort to that part of the research process.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The contribution which I have created will, hopefully, prove to be valuable not only as a historical document on the war-related activism of the Belgrade and Zagreb feminists in the 1990s, but also as a sociological examination of the associated intra-feminist dynamics and, to a smaller extent, the scholarship about it. In addition, these insights are potentially relevant beyond their immediate context, too. They can help increase the understanding of the (analyses of the) intra-feminist dynamics in other regions of the world which are dominated by nationalism and war violence, and where the work of the local feminists is closely intertwined with – and often dependent on – these activists' contacts with foreign academic, funding and/or political institutions.