

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA

FAKULTA HUMANITNÍCH STUDIÍ

Katedra obecné antropologie

Integrální studium člověka - Obecná antropologie

Mgr. Markéta Slavková

**Cooking and Dining in Times of War and
Peace:** Changing Contexts and Modes of Food Production,
Preparation and Consumption in Srebrenica, Bosnia and
Herzegovina

PhD Dissertation/ dizertační práce

Academic supervisor/ vedoucí práce:

PhDr. Dana Bittnerová, CSc. (Charles University, CZ)

Consultant/ odborný konzultant:

Dr Hariz Halilovich (RMIT University, AU)

Praha 2017

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V Praze dne 19. prosince 2016

Mgr. Markéta Slavková

Acknowledgments (Poděkování)

I am grateful for the support I received from my *alma mater*, the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University (Univerzita Karlova), which enabled me to pursue this dissertation thesis project and carry out repeated long term fieldwork in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) with the institutional support of the University of Sarajevo and also a shorter term of fieldwork in Vienna, Austria, with the institutional support of the University of Vienna. The following programs made my fieldwork possible: Fond mobility, Fakultní soutěž FHS UK free-mover, Specifický vysokoškolský výzkum (SVV), PRVOUK P20 provided by Charles University. I am also grateful to the CEEPUS Freemover program and the OeAD for their financial support. I thank all of these institutions and grant providers for their help and support throughout this project.

There are also many people without whom this PhD dissertation would not have been possible. First of all, I would like to thank to PhDr. Dana Bittnerová, CSc. from Charles University, who is the main supervisor of this PhD dissertation. She has kindly advised me as both academic mentor and as a friend. I thank her for pedagogical, practical and psychological support throughout the project. Secondly, I would like thank to Dr Hariz Halilovich (RMIT University, Australia), who initially brought me to Srebrenica and to great extent inspired my PhD research. Thus, I thank him for academic support, consultations and mainly for friendship and company all the way from Melbourne to Srebrenica.

Moreover, I would like to thank my other academic advisors, who kindly supported me throughout my research/study stays abroad, in particular to Prof. Dr. Dubravko Lovrenović and Dr. Emir O. Filipović for making my fieldwork in BiH possible. Many thanks also go to Dr. Tatjana Thelen, Univ.-Prof.; Dr. Vedran Džihic and Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ayşe Çağlar, from the University of Vienna for help and precious advice.

I would also like to thank Prof. David Pettigrew, PhD from Southern Connecticut State University for his kind advice and friendship; Bc. Petra Lewis and Evan Lewis BA for language corrections and their patience; *Fondacija Mak Dizdar*, namely, Gorčin Dizdar, PhD and Suada Dizdar for officially backing my research stay in BiH, help and

hospitality; Sale and Alma from Sarajevo for taking care of me; Paulina Janusz for insights into the world of politics and the many other academic and non-academic friends who have encouraged me on this journey.

My special thanks go to all of my research participants, namely to Jasmina and her family, Sanela and Emir from Srebrenica, who helped and kept an eye on me, and to Deni for driving me on countless journeys between Srebrenica and Sarajevo. My deepest gratitude goes to my biological family – my dad, mom, sister and her husband, who supported me in all possible ways during my academic endeavors. Without their assistance and patience this project could not have existed. Last but not least, I cannot thank enough my “adoptive family” in Srebrenica – Nura, Ramiza, Azra, Amra, Alma, Adi and Adin for accepting a foreigner and an anthropologist as a member of their household, teaching me the local language, keeping me warm during my first winter in BiH, feeding me and for sharing many wonderful moments in a life that I will never forget.

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Abstract (English)

This project opens up the topic of armed conflict and subsequent post-conflict development in the Former Yugoslavia from a non-traditional perspective – that of the anthropology of food. At the centre of attention there stand the ways in which the production, preparation and consumption of food were and are carried out in Srebrenica, BiH in the context of the dramatic changes that the region has undergone over the last few decades. Food is the precondition of reproduction, a primary form of interaction with the world, a mediator of socialization, a sign of identity and social cohesion but also a tool of power. In this sense, Farquhar notes that the “mantra” ‘You are what you eat,’ continues to be thematized by social sciences (Farquhar, 2006: 146). On the other hand, the question of the relationship between social actors and their “daily bread” in conditions of starvation and overall material scarcity in wartime has not been satisfyingly answered. This project, based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork, addresses these issues more closely, affording greater insight into them.

Abstrakt (čeština)

Tento projekt otevírá téma ozbrojeného konfliktu a následného post-konfliktního rozvoje v bývalé Jugoslávii, přičemž problematiku netradičně analyzuje skrze subdisciplínu antropologie jídla. V centru zájmu stojí způsoby produkce, přípravy a konzumace potravy v Srebrenici, BaH v kontextu dramatických změn, kterými region prošel zhruba za posledních několik desetiletí. Jídlo je podmínkou reprodukce, primární formou interakce se světem, mediátor socializace, znak identity a sociální koheze a v neposlední řadě i nástroj moci. V tomto smyslu Farquhar podotýká, že “mantra”: ‘Jsi to, co jíš,’ je i nadále tématizovaná v rámci společenských věd (Farquhar, 2006: 146). Na druhou stranu, otázkou zůstává, co se děje se vztahem mezi sociálním aktérem a jeho/její potravou, když hladoví – za podmínek všeobecného materiálního nedostatku, který nastává v době války. Tento projekt se snaží nalézt odpovědi na zvyše zmíněné otázky na základě dlouhodobého etnografického výzkumu.

Key words (English)

Anthropology of food; subsistence strategies; production, preparation and consumption of food; social change; war in BiH 1992-1995; identity; Srebrenica; Bosnia and Herzegovina

Klíčová slova (čeština)

Antropologie jídla; subsistenční strategie; produkce, příprava a konzumace potravy; sociální změna; válka v BiH 1992-1995; identita; Srebrenica; Bosna a Hercegovina

1. Introduction: Anthropology of food in Srebrenica, a former zone of conflict

1.1. Brief Introduction of the Field of Study

In this PhD dissertation I would like to address the topic of everyday strategies of food production, preparation and consumption within the context of the war in the 1990s in former Yugoslavia and the subsequent post-conflict development in the municipality of Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) from the perspective of socio-cultural anthropology. My main interest focuses on the ways in which the production, distribution, preparation and consumption of food in Srebrenica municipality was and is now carried out on everyday level basis under the dramatic structural changes in the region.

I intend to explore how the eating practices of certain social actors were subjected to social change under a major historical conjuncture, in this particular case, as a result of the breakup of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (*Socijalistička federativna republika Jugoslavija*) in 1991 and of BiH's the declaration of independence for in 1992. These events were accompanied by a violent armed conflict (the Bosnian War, 1992-1995) and eventually also by the economic transition of BiH to a global, neo-liberal market system in the post-war period.

Even though this dissertation is based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in multiple localities, I also attempt to introduce a historical perspective and a more interdisciplinary approach to emphasize the process of social change. I argue that Srebrenica's contemporary foodways cannot be understood if not placed in the context of wartime experiences. Using examples from Srebrenica, I suggest that experiences of scarcity, hunger and starvation have had severe impacts on my research participants' relationship to food.

In this dissertation, I present innovative empirical research and I attempt to contribute modestly to anthropological methodology and theory by linking the subdisciplines of anthropology of food, transnational migration and forced displacement studies. This is important because the meanings assigned to different edibles are created

and negotiated not only in the Srebrenica locality but also in other social and geographical spaces – migration is only one of the mediators of this process. Although I do not specifically include dietary change caused by migration in the results of the empirical research, both internal and external migration constitute an important context of the studied locality and profoundly influenced its current dynamics.

In this introductory chapter, I position my research both thematically and theoretically within the subdiscipline of the anthropology of food. Chapter 2 introduces the studied locality and opens a theoretical discussion on how to delimit locality in a transnational field. In chapter 3, I introduce the context of the field as interplay between the researcher, research participants and other social actors.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the findings of my empirical research in Srebrenica. In chapter 4, I present the contemporary Srebrenica foodways and ultimately focus on the issue of hunger. Chapter 5 looks at the issue of food during the war in Srebrenica in the first half of 1990s and also brings an analysis of selected issues concerning eating practices and dietary change in relation to the use of food as a weapon. I will close these discussions with concluding remarks on the findings of this dissertation in relation to food security using the example of the so-called “February protests” in 2014 in BiH.



Picture 1: A Sunset in Srebrenica (Photo M.S*., December, 2016).

*M.S. always refers to the author of this dissertation Mgr. Markéta Slavková.

1.2. Positioning the Studied Issues in the Subdiscipline of Anthropology of Food

I place the previously described issue in the subdiscipline of the anthropology of food and this is also an area, where I would like to contribute mostly with this dissertation. I see my attempt to study Srebrenica through the theoretical framework of the anthropology of food as my contribution to regional studies. There is no similar study produced on Srebrenica in this subdiscipline of the anthropology of food¹. Here, I attempt to show that the food perspective offers a fruitful approach to the studied issue.

The domain of food constitutes one of the few cultural universals and its production, preparation and consumption are and have been one of the most important human activities from time immemorial. In other words, as Messer amongst others has emphasized: 'food is a basic concern for all human societies' (Messer, 1984: 205). Food provides nutrition to preserve the vital functions of the organism and thus assures survival (see Counihan 1999, Farquhar 2006, Lupton 1996). The perpetual necessity of supplying the body with nutrition places the activity of providing food in every prominent position, which is also reflected in human social organization (see also Mintz and Du Bois, 2002; Farquhar, 2006).

The aphorism 'Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are' is often repeated within the discipline of food anthropology (e.g. Messer, 1984; Nemeroff and Rozin, 1989; Farquhar, 2006). As Messer argues in her review of food studies, both the "French version" (cited above) or the "German variation": 'You are what you eat,' emphasizes more general anthropological issues such as the relationships of human populations to their environment, the symbolic construction of cultures, and the social relations and social structures of societies (Messer, 1984: 205).

Similarly, Judith Farquhar also mentions that the "mantra" "You are what you eat" continues to be mentioned in social sciences to highlight that: *'food makes human form – it directly produces bodies and lives, kin groups and communities, economic systems and*

¹Of course, food has often been mentioned or has even been the central theme in some of the existing literature. Some interesting eyewitness accounts depicting on the topic include Hasan Nuhanović's *Zbijeg – Put u Srebrenicu* (2015) and Emir Suljagić's *Razglednica iz groba* (2005). However, a detailed anthropological study on the foodways in Srebrenica has not been carried out.

ideologies, while being produced in its turn by these formations' (Farquhar, 2006: 146). Thus, food is an inherent part of both nature and culture and the technologies of its production, preparation and consumption are always shaped by both of these dimensions. This reveals food as a truly fascinating subject of scientific enquiry and it also indicates the diverse and interdisciplinary nature of food studies.



Picture 2: Late lunch with the students of Summer University Srebrenica – homemade food from Eastern Bosnia (Photo M.S., summer 2013).

The study of food currently constitutes an entire subdiscipline within social anthropology². As Mintz and Du Bois emphasize, the study of food and eating is not important only because food is essential to human existence (yet it is often scarce) but at the same time it has proved significant while discussing anthropological theory (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002: 99). Moreover, food studies not only parallel the development of the discipline of social anthropology, they also reflect on methodological and theoretical trends within the discipline since the end of 19th century until the present (Watson and Caldwell , 2005: 1). For example, as Mintz and Du Bois noted, food studies have been publication ‘*a vital arena in which to debate the relative merits of cultural materialism vs. structuralism or symbolic explanations for human behavior...*’ (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002: 99).

²A good example of this is, for instance, the number of academic publications in this field including monothematic food periodicals as well as the growing number of food panels at international academic conferences and food working networks within various anthropological associations.

Messer also notes that “dietary constructions” interest anthropologists of all subdisciplines, whether inspired by cultural materialism, the ideological-structural approach or a combination of biological and socio-cultural perspectives (Messer, 1984: 205). In her important overview of the subdiscipline *Anthropological Perspectives on Diet* from 1984 (referenced several times above), Messer identifies three major areas of interests in the domain of food study: 1) the ecological and market availabilities of foods, 2) the socio-cultural classifications of foods (“edible”/“inedible”, “preferred”/“less preferred”) and distribution rules, and 3) the nutritional and medical consequences of particular cultural consumption patterns (Messer, 1984: 205).

She concludes that in the past, anthropological reviews of food studies perceived diet prevailingly in terms of health and environmental consequences of ecological adaptations or examined the "functional" consequences of diet on nutrition and adaptation from the bio-cultural perspective (Messer, 1984: 206). Later, the socio-cultural determinants of food intake began to be taken into account, analyzing how food systems operate and how they change including the focus on the growing delocalization of food supply and consumption patterns (Messer, 1984: 206).

Some eighteen years later, Mintz and Du Bois offer an updated insight into the study of food in their review titled *The Anthropology of Food and Eating* (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002). In their article, Mintz and Du Bois focus on several areas of research addressed by food studies, especially since Messer’s overview (1984) (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002). These areas included: 1) classic food ethnographies 2) single commodities and substances 3) food and social change 4) food insecurity 5) eating and ritual 6) eating and identities (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002). They argue that the richest and most extensive research has been done namely in the areas of: 1) food insecurity 2) eating and ritual and 3) eating and identities (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002: 99)

Overall, Mintz and Du Bois summarize that in attempts to advance anthropological theory, food systems have been used to explain broad societal processes including: 1) political-economic value-creation (Mintz, 1985) 2) symbolic value-creation (Munn, 1986) and 3) social construction of memory (Sutton, 2001) (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002: 100). Of

course, this list does not encompass all of the focus areas of the anthropology of food. Some of the issues have been left out since the quantity of existing literature is vast. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, this brief overview of the subdiscipline with a focus on particular issues, serves as a helpful introduction to the studied issue.

With respect to this dissertation, it is particularly useful to note academic contributions in the areas of social change and food insecurity, which is the perspective from which food during armed conflict has been prevailingly theorized. According to Mintz and Du Bois, social change has been studied in relation to major historical conjunctures, migration and other socio-political and economic shifts, in particular: the culinary effects of the collapse of the Soviet Union, other changes in intergroup relations within societies, biotechnology, movements of peoples, mass production of foods, increasing globalization of food and war (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002: 104).

Mintz and Du Bois emphasize that in 2002, there was still a relatively low number of anthropological studies focusing on how industrialization has changed eating patterns (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002: 104). Even though nowadays there has been an increase of this type of literature, these two studies remain important since they not only contribute to the subdiscipline, but have further theoretical applications with respect to the discipline. The most important development in terms of this dissertation is undisputedly the anthropological focus on food, war and social change.

In his key article within the subdiscipline “Food and its relationship to power” (1995), Mintz argues that major changes in consumption strategies are most commonly caused by major social ruptures and disruptions in everyday routines (Mintz, 1995; also see Messer, 1997: 102). As he, further, argues: ‘*War is probably the single most powerful instrument of dietary change in human experience*’ (Mintz, 1995: 8; also see Messer, 1997). With reference to Mintz, Messer explains that war produces context in which new food and nutritional needs arise as well as new opportunities of consumption (Messer, 1997: 102) (I will examine these processes in the Chapter 5, which deals with food and memories of the last war in the Balkans).

In addition to this, Helen Macbeth (1997) has edited a collective publication titled *Food Preferences and Taste – Continuity and Change*, in which Huss-Ashmore and Johnston have produced an article on wild plants and food choice under the conditions of scarcity (Huss-Ashmore and Johnston, 1997). Very significant in terms of my own topic is also Redžić's study of the use of wild plants in the Siege of Sarajevo from biological/ethno-botanical perspective (Redžić, 2010) and a similar study carried out some ten years after the war in *Podrinje* (Redžić, Barudanović, Pilipović, 2010). Overall, according to Mintz and Du Bois the role of war as well as other social changes has not been satisfyingly explored and is "ripe for research" (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002: 105).

In more recent years, Collinson and Macbeth have put together a key interdisciplinary publication *Food in Zones of Conflict*, in which they try to unify this diverse area of study and establish it at the same time as a specific area of research within the anthropology of food and other scientific disciplines (see Collinson and Macbeth, 2014). Also, there is an intriguing historical study by Collingham (2012)³, *The Taste of War*, reviewing the role of food during the Second World War.

One more important area of food and war studies are studies concerning food insecurity. Even though my dissertation does not focus directly on food security, it became a thorny issue throughout my fieldwork. As I was frequently confronted with the issues of mass starvation (not far from famine) and state sanctioned violence, the question of food security emerged as inseparable from the observed everyday practices. Therefore, I will briefly also touch on what has been written in this regard.

The key study in this area is Johan Pottier's *Anthropology of Food: the Social Dynamics of Food Security*, which deals with food insecurity and its social causes using various examples (Pottier, 1999). As Mintz and Du Bois add the work of Alex de Waal (1989) *Famine that Kills*, Devereux (1993) *Theories of Famine* and Sheper-Hughes' "ethnography of hunger" *Death without Weeping* (1992) are also important (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002: 106). An interesting study on the Great Irish Famine and its broader social, political and economic causes was written by Nally (2011).

³ First published in 2011.

In this dissertation, I intend to explore some of the approaches to food studies listed above in the context of my research from Srebrenica. In particular, I would like to expand on Collinson and Macbeth's focus on "food in zones of conflict" (Collinson and Macbeth, 2014) and look at the studied locality as on the "former zone of conflict" in relation to dietary and other social, political and economic change.

1.3. Thoughts on Food, Power, Social Change and War

When I first arrived in Bosnia, I was interested in the topic of food namely in relation to identity. For this reason, the proverb "you are what you eat" and its extended implications along with Bourdieu's *La Distinction* (1996, 8th edition)⁴ constituted some of the key ideas in my approach. I understood food in terms of something pretty much always present, a substance that is ingested - a special thing that forms and which we actively use to form both our physical and social selves.

Even though this approach was useful in many ways, it could not satisfyingly resolve a question that I increasingly encountered in Srebrenica – the one of hunger. When I explained to inquiring inhabitants of Srebrenica that I was here to research food, they would laugh and the common response was: 'What food? Can't you see that there is none'? I laughed back at them and said: people have to eat despite all circumstances to stay alive and that even the lack of something speaks of many things...

As a result of similar ironical remarks, the question of what happens to the relationship between social actors and their "daily bread" in conditions of starvation and overall material scarcity emerged as crucial direction of my academic survey. And when it came to the variety of daily edibles, I became more interested in who could afford them and who could not. This ultimately made me focus my research on the relationship between food as a "tool of distinction" in the context of social change and power.

The key study concerning food as a "tool of distinction", which is not mentioned by Mintz and Du Bois (2002) above, is Pierre Bourdieu's classic: *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Bourdieu, 1996). In his *Distinction* Bourdieu famously

⁴First published 1979 and translated to English in 1984.

stated: *'Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier'* (Bourdieu, 1996: 6), in other words, that social subjects create classifications on the basis of which they distinguish themselves and these classifications position them within social hierarchies (ibid.). "Taste" should be read here in more general terms as standing for "lifestyle preferences" – i.e. food, clothing, art, political and other preferences that social actors adopt and not exclusively in terms of food (see Bourdieu, 1996).

Yet, as Bourdieu emphasizes, all knowledge and especially that concerning the social world is an act of construction and implementation of the schemes of thought and expression in between the conditions of existence and practices of representations, which deeply penetrate the "structuring activity of the agents" (Bourdieu, 1996: 467). As Bourdieu further explains: *'the principle of this structuring activity is not, as an intellectualist and anti-genetic idealism would have it, a system of universal forms and categories but a system of internalized, embodied schemes which, having been constituted in the course of collective history, are acquired in the course of individual history and function in their practical state, or practice...'*(ibid.).

The processes of internalization and embodiment and of these social structures, Bourdieu explains through the concept of "habitus" (see Bourdieu, 2013⁵ and 1996). Bourdieu further writes that: *'The habitus is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification (principlum divisionis) of these practices. It is in the relationship between the two capacities which define the habitus, the capacity to produce classifiable practices and works, and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products (taste), that the represented social world, i.e., the space of life-styles, is constituted'* (Bourdieu, 1996: 170).

De Solier has expanded on Bourdieu's theory (1984)⁶ in her analysis of television cooking shows in the Australian context (de Solier, 2005). She argued that the culinary television actively educates their viewers in many aspects of social knowledge – practical and aesthetic culinary knowledge but also ideologies of gender, class, ethnicity and

⁵*Outline of a Theory of Practice*, first published in French in 1972.

⁶ Here, referenced as 1996 but de Solier mentions the 1984 edition.

national identity (de Solier, 2005: 479). Precisely, in this sense culinary media does not only promote the ‘regimes of culinary taste’ and lifestyle preferences, they also celebrate and reify the prevailing ideological discourses and help to incorporate and embody them as part of everyday eating patterns.

Moreover, in his *Distinction* Bourdieu identifies a very close relationship linking cultural practices to educational capital and social origin (Bourdieu, 1996: 13). This is crucial because it also permits linking of “taste”/ lifestyle preferences (especially food) to hierarchies in the society and in general to social inequality. In Bourdieu’s understanding the social order efficiently masks its arbitrariness and in a result the social hierarchies are accepted (appropriated, internalized and embodied) by the social actors (see Wacquant, 2008: 264). Namely in *Masculine Domination*, Bourdieu analyses these processes as “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 2001; also see Bourdieu, 1996: 358 and 510-512) – as Wacquant explains: ‘*the subtle imposition of systems of meaning that legitimize and thus solidify structures of inequality*’ (Wacquant, 2008: 264). Wacquant discloses that Bourdieu’s approach is critical towards inherited categories, conventional (accepted) ways of thinking, subtle forms of rule by technocrats and intellectuals in the name of culture and rationality within the established patterns of power (ibid.).

Even though, Bourdieu’s analysis of lifestyle/ “taste” preferences is helpful in many ways, I suggest that Bourdieu’s *Distinction* (1996) does not cover three important dimensions of the studied phenomena (which is most likely dictated by the time at which it was written – his study is based on research from the 60’s and 70’s in France): 1) The explanation of the understanding of food cannot be limited to the concept of distinction and symbolic violence – deprivation of food has physical impacts on the body. 2) Bourdieu does not resolve the question linked to the materiality/physicality. One of the most important updates of these questions offers Daniel Miller’s *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Miller, 1987).

Miller investigates the relationship between society and material culture and examines the consequences of the rapid growth in the industrial production in the 20th century (Miller, 1987: 3). He argues that at the end of 1980’s, the understanding of material

culture was poorly developed and thus materiality and processes of objectification become one his key interests (ibid.). In the center of Miller's attention stands the subject-object relationship both on an abstract philosophical level and at the same time through the perspective of specific aspects of everyday life (Miller, 1987: 4). He locates the subject-object relationship as part of "culture" and therefore part of wider philosophical ideas concerning subject-object duality in Western philosophy (ibid.). 3) Bourdieu's analysis is located in a national context and does not include the transnational dimension.

To expand on these gaps, in this dissertation I attempt to emphasize that: 1) hunger becomes a product of social distinction and symbolic violence and at the same time, 2) materiality of food and its necessity for survival brings other social uses and meanings into play, using the example of the relationship between consumption, embodiment and physical violence in wartime and post-war Srebrenica, 3) many influences that determine foodways as well as other social, political and other relations in Srebrenica are of a transnational character, therefore I borrow some perspectives and theoretical suggestions from the subdiscipline of transnational migration studies.

Most importantly, I define my field in sense of what Levitt and Glick Schiller call the "transnational social field" (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004). The concept is building on Bourdieu's "social field" (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004: 1008-1009). Such perspective facilitates study into how social relationships are structured by power (see Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004: 1008) (for further details see Chapter 2).

In this dissertation, I expand on these selected findings by framing them into the context of the "former zones of conflict" and discussing them, focusing on the issues of food, hunger, material scarcity and social change. Within this framework I am prevalingly interested in Bourdieu's emphasis on the power relations, which I compare with the findings of Sidney Mintz in the context of dietary change and power (see Mintz, 1995).

1.4. Research Objectives and Questions

To summarize, in this dissertation I would like to address an array of issues concerning the changing meanings and modes of food production, preparation and consumption in the context of the last war and the subsequent post-conflict development in Srebrenica, BiH. I intend to concentrate mainly on everyday technologies of producing and consuming food and at the same time to frame these activities within the economic, political and socio-historical development of the region. This narrows the focus of this dissertation within the subdiscipline mainly to the social but also, to a lesser extent, the political and economic significance of food⁷.

As, Mintz emphasized, the situation of rapidly changing food habits requires more explanations as it is not clear why *‘people cling tenaciously to familiar old foods, yet readily replace some of them with others’* (Mintz, 1995: 8). And most importantly, as he further suggests, we need to explain: *‘where and how power enters into these processes of change, projected in part against continuing stability’* (ibid.). This dissertation attempts to answer these questions by presenting an “ethnography of the former zones of conflict”⁸ studied through the lens of the anthropology of food.

The key focus is on contemporary “Srebrenica foodways”, however, as I previously suggested, the presence needs to be studied in a broader social, historical, political and economic contexts, without which it cannot be satisfyingly comprehended. Such an approach raises many theoretical and methodological questions and requires a flexible interdisciplinary research strategy. I will deal with these issues and introduce my research methods in the following two chapters.

⁷ For these reasons, there is no capacity in this dissertation left to explore various biological and environmental aspects of the studied issue and other issues concerning the issue of food.

⁸ Inspired by Collinson and Macbeth, (2014) by “food in zones of conflict”.

In this dissertation I ask:

What roles and meanings does the topic of food acquire in the former zone of conflict? What are the contemporary technologies of food production, preparation and consumption in the studied locality?

How do these activities and their meanings change under dramatic structural transformations the region has undergone?

What happens to civilians and food during an armed conflict? In which context does food become a tool of distinction, a means of oppression or even a weapon? How is war remembered and in which contexts is food used as a metaphor?

How do forced displacement and the processes of industrialization, professionalization and deterritorialization of food affect the post-war foodways of Srebrenica?

And if the proverb ‘You are what you eat’ can serve as a relevant reflection of social reality, what imageries arise in terms of both individual and collective identities under the radical structural changes in times of war and peace?

By asking these questions, I intend not only to broaden the horizons in the field of anthropology of food in former zones of conflict, but I also hope to bring a fresh insight into conflict studies and everyday perceptions of identity in relation to food that transcends the "ethnic lens" (see Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013).



Picture 3: A representation of Srebrenica: Graffiti in Sarajevo (Photo M.S., summer 2014).

2. A “Non-Local ethnography” of Srebrenica: The “Silver Town” that Could Have Glistened with Gold

This chapter has two goals: firstly, to question conventional theoretical notions of locality by borrowing several critiques from subdisciplines of transnational migration and refugee studies; secondly, to introduce the studied locality – the municipality of Srebrenica in a socio-historical perspective and in relation to the chosen subdiscipline.

The complexity of the topic of food in a former zone of conflict, where the vast majority of research participants constitutes displaced persons, creates a methodological and theoretical uneasiness: how to delimit the locality across space and time and within various broader social, historical, economic and political contexts of Srebrenica in relation to the global processes. To resolve this issue, I decided to combine several approaches which I am borrowing from the subdiscipline of transnational migration and forced displacement. In particular, I will focus here on several major updates in anthropological methodology and theory proposed by Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2013), Feldman (2011) and Malkki (1995). I suggest that they are also applicable when it comes to the anthropology of food.

My goal is to raise awareness of three methodological problems that are relevant to the contemporary social sciences: 1) In this dissertation, I use multiple-site ethnographic research, which I attempt to expand on the basis of Feldman’s “non-local ethnography” (see Feldman, 2011), by broadly including the idea of apparatuses, which I understand more in terms of “culinary regimes”. 2) The locality where my fieldwork took place is influenced to a great extent by the fact that the majority of my research participants were subjected to either internal or external displacement. 3) Most importantly, I base my argument on Glick Schiller and Çağlar’s (2013) assertion that the chosen methodological and analytical approach needs to go against the “ethnic lens” in order to obtain a more in-depth understanding of what is happening in the studied locality. I argue that a perspective which ignores the national or ethno-religious background as an entry point of the analysis is not just useful in terms of theorizing migration and forced displacement, but should become an integral analytical approach in the entire discipline of

anthropology and other related social sciences. I consider this approach to be useful and extremely important especially in the context of Srebrenica, which continues to be understood prevalingly on a basis of national and ethno-religious classifications.



Picture 4: Srebrenica at present (Photo M.S., December 2016).

2.1. Srebrenica and the Consequences of Forced Displacement

The results of the recent, long-awaited BiH census (known as "*Popis 2013*", which was conducted in 2013, although the results were not published until 2016) have revealed the extent of the demographic changes that the region has undergone ever since the last war (see Census of Population 2013, 2016)⁹. Before the armed conflict, according to the Census of Population from 1991 the municipality (*opština*) of Srebrenica had 36,666 inhabitants (Census of Population 1991, 1993: 97). Currently only 13,409 persons are recorded in the Srebrenica municipality (Census of Population 2013, 2016: 64) This clearly shows that the municipality has lost about 23,257 inhabitants (63. 43%) (N1, 2016).¹⁰

The drastic decrease in population applies to the entire country. Before the last war the recorded population of BiH was 4,377,033 persons (Census of Population 1991, 1993: 7). The last census recorded 3,531,159 inhabitants (Census of Population 2013, 2016: 54). This clearly shows that more than 20 years later the country's population has fallen by more than 800,000 inhabitants.

Between 100,000 and 150,000 people died during the Bosnian War between 1992-1995 (Halilovich, 2015: 18)¹¹. The survivors of the conflict were subjected to massive forced displacement. In total, 2.2 million men, women and children were forcefully displaced (see Halilovich, 2015: 1). Many of these forcefully displaced persons

⁹Here it is important to mention that the entire time the census was surrounded by frequent media scandals concerning both the methods and the evaluation of results. On the other hand, it is the only census ever conducted since the last war, so the results are generally accepted. On the basis of my fieldwork I suggest treating these numbers only as a guide. In the course of my fieldwork I came across several "problematic cases" in the Srebrenica municipality. For example, I know a person who chose not to participate at all. Although the people who "collected the data" were trained, they sometimes influenced the answers, especially when it came to indecisive or (in fewer cases) illiterate individuals (informal interview during the fieldwork). Also, two girls who worked for the census in Srebrenica were "caught" completing the documents in a café instead of visiting individual households. However, this was taken in account by the BiH statistical agency. Overall, I find some of the data helpful to illustrate some population movements or information on households.

Concerning completion of the census in a café see news portal Klix.ba – "Female census workers were caught filling in documents in a café" (*Popisivačice uhvaćene kako popunjavaju liste u kafani*) (Klix.ba, 2013)

¹⁰This was also discussed in the local media. See e.g. the article "The population census from 2013 show the extent of the genocide in Srebrenica" (*Popis iz 2013 godine pokazao razmjere genocida u Srebrenici*) (N1, 2016).

¹¹Because of the "dispute" concerning the number of victims of the last war, I provide this number given by Halilovich (2015) as merely a guide.

found asylum or moved on a variety of residence permits to various countries where they live to this day. The list of these countries include Australia, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the US, the UK and others (Field notes M.S.¹², also see Halilovich, 2015).

Since the war both internally and externally displaced persons were encouraged to return¹³ (see e.g. Al-Ali, Black, Koser, 2001: 582). Despite this, the majority of the prewar population of the municipality of Srebrenica never returned, which is clearly evident when comparing the last two population censuses. At the heart of many personal decisions not to return lie serious economic problems and the “fragile” political situation in the locality¹⁴. Moreover, Halilovich, who has recently carried out a detailed ethnographic study in the area, has emphasized that accepting the current situation with more than third of BiH population living permanently abroad, in “diaspora”, is perceived by some as accepting the results of ethnic cleansing (Halilovich, 2015: 120)¹⁵.

Halilovich further argues that the central issue of displacement can be seen as a problem of space, or more precisely, the lack of it (Halilovich, 2015: 119). As he further specifies, people subjected to forced displacement have to radically renegotiate their identities linked to a place and position themselves in relation to multiple locations (ibid.). It is precisely in this context when also food patterns are renegotiated and subjected to change (see Mintz, 1995).

The forced displacement created many transnational connections between contemporary BiH (the country of origin) and many host countries. These interconnections have immense economic, political and even social influence (e.g. Srebrenica mayor

¹²In all cases M.S. stands for Markéta Slavková, the author of this PhD dissertation.

¹³BiH Dayton Agreement guarantees all displaced people the right to return (see Halilovich, 2015: 120)

¹⁴Many Bosnians express distrust towards the entity of *Republika Srpska*, whose current president Milorad Dodik is infamous in the world of politics for denying the Srebrenica genocide. However, mostly the reason not to return is motivated by bad economic situation in *Republika Srpska*, particularly in Srebrenica (Fieldwork analysis M.S.).

¹⁵As Halilovich, further writes: '*Without the return of refugees, the results of ethnic cleansing will be de facto legitimized in the form of ethnically cleansed territories and the division of the once multicultural country along the ethnic lines*' (Halilovich, 2015: 120).

elections in 2012 or various forms of support from HTA¹⁶). Also various transnational food-connected practices are on the rise. A good example of this is the circulation of food items between the “country of origin” (BiH) and host countries (e.g. Austria) that I have studied as part of this project. It is important to note here that the state is still a very important player in BiH and its role, especially in the case of Srebrenica, cannot be underestimated.

Halilovich shows in *Places of Pain* how many ethnically cleansed and displaced Bosnians in some cases turn their permanent displacement into seasonal movement between the new place of residence and the place of origin (Halilovich, 2015: 118). As he emphasizes this does not simply mean the multiplicity of new homes rather, he says, these displaced people have developed new forms of “(non)belonging” – a feeling of permanent homelessness and exile which intermingles with notion of multiple belonging – a feeling of “living here but dreaming there” (ibid.) This is also the reason why, according to Halilovich, people of Bosnian origin in Austria, Sweden, USA and Australia reconstruct and recreate their current communities in relation to what they remember from “back home” which gave rise to places like “little Srebrenicas, Zvorniks, Brčkos etc.” (ibid.).

As he explains: *‘displacement, memory and identity are embodied experiences of real people and the communities they belong to. These experiences are remembered, (re)constructed and enacted in diasporic spaces and in the original homeland as well as in cyber space, creating an in-between space, which is sometimes both here (‘where I live’) and there (‘where I come from’) and sometimes neither completely here nor there (‘I am only here temporarily until I’m able to go back home’)’* (Halilovich, 2015: 1).

I suggest that this sort of ambiguity concerning the sense of belonging can be also traced in the renegotiated and embodied individual eating repertoires. Food plays an important role both in the processes of displacement and emplacement amongst these people, as it is linked with self-identification and memories. Despite that, in many cases the individual experiences of forced displacement made it necessary to change eating habits and strategies of obtaining food. For example the majority of the people of Bosnian

¹⁶For the term and description of Home Town Associations (HTA) see Çağlar (2006).

origin that I have met in Vienna preferred to cook adapted recipes of what they classified as “Bosnian” food. I noticed this in all of the visited households. In fact, this can be seen as a result of being “neither here, nor there”. In various contexts of social change, food seems to serve as a “vessel” of embodied memories. The tastes of the familiar recipes are used to evoke the good times when they used to cook such meals. When reconstructing these “tastes of home”, the cooks use their embodied skills and memory or they look up the recipes in cookbooks and often also on the internet (in cyber space). The influence of information shaped and shared in cyber space should not be underestimated, especially amongst younger generations in BiH and in “diaspora”.

Based on his findings concerning the displaced residents of Brčko, Mostar, Prijedor and Srebrenica, Halilovich calls for an expansion of the transnational conceptual framework, which would include a trans-local diasporic identity formation amongst displaced Bosnians worldwide (Halilovich, 2015: 118). Basing his arguments on Al-Ali (2002), Halilovich claims that the “political, religious and personal frictions” test the concept of community (Halilovich, 2015: 120). As Al-Ali, Black and Koser suggested, the various historical contexts and the interconnections of social, political and institutional factors produce highly uneven patterns of transnational activities (Al-Ali, Black and Koser, 2001). Also, Malkki has highlighted that forced displacements cannot be generalized as a “universal experience” because they are caused by diverse historical and political causes and also the situation of the displaced individuals is qualitatively different (Malkki, 1995: 496).

Al-Ali, Black and Koser furthermore argued that, relatively soon after their displacement, neither did the Bosnians in the UK and the Netherlands participate particularly actively in the transnational field, nor could they be classified as “transnational communities” at that time (Al-Ali, Black and Koser, 2001). More than a decade later, the situation has changed dramatically. Halilovich has argued that Bosnians do now form a special type of “diaspora” (see Halilovich, 2015: 118-124). He explains that: *‘From disorganized groups of refugees dispersed across many different countries, in less than two decades displaced Bosnians have evolved into a global web of well organized,*

interconnected deterritorialized communities in which a rich variety of social, cultural and economic exchanges take place' (Halilovich, 2015: 124).

Halilovich accepts the term “diaspora” but he further defines these groups as “trans-local diasporic communities” (Halilovich, 2015: 118-154)¹⁷. However, as he explains, “... *these trans-local diasporic communities are not stuck in the past or fixed and stable and localized in time and space in their identities. On the contrary, trans-localism, as performed by war-torn communities from Bosnia, exemplifies how cultural place and embodied local identities transcend geographical space and chronological time – how mobility and attachment to place are not intrinsically contradictory, but can in fact be complementary processes'* (Halilovich, 2015: 151)

2.2. Beyond Geographical Space: Non-local Ethnography of Srebrenica

In this chapter I try to show that the "locality" is not simply a geographical space that necessarily also affects the research methodology of my fieldwork. I therefore used the strategy of multiple-site ethnography which I decided to broaden up in terms of Feldman's "non-local ethnography" (Feldman, 2011).

According to Feldman, multi-sited ethnography is very useful in terms of explaining “connections”, but it does not escape the limits of empiricism and overemphasis on the “firsthand account” by itself (Feldman, 2011: 378). As he further suggests: “*Ongoing structural marginalization requires specific configurations of social relations that one cannot identify by merely pointing to them*” (Feldman, 2011: 379). Feldman argues, that anthropology fails to differentiate between "connections" and “relations" as methodological constructs because the epistemological distinction between ethnography and participant-observation within the discipline has not been effectively resolved (Feldman, 2011: 378-379). As a solution, he encourages the use of the concept of "apparatus" and suggests a "non-local ethnography” approach (Feldman, 2011: 380).

¹⁷Unlike Halilovich (2015), I use *dijaspora* (diaspora) with reference to the *emic* perspective as the term is commonly used in contemporary BiH.

According to Feldman: *'Apparatuses decompose direct social connections and replace them with shifting constellations of indirect social relations... [that are] mediated by abstract third agents and have an arbitrary relationship in/to space and time'* (Feldman, 2011: 375). Drawing on Feldman (2011), I do not define the locality simply as multiple physical locations examined by participant observation, I also include other social, historical, economic and political contexts and I attempt to emphasize apparatuses that help to shape contemporary Srebrenica foodways.

This, I believe, is a fruitful direction of analysis. Similarly, in his food studies Mintz has argued that the analysis needs to include both: “outside meaning” – the economic, social, political (military) conditions and “inside meaning” – the everyday life conditions of consumption (Mintz, 1995: 5-6, also see Messer, 1997: 102). As he further explains: *'Outside and inside meanings are linked through the conditions created and presented to the potential consumers by those who supply what is going to be consumed'* (Mintz, 1995: 12). I would further add that this is precisely where also the apparatuses enter everyday eating practices as “culinary regimes”.

The reason why I am drawing on Mintz's (1995) and also Feldman's (2011) arguments is that I was attempting to find a theoretical and methodological framework which would allow me to contextualize what is happening in Srebrenica on a local, national and partly also transnational level (and at the same time enabling me to move between “ethnographic present” and history). This was also the reason why I divided my research activities into three localities: Srebrenica (primary locality/ “point of reference”), Sarajevo (national context), Vienna, Austria (transnational context). At the same time I focus on apparatuses and other expressions of structural power in a global context in interplay with the agency of social actors (for particular examples see chapter 4).

This focus inevitably opens a whole range of questions about the role of “power” within these processes in relation to construction of social hierarchies. Moving in this theoretical direction, I connect with the Levitt's and Glick Schiller's proposal to understand “society” and “social membership” in terms of Bourdieu's concept of “social field”, which

enables one to make a difference between “ways of being” and “ways of belonging” (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004)

Levitt and Glick Schiller encourage the use of the concept of “social field” because it emphasizes ways in which social relationships are structured by power since the “*boundaries of the field are fluid and the field itself is created by the participants who are joined in struggle for social positions*” (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004: 1008). According to Levitt and Glick Schiller, Bourdieu’s ideas are also well applicable to what they call the “transnational social field”, because they are not contained within the limits of state boundaries (ibid.). Based on Bourdieu’s social field, Levitt and Glick Schiller define the social field from the position of transnational migration studies as ‘*a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized and transformed*’ (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004: 1009).

2.3. Simultaneity of the Temporal Frameworks – an Analysis Beyond the Ethnic Lens

In the previous sections I have summarized several important observations that point to various methodological problems. Here, I am going to look at the issue of methodological nationalism. At first sight, these critiques might not be directly linked to the previously mentioned issues of spatiality, temporality and power. However, here I will argue in accordance with Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2013) that these problems are, in fact, interlinked.

Glick Schiller and Çağlar have in the area of migration studies called for a scholarship that goes against methodological nationalism and does not rely on an ethnic lens (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013). As they explain, the methodological nationalism approach presumes that society/culture as well as boundaries of belonging copy the borders of the nation-state and thus the nation-state becomes the unit of analysis (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013: 496). Such idea of culture and belonging is a perspective of 20th

and 21st century nation-state building processes, which legitimates a political ideology of one country and thus one's identity (ibid.).

In the field of migration studies, the differences in national origin (and as I would add, also ethno-religious background) were seen as the most important divisions amongst the inhabitants of the nation-state (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013: 496). However, as Glick Schiller and Çağlar have emphasized: *‘Through a single discursive act those who are native to the territory of a nation/state are transformed into participants in a shared and homogeneous culture; those departing from one national-territory to settle in another are likewise seen as sharing identity and culture so that they become identified by the nationality of their homeland. It is this foundational binary of difference that leads scholars to approach all people of the same national or ethno-religious migrant background as homogenous in terms of their values, culture, achievement and identity’* (ibid.)

Critiques of such simplified perceptions of identity have been quite prominent in this subfield already since the early 1990's. On one hand, criticism of the imagery of cultures as enclosed and discrete units has been raised by several scholars (e.g. Abu-Lughod, 1991; Clifford, 1992, Gupta; Fergusson, 1992, Malkki, 1992). At the beginning of 1990s Liisa Malkki raised awareness of “sedentarist metaphysics” using the example of war refugees in Africa (Malkki, 1992: 31-33). Malkki explains that this “sedentarism” is not inert to societies, but it serves as a discourse that presumes the identities (whether national or cultural) to be territorialized and therefore enables territorial displacement to be perceived as pathological (Malkki, 1992: 31).

Dawson and Rapport posed a similar critique when they wrote that the conventional understanding of home was “being environmentally fixed” (Rapport and Dawson, 1998: 21). Also, for Gupta and Fergusson the imagery of “enclosed” and “static” understandings of “cultures” and “nation-states” that consist of homogenous populations territorialized within its confines is highly problematic. This becomes visible namely in the border areas (see Gupta and Fergusson, 1992: 6-7).

Later Wimmer and Glick Schiller formulate the critique of “methodological nationalism” – the tendency to understand a nation-state and its boundaries in terms of a unit of social analysis (see Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002). These ideas have been further developed by Glick Schiller and Çağlar as moving analytically beyond the “ethnic lens” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013: 495). Also Castles has argued that sociology of forced migration has to depart from “nation-state boundedness” (Castles, 2003: 30). Food offers useful insight into the processes of displacement and emplacement and also serves as a good example of illustrating this. The last armed conflict in the country has also shown how food can be used to differentiate and exclude targeted groups.

To avoid the ethnic lens perspective, Glick Schiller and Çağlar offer a concept of migrant “emplacement” that focuses on the relationship between the economic, political and cultural positioning of cities within the broader networks of power (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013: 494)¹⁸. They understand emplacement as: *a relationship between the continuing restructuring of a city within networks of power and migrant’s efforts to settle and build networks of connection within the constraints and opportunities of a specific locality. It focuses analytic attention on the conjunction of time and place. In this approach migrants’ local and transnational networks of connection are considered in relation to local institutions, structures and narratives, as they emerge at particular moments in the historical trajectory and multiscalar positioning of specific cities’* (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013: 495).

In other words, the ethnic lens perspective denies not only the social actors’ agency but also simultaneity in time and space. As Glick Schiller and Çağlar highlight: ‘... migrants do not live in a world apart but are shaped by and contribute to the processes through which globe encircling institutions, networks and struggles become emplaced in time and space’. (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013: 510-511). This also applies to the marginalized, impoverished individuals who become similarly denied relevance and access to power.

¹⁸They explore urban-based entrepreneurial activities as a mode of emplacement (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013: 494)

In my opinion this perspective is very useful when it comes to researching Srebrenica which is generally perceived through an ethnic lens and ethnicized. However, this is a very reductive perspective which is analytically problematic. The reproduction of national and ethno-religious identity stereotypes is potentially very dangerous, as was the case in Srebrenica where state sanctioned violence against persons of non-Serb origin led to genocide. This is another reason why I find necessary to reject the ethnic lens that shadows and twists understanding of a social reality that is far more complicated. This becomes even more important at present, in the world which, as Collinson and Macbeth (2014: 18-19) argue, is more increasingly divided by conflict.

2.4. Nekada prije/ Once Upon a Time: Srebrenica Before the War

In this dissertation, I am primarily interested in contemporary eating practices in the context of the last war and to a smaller extent also in pre-war Yugoslavia, but sometimes it is necessary to delve further into history. Culinary practices are quite resilient to change. For that reason, I look briefly at the history of the locality since ancient times to pin point the different groups of people who lived in Srebrenica in the past. These selective excursions into history emerge as necessary in terms of understanding the contemporary eating patterns (as I will show namely in Chapter 4).

I structure the different periods according to the *emic* understanding of my research participants into the time: 1) before the war (*prije rata*), 2) during the war (*u ratu/ za vrijeme rata*) 3) after the war (*poslije rata*). I also introduce this division to highlight that the last historical conjuncture in the region still has a powerful influence on the perception of the self as well as the subsistence strategies of everyday life in BiH. In the several following pages, I will briefly introduce the studied locality, touching on all of these three dimensions. I intentionally chose not to structure my narrative in a simple linear manner in order to emphasize that the past actively permeates and shapes the present.

Srebrenica literally translates as the “Silver Town”. The etymological origin of the town’s name harks back to the long mining history of silver (and also lead) (Mutapcic, 2012: 11) which goes back to Classical Antiquity (see Imamovic, 2012: 131). Most likely around the 1st century B.C. the area, which was inhabited originally by persons of Illyrian

background, became dominated by the ancient Romans (see Imamovic, 2012: 103-104). Imamovic argues that a relatively large number of foreigners moved to the region, attracted not only by the local silver mines, but also by other natural resources (Imamovic, 2012: 104, 120). According to Salimović, Slavs began to settle in the area around the 6th century AD (Salimović, 2002: 13).

In the Middle Ages, Srebrenica was one of the most important silver mines in the Balkans (Mutapcic, 2012: 11). Since 1422, Bosnia and Serbia produced more than fifth of all silver in Europe (Malcom, 2002: 25). Different groups of people lived in the locality and several different faiths have coexisted here, a fact which is supported by various historical evidence. For example, a group of Saxon miners moved to the area (Mutapcic, 2002: 13). Dozic also mentions apart from Saxons that Vlachs and people from Dubrovnik constituted some of the migrant groups (Dozic, 2002: 39). During the medieval period, the area came under an influence of the Bosnian Kingdom and the spiritual influence of the Bosnian Church was also important (see Mutapcic, 2002: 14-16). Large numbers of tombstones (*stećci*) are to be found both in the town and in its surroundings (see also Mutapcic, 2002: 17). There was also an influence of Franciscans in Srebrenica who built a monastery and Church of St. Mary, which is mentioned in 1387 and in 1514 (Mutapcic, 2002: 16). The church exists to the present day. Around this time also an Orthodox Church existed in Srebrenica (Dozic, 2002: 40-41). In the mid 15th century, the locality became part of the Ottoman Empire (see Mutapcic, 2012: 27-28). The Ottoman Empire not only introduced a new religion, Islam, but it significantly shaped previous cooking and eating patterns and introduced many dishes such as *pita*, *ćevapi*, *sarma*, *dolma*, *baklava* etc. which are nowadays considered as constituents of “Bosnian cuisine”. I will further discuss the impact of the Ottoman culinary regime on contemporary eating practices in BiH in chapter 4.



Picture 5: Stećak (a medieval tombstone) in the Srebrenica municipality (Photo M.S., April 2014).

In the second half of the 19th century, the Bosnian *vijalet* (municipal unit in the Ottoman Empire) became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (see Malcom, 2002: 136-155). The Austro-Hungarian Empire brought another culinary regime that is evident until the present day. A good example of this can be introduction of some dishes such as *šnicla* (schnitzel), *knedle* (dumplings) as well as various culinary techniques and “Western and Central European” dining practices. In the first half of the 20th century, the area underwent two bloody armed conflicts: the First World War which began with the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand d'Este and his wife on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip. With regard to the studied issues, the Second World War is more relevant, as the older generations directly experienced it. Throughout my fieldwork I encountered narratives, where a grandmother saved her family from starving using survival recipes during the latest conflict in the 1990s that she had remembered from WW2.

From 1945 until 1992, the municipality of Srebrenica was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ)¹⁹. In the late 20th century, Srebrenica and its close surroundings constituted one of the well-developed localities of the former Yugoslavia, mainly due to its long history of metal industry, spa tourism and attractive countryside (see

¹⁹*Socijalistička federativna republika Jugoslavija* (Social Federative Republic Yugoslavia).

e.g. Salimović, 2002). One of the popular leisure destinations for inhabitants of Srebrenica but also other Yugoslavs was Lake Perućac on the River Drina. Halilovich offers following characteristics of the locality:

‘Before 1992 hot summers would always attract visitors to Klotjevac and other towns along the river Drina, separating Bosnia from Serbia. Famed for its beauty, its clean water and breathtaking canyon through which it flows, for centuries the river has boasted many notable bridges – including the bridge at Višegrad made famous by Ivo Andrić in his Nobel Prize winning novel The Bridge over Drina’ (Halilovich, 2015: 21).

The high standard of life was enabled largely by the establishment of industrial zones Potočari, Zeleni jadar and Skelani which employed a large portion of the local inhabitants. *‘There was nothing we lacked before the war’*, often repeated Almedina, who is one of the Srebrenica returnees, during many of our informal conversations. *‘I had a job and a husband, who was also employed. In the evening, we would go with friends to the town. Čaršija would be full of people. Some of them would go for a walk to Guber (healing springs, before the war also a spa complex) or they would have a drink in one of the many cafés’* (Field notes M.S.)²⁰.

²⁰In order to protect the privacy of my research participants the names of my research participants are coded. The selected parts of interviews cited in this dissertation contain minor stylistic changes, however the meaning stays unchanged and is representative of the opinions of the interviewees. Also as vast majority of the interviews and informal conversations were carried out in Bosnian, some minor changes are the result of translation. The interviews were translated by M.S. (author of this PhD dissertation).



Picture 6: Lake Perućac (Photo M.S., July 2014).



Picture 7: Guber healing springs in Srebrenica (Photo M.S., November 2016).

Industrial food production was introduced to the region in this period as part of the socialist modernization project. Moreover, many foreign goods were allowed to be imported and also Western factories produced their goods in SFRJ such as Lino Lada spread (referred to locally as “Eurocrem”), a product made by an Italian company in Serbia even during the existence of the SFRJ. Already during this time of socialist modernization, the older food production technologies were abandoned on a large scale but at the same time private food production using mostly preindustrial food production techniques was practiced in the countryside (Fieldwork Analysis M.S.).

Additionally, it is important to note that many of my research participants appreciated the fact that the former regime placed no accent on religious distinctions. Even though socialism did not favor religion, people were allowed to celebrate various religious holidays, often together, regardless of their various ethno-religious backgrounds. A short example can be found in another comment from Almedina.

On April 16, 2014, I met Almedina coincidentally in a small local store in the center. It was just before Easter. We exchanged greetings and started to chat. At once she said that in former Yugoslavia people used to celebrate the holidays together and that her mother took her to an Easter celebration when she was a child. She mentioned, there was a cross on the hill but she didn’t remember much since she was very young at the time. Almedina

noted that she watches biblical stories every night on television and she likes them. Then she sighed that: *'these days nothing gets celebrated like before and nothing is what it used to be'*. I knew that since the war the things had been tough for her – her husband had died and she had had to take care of her two kids alone ever since. She came to the store just to buy cigarette filters, probably some tobacco as well, I did not see. Certainly it was not much, these days she had to cover most of her expenses from her meager widow's pension...

2.5. Srebrenica during the War (1992 to 1995) and at Present

During the armed conflict of 1992 to 1995, Srebrenica became an isolated enclave under siege, where around 40,000 of persons from adjoining areas of *Podrinje* sought refuge (see Halilovich, 2015: 38) as the ethnic cleansing proceeded. In consequence of this, the local infrastructure eventually collapsed which, needless to say, heavily reflected in the everyday consumption strategies. On April 16, 1993 Srebrenica was pronounced a UN Safe Area (Honig and Both, 1997: 127); however this did not have visible positive impact on the living conditions in the locality. On an everyday basis this meant increasingly scarce food supplies and people in Srebrenica were dependent on limited resources coming from international food aid and some of the remains of local produce (for details see Chapter 5).

In July 1995, the town submit to the heavy military offensive of the Armies of *Republika Srpska* (VRS) (see Honig and Both, 1997: 52). This led to an event known as the "Srebrenica Massacre", which was later described by the *International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* at the Hague (ICTY) as the worse mass atrocity in Europe after WW2 (ICTY, Facts about Srebrenica). The massacre and subsequent cover-up operations were planned and well-organized, therefore the ICTY has classified the event as genocide (ibid.)²¹

²¹In this dissertation, based on my fieldwork findings and conversation with the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), I accept the conclusion of the ICTY that what happened in Srebrenica can be categorized as an act of genocide. For further arguments concerning this matter see Halilovich (2015: 39-41). For definition of genocide see Zwaan (2003).

More than twenty years have passed since the last armed conflict in this region of former Yugoslavia, but the traces of war are still evident at almost every step. The streets are lined with houses riddled with bullet holes. ‘*Unbelievable*’, commented on the situation a Bosnian middle-aged couple from their Viennese home. ‘*If all that humanitarian aid and money that went to Srebrenica had not disappeared, the čaršija²² (downtown) would now be paved in gold*’ (Interview Haris and Nina, 2015). ‘*It would look like New York...*’ a local youngster said dreamily as we watched the sun set over the city from a bench (Field Notes M.S.).

Under our feet there sprawled the “Silver Town” – a region near the river *Drina* that has been known for its silver mines and healing springs since Roman times: a place where the “Western” cultural influences mixed with the “Eastern”. In contrast, nowadays since the last war the municipality of Srebrenica has become a socially and economically marginalized locality, “where time has seemingly stood still” – a *vukojebina²³* as some of the impoverished youngsters would joke. But most importantly, it is a place where the everyday lives of almost all of the inhabitants, regardless of their so-called “ethnic”, “religious” or “national” origin, are heavy with memories of wartime.

Sadly, the case of the Srebrenica genocide demonstrates the consequences of extreme nationalism and what can happen when categorizations according ethno-religious background are abused. A major disruption in the everyday routine occurs for several days around the annual commemoration of the so-called “Srebrenica Massacre”. At a local level, this event is perceived as and represents a symbol of suffering of the people of prevalingly Bosnian Muslim origin in the last war. Every year on July 11, the *Memorial Cemetery in Potočari* is commonly visited by between 30,000 and 50,000²⁴ people – the mourning relatives, participants of the Nezuk-Potočari Peace March (*Marš mira Nezuk-Potočari*), activists, politicians, journalist and others. Once a year, this quiet town that

²²Also Halilovich (2015: xiii) defines *čaršija* as “downtown”. The term *čaršija* was introduced to the region along with the ottoman influence, particularly in the domain of spatial organization and architecture.

²³Literally, “a place where wolves fuck” meaning the middle of nowhere. A little place where is not much to do . I need to emphasize that I am not using the term in pejorative sense but to emphasize the *emic* view of some of my research participants as well as to highlight the social and economic marginalization of the place.

²⁴There is no exact statistic and the numbers vary in different years. The numbers that I list are an estimate based on newspaper articles and the estimate of individuals participating in the event.

currently has a population of only a couple of thousand appears on the television all over the world. The last commemoration in July 2016 marked 21 years since the conflict, although not all of the victims have been buried yet and some of them have still not been found. It is precisely in this context that Srebrenica is represented to global audiences (and enters the transnational social field).



Picture 8: The collective commemoration and burials of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide on July 11, 2014 (Photo M.S., July 2014).

As I have previously argued, it is important to realize that Srebrenica is not simply a geographical space and administrative unit but it has been made also a symbol of the Bosnian²⁵ (in some attempts of exclusively Bosniak²⁶ or Muslim) suffering. This profoundly impacts the social, political and also economic relations in the region and also the multiscale positioning of the city within the global context. The vast majority of both its local and international political contexts and media representations is connected with the issue of genocide. This, of course, is a very reductive perspective (as I will demonstrate later); nevertheless it is important to mention it because it creates an important context of the locality.

²⁵The term “Bosnian” is used to describe a citizen of BiH without being linked to any specific ethno-religious background.

²⁶The term “Bosniak” is used to describe persons of Bosnian Muslim origin and thus, accentuates ethno-religious perception of identity.

In *Places of Pain* (2015), Halilovich explains how deeply the fact that he was born in Srebrenica affected his public identity. He writes: *‘Over the last twenty years, my place of birth has become an important distinguishing mark – more a scar than a mark – that I am often identified by. Upon learning about my place of birth, I know what kind of questions to expect from people. Spread across the first page of my Australian passport, “S r e b r e n i c a” almost reads like my name and like my name travels with me wherever I go. Although I left Srebrenica at the age of fourteen and was not there during the 1992-95 war, the Srebrenica genocide – which claimed more than hundred of my extended family – has had a profound impact on my life...’* (Halilovich, 2015: 14)

This tragic event had profound impacts on my research participants’ lives in many ways, especially on those who were in the enclave during the armed conflict. This is hard, if not impossible to explain by scientific methods, even express in words. A simple psychologizing reduction of this issue to “trauma” or PTSD, does not offer any complex understanding of the issue. Many of the inhabitants of the region still cannot speak about what happened to them in the last war. Others find ways how to break the silence and some of them feel the need to express their pain through art. Azra from Srebrenica and her cousin Kerim are good example of this. Art became their means to speak about their life’s troubles, poverty and also Srebrenica genocide.

Azra wrote an autobiography/memoirs which she would like to publish one day. In 2014, she still feels highly distressed about 1995: she can hardly control herself as she writes:

‘Where is the golden fish, so I can make a wish? The wish would be to erase 1995. I would dig it out of the multitude of years. I would rip it, burn it, jump on it, take different parts apart and laugh. If I had only a little bit of luck, I would cut it – finely into little pieces. Make it suffer, to feel sorry for each and every person lost...I would peel it same like it peeled my cheeks, wet from tears, cracked. I imagine I am an old woman with a distressed face. All this pain brought me that cursed year. Oh, if only the goldfish would appear...’ (Memoirs Azra, version from February 2014)²⁷.

²⁷Translation from Bosnian to English M.S.

Her cousin Kerim, nicknamed Orfej (Orpheus), is a rapper. He wrote an autobiographical track called *Vrati vrijeme nazad* (Let the Time Return), in which he raps:

‘When the moment of happiness is gone, things settle in my head and my mind drifts back to the old times. I’m alone again with a sheet of paper. We live in darkness. Where did those [old] days go? Everything went downhill ever since my dad perished.

You are always in my heart, I will always remember you. I hold on tight to your picture because I cannot turn back time. I got used to suffering and even when it’s already bad, it can still get worse. My dreams are horrors and in life I have mere nightmares.

Then, I am drunk, awful – the memories silence me. Scoundrels have no clue, what’s going on in my head. And then when life slaps you, I am again at [mother’s] door. Hello mother, why did you wait for me hours?

I’m fucked up by things, which I don’t understand. How can you only expect me to be a better man? The streets and lowlifes won’t leave me in peace. I can turn back time but only on paper.

Let the time return to the old days. Maybe we would have a great time, maybe new wounds would come. Life goes on, news changes and I wait again and again what tomorrow brings...

Life goes on but my brain is locked. I am looking for the key of freedom but I can’t find it by myself. Like a street dog, I am a lost in my thoughts. I am a lone wolf amongst human beings...’

(Orfej, *Vrati Vrijeme na Zad*)²⁸

²⁸Translation from Bosnian to English M.S.

3. From a “Traveler” to a “Dweller”: Reflexive Remarks on Interaction Between the Anthropologist and the Participants of the Research

Having given a more general introduction to the locality in the previous chapter, here I am going to briefly discuss methods of anthropological research in the context of my “long journey” to Srebrenica. I will explain who my research participants were (the studied sample) and I am also going to draw on my time as a researcher in Srebrenica and the interactions amongst us throughout my fieldwork.

With respect to the complexity of the studied phenomena, I primarily designed my research as an anthropological study based on long-term, extensive ethnographic fieldwork, which made obtaining in-depth data easier.²⁹ In the actual physical localities, namely in Srebrenica, I have been looking at the studied populations in terms of Appadurai’s concept of “neighborhood” – actual, living communities which have the potential for social reproduction at their disposal (see Appadurai, 1996: 178-185), with an emphasis on various types of household formations. This seems particularly appropriate in the Balkan region where the traditional social cohesion developed around *zadruga*³⁰ and *zavičaj* (*place of belonging*)³¹. Moreover, I consider this approach advantageous, as it highlights actual social formations and opens the way to questions regarding social reproduction, which is a thorny issue in the area of food consumption and amongst post-war populations.

Second, I frame my research with an accent on the studies which use the methodological and theoretical standpoint of the (prevalingly) British school of material

²⁹I also choose in-depth ethnographic research within the scope of social anthropology since it allows me to work with sensitivity and consideration. This is particularly important in Srebrenica or other post-genocide environments where any fieldwork raises many questions concerning research ethics and the positionality of the researcher.

³⁰Zadruga is a term used for: 1) a social unit of rural community among the Southern Slavs associated with kinship characteristic of communal production and consumption strategies or 2) a socialist collective farming in Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

³¹Halilovich defines “zavičaj” as an “emotional and intimate home, local homeland, place where one grew up, place of belonging, one’s native region, local community see Halilovich, 2015: xvi).

culture (e.g. Appadurai, 1986; Buchli, 2002 Tilley, 2006). Christopher Tilley fittingly describes this framework, when he writes:

‘At present, material culture studies form a diffuse and relatively uncharted interdisciplinary field of study in which a concept of materiality provides both the starting point and the justification. This field of study centers on the idea that materiality is an integral dimension of culture, and that there are dimensions of social existence that cannot be fully understood without it... ...Alternatively, material culture studies may take the human subject or the social as their starting point: the manner in which people think through the medium of different kinds of things. Material culture studies in various ways inevitably have to emphasize the dialectical and recursive relationship between persons and things: that persons make and use things and that the things make persons. Subjects and objects are indelibly linked.’ (Tilley in Tilley, Keane, Küchler, Rowlands, Spyer eds., 2006: 1,4).

When it comes to ethnographic practice itself, I have applied six basic methods to produce/construct data for this research: 1) participant observation (see Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2003: 107-154, Bernard, 2006: 342-375) 2) informal interview 3) interviews focused on material culture and culinary techniques 4) various types of documents and archive materials and other relevant sources such as non-academic literary representations of actual events 5) visual anthropology (see e.g. Collier and Collier, 1986) and 6) introspection/ self-reflection. The most important method of this fieldwork proved to be participant observation. I did not start recording interviews until after more than one year into my research. The main reason of this was the suspicion of many of the local inhabitants towards foreign researchers and others coming into the locality “from outside”. I will discuss this issue in the final section of this chapter.

On the other hand, the experiments with visual anthropology and, in particular, photography and video positively surprised me. I documented important events in the chosen localities as well as my research participants’ everyday life with a focus on social life of various edibles. Some of the most interesting materials were produced during experiments with these techniques. Some of the footage was produced with my research

participants behind the camera. A significant breakthrough came with my very first interview with Darko, who was showing me how to make a typical local dish *pita*. Darko said that I could not learn to make *pita* without making the dough myself. So I asked him to document the situation for me, thereby inverting our roles (the session was also recorded on a digital voice recorder). He was now the one “in control” and could decide what to record and what not. Such little changes in the use of fieldwork methods eventually led to mutual trust and exchanges of reciprocity. I also applied the ethnographic drawing technique, where both my research participants and I drew pictures to express our thoughts and observations (examples of the outcomes can be found in this dissertation).

Within the chosen approach, I also draw on Clifford’s idea of “fieldwork as a mini-immigration” (Clifford, 1992), which, in my opinion, is important in terms of research ethics. This position emphasizes participation in social life in the field and the question of reciprocity. This is something that also Halilovich emphasizes when he opens up the “thorny” question of field work in war-torn communities in Bosnia: that an anthropologist is obligated not only to follow the “ethical principles of *primum non nocere* and empathy,” but also to explore the idea of reciprocity with the community in terms of some “useful” outcome, which is rarely discussed or not expected at all in the academic community (Halilovich, 2008: 167). Thus, my primary concern was not to harm anyone³², while I also aimed at establishing a type of more reciprocal relationship between me and my research participants.

A close familiarity with the studied environment, awareness of the self and others, along with many other aspects, are generally considered crucial for providing relevant comprehension. Yet, within the discipline it was paradoxically this “familiarity” or “intimacy” that was seen as an issue that might “threaten” the validity of research data (see Abu-Lughod, 1991). However, as Bourgois puts it: ‘...in order to collect “accurate data”, ethnographers violate the canons of positivist research; we become intimately involved with the people we study’ (Bourgois, 1995: 13). This reveals “the field” as an uneasy

³²I respect the general statement on ethics made by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and that of the Czech Association for Social and Cultural Anthropology (CASA). I also code the names of my research participants in order to protect their privacy with the exception of publicly known figures who give public statements on Srebrenica. These people include Hasan Hasanović, Hasan Nuhanović and Emir Suljagić.

terrain in which “intuition” and “improvisation” become necessary techniques in our research endeavors (see Flyvbjerg, 2001 and Stöckelová and Abu Ghosh, 2013).

I see ethnography in the same way as Stöckelová and Abu Ghosh as a ‘*creative process, which combines creating the data, theorizing reflexivity and various ways of writing, as well as social relations both in the field and in the epistemic community*’ (Stöckelová and Abu Ghosh, 2013: 7).³³ In this sense, explaining the position of the researcher, his/her way of “being in field” or the procedure of forming a line of interpretation are equally important processes that should also be reflected upon in the final (conventional) textual form – a “scientific manuscript”.

Despite White’s famous attempt to reduce social scientific (historical) writing to mere literary tropes in *Metahistory* (White, 1973), I propose a story combined with a few photographs to be still one of the best fitting representations of scientific ventures. After all, as Rapport and Dawson have noted, humans themselves are an outcome of discursive practice as the body itself is already a site of narration and expression (see Rapport and Dawson, 1998: 28-29). Lincoln and Denzin suggest that the outcome of the work of an ethnographer who in this case is understood as an “interpretive bricoleur”, is a complex “reflexive collage or montage – a set of fluid”, “interconnected images and representations” – a “performance text” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 9). In a similar manner, this dissertation tries to capture the “labyrinthine” paths that led me to my comprehension. The result is a montage of words and images brought together in one literary representation – “stories of food” and their producers and consumers.

³³Translation from Czech original to English M.S.

3.1 The “Long Journey” from Melbourne to Srebrenica: How I Was Introduced to the Field



Picture 9: A representation of one of the many journeys I took between Czech and Bosnia during my ethnographic fieldwork (Drawing M.S., December 2013).

At the end of June 2013, after about a year of preparations (writing the research project, grant applications and negotiations with the partner institutions in BiH), I was on the move again. All of my possessions were reduced to what fitted into my big backpack and a few smaller bags. When my friends saw me with all my bags, they would joke that I looked like a Christmas tree.

My journey began with a ride in a tourist shuttle from my South Bohemian hometown to Vienna from where I was going to take a plane to Sarajevo. Later I “discovered” the Bosnian bus provider, *Centrotrans*, which would become the main means of transportation on the many journeys I took between Bosnia and the Czech Republic during my fieldwork (18 months of fieldwork in BiH divided into several phases). I was an anthropologist traveling to the field – a temporary migrant in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a bit of a “contemporary nomad”. What connects and disconnects me from millions of other world migrants? Personal belongings reduced to luggage, a journey towards a “new life”, many questions on one’s mind and a lack of answers? Unlike the majority of world’s

migrants, my migration was relatively privileged and, on my first journey at least, I could even afford to fly.

With the setting sun, the Austrian Airlines airplane finally took off. As usual, I booked a window seat: the view was breathtaking. After about an hour we flew into dark storm clouds above the mountains that encircle Sarajevo. The plane started to shake as it met some turbulence on our approach but soon after we landed safely at Butmir Airport. I passed through passport control and customs and there I was – a stranger and a country that was about to become, at least for the time being, my second home: “Welcome to Sarajevo”, I thought, while remembering some images from a war movie with the same title that I once watched.

Generally, it is expected that the researcher chooses her/his field, however in my case I would rather say that the “field” or precisely the people who I ended up working with in a way chose me and that had a fundamental impact on the final topic of my dissertation. Interestingly, it was my first study/research stay in Melbourne, Australia, in 2008 that brought me to Srebrenica, although I was unaware of this at that point. In Melbourne, I met my current external consultant Dr Hariz Halilovich. In summer 2009, he invited me to the unveiling of the memorial to the victims of the last war in his hometown, the village of Klotjevac in the municipality of Srebrenica, so I went.

Hariz insisted that I join him in his efforts and he suggested that I change my regional specialization to BiH. However, at that point I considered such research “too hardcore”. I thought I would not be able to deal with topics such as violence, death and war. About three years later, I got another email from Hariz. He invited me to participate in the Summer University Srebrenica program that he was organizing at that point with Muhamed Duraković, who was also one of the most pronounced Srebrenica survivors. Thus, in the summer of 2012, I returned to Srebrenica to attend the international study program – Summer University Srebrenica (SUS).

The journey to Bosnia in 2012 was my fourth in total. I realized that out of all the places I had ever visited I had ended up in Bosnia most frequently (and that was coincidental). I also realized that no one had researched the topic of food in Srebrenica

during and after the war and, most importantly, that I also probably “had the guts” to do it. The evening after the Srebrenica Commemoration on July, 11 2012, I was looking at the night sky. We were drinking beers with some of the summer university students at the bench in the forest. Millions of stars shone above our heads and large, orange and green fireflies hovered before our eyes. And I just knew, there is no other place I would rather write about.

At the end of June 2013 I returned to live and do fieldwork in Srebrenica as a foundation of my dissertation. Similarly to 2008, when I headed for a research stay abroad for the first time, my current fieldwork began with a temporary migration. Clifford has argued that fieldwork has been thematized since the beginning of the 20th century as a type of “mini-immigration” (Clifford, 1992: 99). By providing the context of my travels and motives behind them, I intend to emphasize the moment of “resettlement” as a fairly typical feature of social anthropology which should be discussed to give a general understanding of the position of the researcher in the “field”.

Clifford sees the position of the anthropologist in the field as that of someone who first arrives as a traveler, who, after some time, is “adopted” and becomes to a certain extent a “local” (“learns” the “culture” and the language, participates in local social life) (see Clifford, 1992: 99). Clifford further argues: *‘The field is home away from home, a place of dwelling. This dwelling includes work and growth, the development of both personal and “cultural” competence. Ethnographers, typically, are travelers who like to stay and dig in (for a time), who like to make a second home/workplace. Unlike other travelers who prefer to pass through a series of locations, most anthropologists are homebodies abroad. The field as a spatial practice is thus a specific style, quality, and duration of dwelling’* (Clifford, 1992: 99).

These were also the thoughts with which I was entering the “field” in 2013. I was not just passing through. I came to live in Srebrenica for quite some time. The following two years I spent prevailingly between Srebrenica and Sarajevo with shorter periods of time in the Czech Republic and Austria. The main part of the research was conducted in Srebrenica and Sarajevo; this phase lasted a year and a half. Additionally, I conducted a

shorter period of research in Vienna lasting one month amongst former Srebrenica inhabitants³⁴. Using such a research strategy, I was able to follow the movement of persons and objects between these two places as well as the statuses that the cities gain within the global hierarchies of power. The circles of my research participants differed according to locality. I will begin with contemplations on my life in Srebrenica and later I will also give a description of my research participants in other localities.



Picture 10: Srebrenica – Home Away from Home (Drawing M.S., Combined technique, summer 2013).

In Srebrenica, I mainly worked with several impoverished families and individuals with whom I became closest throughout my fieldwork. During the war, the majority of these persons had been civilians. The core of my research participants constitutes “anti-nationalistic youth”³⁵, who rejected the ethno-religious and nationalistic divisions and became involved in various activities together. Many of them hung out at “Tito's Bar”. My other focus was directed on several children (and their families) who were classified after

³⁴In addition to this, I underwent a 5-month study/research stay at the University of Vienna in the summer semester of 2016, which was more theoretical rather than research oriented. The main goal was to improve my academic skills. The exchange study was financed by OeAD and ran through a CEEPUS Freemover program.

³⁵Here I include quite wide variety of persons between 18 and 30 years old (some of them are even a little bit older).

the war as members of “shehid families” (*šehidska porodica*), which is a specific social position in contemporary BiH³⁶. Several children from Srebrenica belonging to these families spent (on average) a couple of years at the Al-Walidein-Gazzaz elementary school with boarding facilities in Mojmiro, Sarajevo, as part of a humanitarian program. The majority of them were my research participants. This was not out of choice but this just happened to be a group of youngsters that started to communicate with me.

The majority of these persons, including the family I stayed with for half a year, were of “Bosniak” (Bosnian Muslim) background (especially, those who were understood as members of a “shehid family”). Others were categorized or categorized themselves as “Bosnian Serb” origin. The so called ethno-religious-national background was immaterial for me and, more importantly, it was not all that important for them either. Many persons of the group identified themselves first of all as PEOPLE and then perhaps as “Bosnians” (citizens of BiH) or some of them would claim to be “Yugoslavs”. A few of them would say they are atheists, some would be slightly religious but they rarely participated in religious events. They emphasized that “good” people and “bad” people are everywhere regardless the ethnicity, religion or nation. On the other hand, there were others who hold on to categorizations on ethno-religious and national categories, as they were omnipresent in the public discourse.

At any case, I perceived all of my research participants as equal human beings and tried not to jump to “quick conclusions” about them on the basis of their national and ethno-religious distinctions as an attempt at going against the “ethnic lens” perspective. This is also the reason why, in the majority of cases, these categories appear in quotation marks. I want the reader to bear in mind that these are prescribed categories which are socially constructed. Thus, instead of taking these identity categories for granted, I try to follow how these ethno-religious discourses penetrate the food domain in relation to the continuous process of negotiating one's identity on an everyday basis. From this point of

³⁶Halilovich suggests that shehid or *šehid* (in Bosnian) is literally “Muslim martyr”, however in Bosnia this term is used for all Muslim origin victims who died in the 1992-95 war, whether they were religious or not (2015: xv). A shehid family is a family a member of which died during the Bosnian War. These families are generally eligible to receive financial compensation (a pension). According to the law this category is limited to soldier/ “defenders” of BiH in the past war (both mobilized and demobilized). However, within general perception the category of *šehid* covers the majority of the men killed in the last war.

view, ethno-religious origin might constitute a specific variable in food patterns. Yet, the topic of food reminds us that our needs as human beings are fairly universal when it comes to food. We need to ingest food to sustain our lives regardless the national and ethno-religious origin.

However, to be fair, ethno-religious differences do play a role to some extent in the material culture of houses and are politically important within the nation-building process by which they are also reaffirmed. In this sense, it is helpful to look at how different foods, eating practices and even recipes are used by different ideologies (religious, political or economical) to differentiate populations and to make them embody specific “tastes”.

My closest research participants ended up being several families of “Bosniak” origin, therefore I gathered the greatest amount of information regarding this aspect. Moreover, some of them are referred to as “shehid families”, including the family I lived with for about half a year. Therefore in the next chapter, most of my examples will draw on this slightly specific environment but at the same time highlight the similarities with other, for instance “Bosnian Serb”, households too. In other words, I place a focus on the households of persons of “Bosniak” origin in the broader social, economic and political contexts and in interaction with groups of other backgrounds while looking at the mechanism of how these distinctions are constructed and negotiated in the domain of food.

3.2 Azra, Nedim, Their Families and the Srebrenica Mahala (Neighborhood)

Let me now return to my research participants in Srebrenica. About three weeks after my initial arrival, when the summer university had finished and I remained “alone” in Srebrenica, I started to understand the place I had ended up in. One early afternoon, with the temperature at around 40 °C, I walked out of Jasmina’s house where I was staying at the time and soon I found myself standing on a square, in front of a mosque. Pretty much everyone from the surrounding cafés and restaurants (prevalingly men) stared at me. *Čehinja* – a “Czech girl” had moved into the local *mahala* (part of the town/neighborhood; also linked to “gossips”, e.g. *mahaluša* is a woman, who likes to gossip). I did not

understand much Bosnian at that time, so I did not know what they were saying, but it was quite obvious that they were commenting on me. I remembered what Nedžad had said when we were visiting the city of Bratunac as part of the summer university program: ‘*Do you realize that everyone is staring at us? Just pretend that nothing is going on. Or you can wave at them and smile, if you like*’ (Notes from 2012 M.S.). I felt nervous but I did not show it; I ignored them and smiled.

That evening I was sitting at Jasmina’s, trying to devise a strategy of how to meet someone. It was the period of *Ramazan* (Ramadan) and I remembered that during the summer program we were advised to behave more respectfully during the religious holiday in order not to offend anyone. I was not sure, for example, if it was socially acceptable for a woman to go into a bar alone and drink beer. On the other hand, I could not think where else to go apart from to a bar, so I decided on Tito’s. I knew there would be the local youth that I had met briefly during the summer program. To my surprise I met some people who I already knew – Darko, Ivan and few others. That evening carried on late into the night after Tito’s had closed (all the bars in Srebrenica have to close at 11 pm, apart from Fridays and Saturdays, when they can stay open till midnight). Later, I was invited by the local “youth” to join them to drink beer in the park outside the *Robna kuća* (supermarket). That night I also met Nedim, who later introduced me to his family and friends.

The day after that I met Nedim by chance in the *čaršija*. I was coming out of the supermarket and he was sitting in the café where Azra was working at the time. Azra spoke English pretty much fluently, Nedim only a little but I was glad that someone was interested in spending time with me. In the afternoon that day, Nedim invited me to go with him and Azra’s brothers, Adi and Adin, to drink some beers on the top of the hill above the town. I thought about it for a while. I knew from the previous night that Nedim was a relative of an acquaintance of mine from the summer university program, so I deemed the situation most likely safe and agreed to join them.

These new friendships actively shaped my stay and also influenced who I became acquainted with in Srebrenica. Later, I lived with Azra's family for about six months³⁷. I consider this phase very important in terms of my project as I was allowed to participate in the most intimate sphere of everyday life and even embody some of the local practices, namely when it comes to culinary techniques and household management. It also helped me to experience the everyday life struggles amongst the impoverished locals including occasional experiences of hunger.



Picture 11: Lunch at Nura's house. Homemade pita maslenica (literally the "butter pita") (Photo M.S., April 2014).

Azra is the oldest of five children born to Aziz and Nura. There are three girls Azra (born 1986), Amra (1988) and Alma (1993) and twin boys Adi and Adin (1995). The twins were born just couple of months before the fall of Srebrenica and the subsequent atrocities during which their father was killed. They do not remember their father in person – they know him from stories and several old photographs. None of their closest male relatives survived the war. The twins – 18 at the time I met them (in 2013) – were the oldest males in the household and in the close family. Another member of the close family circle is their

³⁷At the beginning of the research, I lived for a short period in a small studio alone before Azra invited to stay with her family. Later on, I lived also with other people. I moved out of Azra's for several reasons including some family issues and also the fact that I became limited to a particular circle of research participants and I was geographically isolated from the rest of the town. During my other phases of research I stayed with Jasmina or Sanela who live more centrally.

grandmother Ramiza, who lives in a nearby village in the Srebrenica municipality. The children also liked to spend time with their cousins Kerim and Eldin who regularly came for visits with their mother Fatima. Not even their father survived the war. At some point, the family returned to Srebrenica but later the sons returned to live near Tuzla where they grew up.

Nor did Nedim's and Ilhana's father survive 1995 and their mother, Almedina, brought them up by herself. Similar situation where male relatives perished in 1995 is very common in many household where people of Bosniak origin live. It is a tragic example of what happens when the ideology of ethnic targeting, persecution and mass murder materializes. On the other hand, it is important to mention that people of other national and ethno-religious origin also lost their loved (many were civilians). Darko's mother, who was of Bosnian Serb origin, was killed by a sniper in front of him and his brother during the war (interview Darko). As a result of the war, many families I encountered in the municipality were incomplete. Similarly to the cases of Azra and Nedim the war had profound impact on Darko's life (Field Notes M.S.).

Throughout my fieldwork I visited mainly eight households³⁸ of various research participants in the Srebrenica municipality which shaped the core of my research. I am the most familiar with the Azra and her grandmother's households and other households where I lived – Jasmina's and Sanela's (single female households). I conducted fieldwork primarily in the families of: Almedina (Nedim's mother), Zineta and Darko – from Srebrenica, Nejra from Potočari and Nele from Klotjevac. Apart from that, I visited numerous other households on single occasions or on a less regular basis.

Additionally, I also interviewed individuals with whom I was familiar but did not have an opportunity to perform participant observations in their households (altogether I conducted participant observation or informally interviewed about 40 persons from Srebrenica and the surroundings over the period of 18 months). I was moving among various social strata of the various populations – from the impoverished to some of the

³⁸The average number of household members in the Srebrenica municipality is 3.47 according to the results of the last census (Census of Population 2013, 2016). This seems adequate in comparison to the observed situation however it is important to note that the number of members of the household differs noticeably from case to case. Whereas some households are run only by one member, the others are quite numerous.

policy makers and international donors. I also directed my attention to the intergenerational exchange of culinary (and other forms of) knowledge.



Picture 12: A view from Sanela's apartment (Drawing M.S., summer 2015).

3.3 Sarajevo and Vienna: National and Transnational Contexts of Srebrenica

In order to be able to follow the national and transnational contexts, but also to follow the people who moved from Srebrenica after the war, I also carried out an additional fieldwork in Sarajevo and in Vienna, Austria. From the Bosnian perspective, both Sarajevo and Vienna are “places to go”, “dream destinations” of a “better life”. During my stay in Vienna in spring 2016, I met with Bastian – a former EUFOR soldier who had served on an observation mission in Bratunac. We were enjoying a *Stiegl* (Austrian beer) on the university campus when he noted: “*Nowadays, Vienna is like the capital of the Balkans*”. I found this metaphor very fitting. Expanding the “Srebrenica research locality” to include these two other cities enabled me to see how these different physical localities are related. Even though this led me to deeper comprehension of the studied situation, in this PhD dissertation I keep my focus mainly on Srebrenica in order to retain a narrative consistency.

During my fieldwork in BiH I lived simultaneously in both Srebrenica and Sarajevo. When I was not in Srebrenica, I was in Sarajevo where I was meeting with members of Srebrenica intellectual elites and other relevant people. Former inhabitants of Srebrenica who moved to Sarajevo often keep property in their place of origin as well. I also attended several public events that were related to Srebrenica or some events that had an impact on the region: e.g. natural foods market outside the BBI shopping centre in Sarajevo (where Jasmina sold local Srebrenica produce), the protest by parents from Konjević Polje in 2013, or the February Protests in 2014. Also, when my research participants happened to be in Sarajevo, I always tried to meet up with them. Members of my “adoptive family” stayed over several times at my former place in Sarajevo. This was one of the ways how I tried to reestablish some type of reciprocity. In Sarajevo I also had an access to other sorts of archival materials and documents, for example at the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In order to obtain more in-depth knowledge about those who had emigrated, I spent one month on a research stay in Vienna in spring 2015. Additionally, I spent another five

months in Vienna from winter 2015 into the spring of 2016. This was mostly a study stay but I managed to carry out some fieldwork as well. During my fieldwork in Vienna, I conducted interviews and informal conversations with five former inhabitants of Srebrenica who I had found via social networks and at the recommendations of friends from BiH. In addition, I met several from Sarajevo and other inhabitants of Former Yugoslavia.



Picture 13: Making tufahije (stuffed apples) with Hatidža in Vienna (Photo M.S., May 2015).

Most importantly, I was able to participant observation and interviews with Hatidža who is a leader of one Srebrenica association in Vienna. This “home town association” (HTA) is very active when it comes to organizing cultural and political events in Vienna as well as being actively involved in post-conflict development in Srebrenica. It was in these circles that I met Bakir who has been actively involved in humanitarian aid in BiH at several occasions.³⁹

³⁹Here I would like to take the opportunity to thank both Hatidža and Bakir for thier participation in the research.

3.4 Imageries Surrounding the Persona of an Anthropologist: An “Exploiter of Local Knowledge”, a “Weirdo Vegetarian”, a “Bride”, a “Prostitute” or a “Spy”?

‘Sjebat će te taj tvoj liberalizam’! (‘*Your liberalism will fuck you up*’!) (Nedim).

Being an “anthropologist on fieldwork” is not an easy position. It raises many questions concerning the inhabitants of the place where he/she settles. What do the members of local communities think of anthropologists? How do they make sense of their presence? I became more increasingly preoccupied with these questions during my latest stint of fieldwork which often left surprised me how hard it might be to prove one’s “identity” and “intentions”. I entered the field determined always to be open-minded and clear about my position and the reason why I was in BiH, specifically in Srebrenica and my determination to live and undertake fieldwork in Srebrenica, indeed, raised many questions on the part of the locals.

I usually explained that I was a doctoral student of anthropology at Charles University in Prague, doing fieldwork mainly concerning food in Srebrenica and eating practices in BiH as a whole. On the other hand, like the other researchers I came to BiH as part of a study program concerning the last war. If the people I spoke with were unsure about what anthropology is, I added I was ethnographer and something about “traditional eating customs” as this was more understandable amongst the general public. I think that the inhabitants of Srebrenica found it relieving that I was not interested only in the “war and politics”, like the vast majority of the other researchers, journalists, international students and NGO workers. In fact, I suggest that the “topic of food” enabled me to integrate better within the local social life. Food was something that everyone could relate to.

On the other hand, researching food also meant, in my case, that my research participants soon found out that I was also vegetarian. They would often say with surprise: *‘How can you research food if you don’t eat meat’?* Vegetarianism was something that I was questioned about many times, not only by my research participants but also by many

colleagues. Also David Sutton writes in his article “The Vegetarian Anthropologist” that at first he was not sure how his vegetarianism would be accepted on Kalymnos Island in the Eastern Aegean, where he was doing a research (Sutton, 1997). Sutton argues that interestingly his vegetarianism raised curiosity, interest in his "otherness" and provoked discussions on the part of the locals (Sutton, 1997: 5). This helped him to understand better local cultural preoccupations, attitudes towards the “others” and their past (ibid.). Thus, not only does the researcher’s vegetarianism form part of negotiations of his/her position in the field, but can also be helpful in “uncovering” certain aspects of social life which would not be otherwise accentuated.

In my case, the locals first reacted to my vegetarianism with surprise and suspicion, but I agree with Sutton (1997) that this helped me to comprehend better certain ideas (especially what is and what is not considered “meat” and its status within the idea of a “good life”) which I would not notice otherwise. Coincidentally, my external consultant Hariz Halilovich and also his friend, a renowned sculptor, both became vegetarian after their personal experiences of the violence of war and persecution in concentration camps. They claimed that they could not bear the idea of other creatures dying only to become food. The story of their vegetarianism helped me to clarify and negotiate mine too. Moreover, I also believe that the idea of exclusion of meat was understandable for the locals in the context of various fasts and other food avoidances which are practiced in the locality by members of different religious groups (also Sutton notes, that the idea of fast was important for understanding his vegetarianism see Sutton, 1997: 6). Even though some people continued to tease me for not eating meat, they generally respected my choice.

Before the locals got to know me, not only my vegetarianism but also my position as an anthropologist presented a problem. Despite my efforts to emphasize my position of an anthropologist, some of the locals challenged my explanation on some occasions. They could not believe that I could be sincere and honest “just like that”. It seemed to me that the experience of war left many people generally mistrustful and suspicious. I also became well aware of the fact that in Srebrenica there were very ambiguous ideas about researchers in general. After the last war the locality damaged by the armed conflict became frequented by researchers coming from various disciplines, NGO workers,

journalists and also politicians. Most of these groups of professionals were not originally from Srebrenica and their stay in the city was motivated by work. The locally marginalized people of Srebrenica saw them mostly as some sort of exploiters – groups or individuals that “make money from their suffering and then they go back to where they came from”.

‘You are exploiting us!’ said Nedim to me once, laughing (Fieldnotes M.S.). This surprised me, to a certain extent because I had done him a couple of favors. Later, I interpreted these comments as some sort of “social game” to make me doubt myself “to make me feel bad about myself and perhaps even leave”. He was testing me. This sort of approach to social interaction – “to scare someone in order to test their toughness” seemed somewhat typical for some circles of the youth in the post-war society and people from the Sarajevo street subcultures as well. Yet overall I was supported and treated with generosity that overwhelmed me. People would share the little they had on everyday basis. This was one of the main reasons why I decided not to give up.

There were also those who were not interested in my researcher status at all, they saw me as an “exotic stranger” and some even perceived me as a potential bride. As I realized soon after my arrival, Czechs are perceived with certain ambivalence in BiH. The peaceful separation of the Dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993 is seen positively and this feature is also associated with the “character” of Czechs.⁴⁰ However, being a Czech woman added another heavily gendered perspective. Apparently, Czech women were famous for sunbathing half naked on the beaches of the Adriatic Sea. In comparison to the “local women”, they were known as an “easy catch”. A good example of these stereotypes (and source of some) is constituted by a classic Yugoslav film *Varljivo ljeto '68* (The Elusive Summer of '68) directed by Goran Paskaljević who had studied film at FAMU in Prague (the film was released in 1984). I considered this stereotype rather annoying and had to learn how to do away with this unwanted attention. The best defense certainly was joking about it. Outside Srebrenica, I would sometimes tell taxi-drivers and other men that I came from Slovakia or Poland in order to avoid such associations.

⁴⁰I believe that my Czech passport kept me sort of on “neutral ground” within the society which, in various situations, tends to be sharply divided on the basis of ethno-nationalistic and religious categories. Additionally, being a native Slavic language speaker meant that I could obtain language competencies relatively fast.

For many I was just a “weirdo” because “who else would stay in Srebrenica?”. There were those who even joked that I was a spy. For example, in late July 2014, I went to drink coffee at Tito's bar. Two older guys who I did not know by name started making fun of me “behind my back”. One of them was telling the other one that I was a spy. ‘*Yes, I am a volunteer spy*’, I sarcastically remarked. They smiled. One of them said: ‘*And did you know that we have here a special breed of chickens that kill snakes?*’. I paid little attention to their talk and continued responding to e-mails. ‘*Look, she’s carefully typing everything we are saying*’, said the other. ‘*I think the Americans are truly interested in our snake-killing chickens*’. At that point a “Yugoslav” friend of mine, entered the café. Catching previous piece of the conversation he commented: ‘*Kokošima protiv zmijema!*’ (With chickens against snakes). Everyone started to laugh as it was a good metaphor which could be read in several ways.

This “joking around” and “black humor” filled with irony and sarcasm constitutes an important element of verbal interaction in BiH. Fabulation also plays a significant role within this humor. However, what my friends and research participants taught me was that this fabulation did not necessarily mean “lying”, but it was more used in a sense to “out-smart” the other. I was even told that there is allegedly a saying that goes: “a good person is a stupid person” (if someone is too trustworthy and expects others to be “good”, he/she is naive and easy to trick). And indeed many of my research participants found me naive, as I tried not to be judgmental in my approach and to be open to others.

One day, Nedim told me: ‘*You cannot just come here with your naive ideas that people are good and expect that people here will understand that. Your liberalism will fuck you up*’ (Field notes M.S.). I answered that we would see about that. There were also a couple of situations when some individuals tried to scare me. However, this did not discourage me, but I made sure there would always be one of the locals I knew watching over me. This was a precious piece of advice I got once from a Czech anthropologist Mariana Pfliegerová. She advised me to always let people know who I was and where I was, because anonymous strangers are more likely to get into “tricky situations”. Thus I made a decision to primarily trust a few chosen locals and made sure people knew who I was.

Many of these issues also stemmed from the fact that my behavior was certainly transcending the customary female position in the locality and would, thus, lead to confusion and perhaps suspicion. I was also “checked” and “tested” by the local police in Srebrenica most likely because I was hanging out with the “problematic youth” at night – the majority of them men. Tensions and occasional incidents occurred between the police and some of my research participants. I tried to avoid conflict and suspicion as much as I could.

Despite that, one morning the local police asked me to identify myself in a café near the mosque, where I would regularly sit. I guessed they thought that I was not registered like the majority of the strangers that come to the town. However, my documents were in perfect order. Coincidentally, a week before my visa application had been processed (after about half year of waiting) and I had a brand new temporary residency sticker in my passport.

The older of the two police officers, Ratko, inquired about my opinions on alcohol, sex and drugs, while they both carefully listed and looked at records in my passport. I responded that I liked beer and played on the “Czech stereotype”, but when the other two questions came, I could only stare at him and I objected what type of questions are these. I started to get angry, but I tried to stay calm. Then they started to accuse me of not being registered. I objected that I am registered in the Federation, but they insisted that I need to register also in *Republika Srpska*. Later I found that they intentionally tricked me and that it is untrue that one would need two registrations in BiH. All of the other authorities in BiH claimed that I needed only one registration with one of the entities.

Luckily my friend and research participant, Sanela, who worked as a waitress at the café, intervened. She objected to their behavior and defended me. She knew them both well and, probably because of her and the fact that my documents were in perfect order, the “incident” ended up in my favor. The police in the end claimed that as a “young educated woman”, I should know that there are “dangerous people” out there and all they want is my safety. Personally, I think that they wanted to scare me a bit in order to find the exact

address where I was staying in Srebrenica. This behavior did not help to build a trust relationship with the local police, but after this incident they left me alone.

Most of all, I was surprised what nonsense and misunderstanding one might, with a little bit of fantasy, elaborate. How much of confusion might arise around situations which are “new”, “illogical” and “unknown”. During these occasional peculiar moments I remembered reading Philippe Bourgois’ study *Selling Crack in El Barrio* which is an intriguing ethnography concerned with poverty and marginalization amongst the crack dealers of East Harlem (Bourgois, 1995). Bourgois also mentions that his position of a researcher in the locality was confusing for the local authorities and he had been searched and subjected to humiliation by the New York Police (Bourgois, 1995: 30-32). On the other hand this helped Bourgois to establish a trust relationship with his research participants (ibid.). This was similar in my case as well – especially when it came to my research participants who were not on good terms with the local police.

To conclude, explaining the position of the researcher and his/her way of “being in field” and the procedure of forming a line of interpretation are equally important processes that should also be reflected upon in the final (conventionally) textual form – a “scientific manuscript”. Paul Rabinow argues that everything we observe, who we encounter and who we talk to, should be perceived as mutually mediated by both socio-historical contexts of the researcher and the research participants which causes so-called “doubling of consciousness” (Rabinow, 1977: 119). As researchers we are: *‘historically situated through the questions we ask and the manner in which we seek to understand and experience the world; and second, that what we receive from our informants are interpretations, equally mediated by history and culture’* (ibid.). So, it is crucial for the researcher to acquire at least a partial understanding of these various contexts in the “field”.

Secondly, I attempt to suggest that the treatment of our research participants as equal human beings and the use of perspective beyond the “ethnic lens” is extremely important. I ignored Nedim’s comments concerning my “liberal behavior” and I tried to treat everyone as kindly as possible and most importantly without prejudice and stereotype. As a result these suspicions weakened the longer I stayed and the more I participated in local life (e.g.

when I volunteered at the local boarding school and childcare centre EMMAUS-Potočari or helped some of the Srebrenica inhabitants to resolve their daily issues). Also, I started to appear more frequently in public with the other international academics when there was a chance that this would confirm my position of a researcher.

Most importantly, with time I gained the support of many of the locals who “watched over me” and informed me about possible problems. I decided to trust the people I shared my life and worked with on my research. I perceive these people not only as my research participants but many of them are also close friends. They made sure I was well, they fed me when I was hungry and when I got sad they tried to comfort me. I tried reciprocally to return these favors whenever I could. I should also mention that meeting some of the local politicians, journalists and Austrian EUFOR soldiers from observation mission in Bratunac made me feel much safer.

Earlier I mentioned that in Bosnia there is a saying that people who are too trustworthy are “stupid”. Also, I was similarly “stupid” when I first came. I didn’t understand the language, didn’t know the realities of the country and it was seemingly easy “to trick me”. Yet, day after day, I learnt word after word and step by step I gradually got to know almost every corner of the town, its surroundings and the local inhabitants. I also learnt a bit of *šatro* (Bosnian slang – a type of code language of the street, in which the syllables of words are reversed). I also found out that attempts to “outsmart” someone are part of the local “social games” and black humor invokes genuine laughter which “lightens up” the struggles of everyday life. In the end, my efforts to partially belong were appreciated and my friends would reply to inquiring strangers: ‘*Maja je naša, udat će se ovdje i ostat će u Bosni. Maja je Srebreničanka*’ (‘*Maja [me] is ours, she is going to marry here and stay in Bosnia. Maja is a “Srebreničanka” [inhabitant of Srebrenica]*’) (fieldnotes M.S.). Each of these times, the whole café would burst out in laughter...

4. No Truth for Hungry Stomachs: Eating Habits in Contemporary Srebrenica

In this chapter I intend to take a closer look at the contemporary eating practices in Srebrenica in a broader regional context of the Balkans, in relation to historical “cooking regimes” and the notion of so called “Bosnian national cuisine”. I am looking at the historical origins of selected iconic dishes that are cooked until the present day, but made using culinary techniques several centuries old. The aim is to offer an insight into the everyday diet of my research participants – what is cooked, how it is served and prepared and where the ingredients come from. To get a better understanding of the plethora of various edibles and culinary techniques of food preparation, I am going to use Mintz’s distinction between the “inside” and “outside” meanings (Mintz, 1995), in other words, the differences arising in between everyday life consumption and macro structural conditions which I refer to in this text as culinary regimes.

As I have suggested previously, I use the idea of “culinary regimes” to concretize broader structural forces, which Mintz (1995) describes as “outside meaning” or “structural power” and Feldman (2011) labels in the context of migration as “apparatuses”. By culinary regimes, I mean systems of culinary preferences including distinct culinary techniques and methods of food production that historically developed in relation to specific cosmologies/ideologies and in the context of the possibilities offered by the locality in which they developed. These culinary regimes are primarily outside influences which need to be internalized and appropriated by social actors. The ideological sources of culinary regimes vary, but historically they often stem from religious beliefs, however nowadays they are also very actively shaped by various discourses such as ideologies of the nation-state or transnational organizations and businesses.

In contrast to this, I use the term “culinary repertoire” by which I mean internalized selective segments of culinary regimes that are renegotiated and embodied by individual social actors. My use of “culinary repertoire” is similar to Mintz’s “inside perspective” (Mintz, 1995: 5). Even though the sources of these repertoires come mostly from outside culinary regimes, the influence of social actors is significant. This perspective

offers an explanation for why techniques of producing the “same” dish differ from person to person. The method of producing foam on coffee made in *džezva* can serve as a good example: Nura simply lets coffee foam up in the *džezva*, Mirsada adds more boiling water at the end of the brewing process and Sanela whisks the coffee energetically with a spoon. The result in all three cases is almost identical but they all claim that their individualized way of preparation leads to the “best result”.

First, I am going to give a more general outline of what is consumed then I will briefly suggest how and where these dishes are produced. Subsequently, I am going to analyze the observed situation in relation to the historical development of the region and as part of this analysis I also intend to challenge the notion of “national cuisines”. Overall I will attempt to show that, apart from certain selected dishes that serve as a marker of belonging to a certain ethno-religious group, the food which is prepared and consumed both in households and in public eateries is, in fact, pretty much the same. Ultimately, I will identify the “embodiment of hunger” as the major characteristic of many families and individuals in the locality and I will attempt to show that family’s economic situation is one of the most important factors that dictate what is going to be eaten.

4.1. An Overview of Common Foods and Dishes in BiH

In this section, I am going to have a closer look at what food items are generally found in the households in Srebrenica and Sarajevo and what dishes are prepared. My aim in this section is to give a description of the perceived situation based on findings of my ethnographic fieldwork with an accent on material culture. I combine these findings with analysis of cookbooks and other sources of recipes and manuals for dietary practices.

4.1.1. Meat, Fish and Eggs

Meat is an important part of the diet in BiH. The overall avoidance of meat is seen by many as surprising and is categorized by some as even “unhealthy”. Such a perception comes out subtly in everyday conversation, especially after I revealed that I was vegetarian. My vegetarianism would often raise controversy, even though the locals were well aware of meat abstinence during both Catholic and Orthodox fasts (*post*). The

majority of my research participants considered meat to be tastiest food without which they could not imagine their life. On the other hand, the majority of my research participants could not afford to cook it very often; it was nevertheless always on the table on special occasions.

Various types of meat are eaten in the region including veal (*teletina/junetina*), beef (*govedina*), lamb (*janjetina*), mutton (*ovčestina*), pork (*svinjetina*), young goat/ kid (*jaretina*), poultry (*perad*), game (*divljetina*) and fish (*ribe*). Seafood is consumed rarely; the majority of my research participants in Srebrenica expressed a dislike for it because they were not used to consuming it – the locality is quite a distance from the sea coast.

Meat is prepared by various methods such as grilling, roasting, baking, frying, cooking or smoking and is combined with various vegetables, legumes, wheat grains, rice or pasta. It can be also baked in pastry e.g. the *burek*. An important product in BiH is *suho meso* (literally “dry meat”), which is meat preserved by the technique of smoking. Sausages (*sudžuke*) are also made within the region. In the villages, various parts of the animals are consumed including offal which is referred to as *džigerica*. Another popular delicacy is most commonly *glavuša*, calf’s head or but also occasionally *glavušica* (“little head” – lamb’s head). Another specialty, mainly amongst populations with a Christian background is *koljenica* (knuckle of pork or other animal).

Various dishes stemming from both “Western” and “Eastern” culinary regimes (on which I am going to elaborate later) have meat as the key ingredient. Typical meat dishes include: *burek* (“meat pie”), *ćevapi* (grilled mince meat sausages, a local variation of the Turkish *köfte*), *pljeskavica* (meat patty), *dolma* style dishes (vegetables filled with meat)⁴¹, *sarma* (meat wrapped in leaves of *kupus*/cabbage, *japrak*/ grape leaves or *raštica*/ *Brassica oleracea var. viridis*). There is also *Grah* (bean stew) which is made with *suho meso*. Also, stew-type dishes exist such as *bosanski lonac* (which is often on the list of national dishes). It can be also prepared in a form of “meat porridge” such as *keške*. There is also a meal called *sitni ćevap* which is, unlike other versions of *ćevapi*, generally made from pieces of veal in a stew (looks similar to goulash). Also goulash (*gulaš*) is to be found on the “local

⁴¹These dishes are not generally referred to as dolma with an exception of *sogan dolma* (onion filled with meat). Filled peppers are referred to as *punjene paprike* and so on.

menu” as well as schnitzel (*šnicla*). Meat is often just fried or baked. One of the most popular ways of preparing meat in BiH is grilling (*roštilj*). For festive occasions a whole animal (most commonly lamb but also pig) is baked on a large skewer on an open fire (especially in this last case, the consumption of pork can serve as tool for affirming ethno-religious identity). Meat is also used as a base for soup broth or it is added, cut into pieces into thicker soups (*čorba*).



Picture 14: Making sarma (stuffed cabbage leaves) with Nura in Srebrenica (Photo M.S., July 2014)

Picture 15: Fried eggs and sausages at Ramiza’s house in the village (Photo M.S., March 2016)

Also other animal-derived products are common in BiH. Important are eggs; in the majority of cases, chicken eggs are often produced privately as an important part of self-provisioning. Eggs are commonly consumed fried (*jaja na oko*) or as an omelette (*kajgana*). Boiled eggs were generally consumed at Easter, but otherwise they did not seem particularly dominant in the diet. Eggs are also an important ingredient in other pastry based dishes, particularly cakes.

4.1.2. Dairy Products

BiH also has wide range of other products such as animal fats (butter, lard), milk and other dairy products (soured milk, yoghurt, cream, *kajmak*, sour cream, various types of cheese etc.). Dairy products represent an important part of the everyday diet in the Balkan Peninsula. In this text, I use them also to illustrate the interconnection between household, local, national and international food production. The case of milk products is also helpful

for illustrating the influence of transnational corporations which play a significant role on the BiH dairy market and in dairy production. A wide range of dairy products are made both by using largely “preindustrial” techniques used in the households and by industrial techniques of food production. Part of the locally produced milk is also sold to the central dairy in Gradačac (*Mlijekara Gradačac*) which is operated by one of the biggest German origin global dairy producers *Zott*.

Milk is consumed as a drink or it is used as an ingredient for preparing various dishes. Cow’s milk is most commonly consumed, but occasionally goat’s or sheep’s milk too. Raw milk is an important basic ingredient for producing milk-derived products such as yoghurt. In BiH, *tečni* (literally liquid) yoghurt is probably in greatest popular use as it is served with *pita*. It is similar to *kiselo mlijeko* (soured milk) and *kefir* – a fermented milk drink but the technology of production slightly differs. Another important basic milk product in the Balkans is sour cream – *pavlaka* or *kiselo vrhnje*. In contemporary BiH, people generally distinguish sour cream into three categories: *pavlaka*, *kiselo vrhnje* and *mileram*. In local context of Srebrenica and Sarajevo some people perceive *mileram* as a specific type of sour cream which is “sweeter in taste” (Field notes M.S.). This sweet taste is due to its high fat content; commercially *mileram* is generally distinguished by a higher fat content of than in sour cream but not always – generally speaking the two products are almost identical and the distinction seem to more serve commercial purposes (e.g. Meggle Mileram contains 22% or 30%, *kiselo vrhnje* from the same producer contains either 12% or 20%, however Meggle produces also “sour cream for fresh cheese” which contains 25% of fat see references Meggle AG, official website BiH). Etymologically, *mileram* most likely comes from German “*milch rahm*” – (milk) cream. Here it is important to note that in BiH, sour cream is used as a spread on bread – *hljeb sa pavlakom* (bread with sour cream) which particularly applies to the Srebrenica locality, unlike in Central and Western Europe where it is more common to spread butter, or alternatively margarine on bread.

Also, cheese is a very important dairy product in BiH. Most common type is *sveži* (fresh) or *mladi* (young) *sir* (cheese). This is basically what is nowadays sold outside the Balkans as “Balkan cheese”, but this cheese is a far cry from the cheese produced on the

Balkan Peninsula. Generally, it is much more salty and the texture is considerably different.

Another similar cheese is feta. Feta is a Greek name for a type of cheese kept in brine and it is sold under the same name in BiH. Unlike the local cheese which is often produced in individual households, feta must usually be bought in a shop. It is industrially produced and comes in Tetra Pack containers or some type of plastic packaging. Interestingly, the spread of consumption of feta in BiH seems to be linked to the last war. Many of my research participants say that they started to consume it more after the last war when it was distributed as part of the humanitarian aid (Field notes M.S.). Thus, the addition of feta into everyday consumption choices, constitutes one example how war shapes the taste preferences of individual social actors.

Apart from soft cheese, also hard cheese is made in BiH. Similarly to “soft cheese” mentioned in the preceding sentence, hard cheese is produced locally, but a variety of foreign imported cheese is available in the supermarkets of larger cities. Some of the most popular locally made cheese is *Travnički sir* (cheese from Travnik) which has about a 50 % milk fat content (produced by Pojorad Travnik originally from sheep’s milk, but there is also cow milk variation). *Travnički sir* is similar to *Vlašički sir*. This cheese is specific for a specific locality in BiH and its production is centuries old. Within the oral tradition, this cheese making method was brought to Bosnia by Vlachs who settled amongst other places around the mountain Vlašić (BHEPA)⁴². *Travnički sir* is now an important ingredient in a Ramadan dish called *topa* (however some recipes state that other cheese can be used as well). *Topa* generally consists of eggs, cheese, butter and salt.

Moreover, fresh cheese may be treated by smoking (*dimljeni sir*). Another way of preserving cheese is drying, for example *sušeni sir Ribanac* (dried cheese for grating – variation of *zarica*). Even though linguistically smoking is distinct from drying, in everyday practice these are not seen as different practices and “drying” is most commonly achieved by “smoking”. There are also types of aged cheese in BiH and generally their

⁴²BHEPA – Export Promotion Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, “Indigenous dairy products industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, publication developed within the Value Chains for Employment Project of the United Nations Development Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNDP BH).

production is tied to a specific geographical area. One might thus encounter *Hercegovački sir iz mijeha* (Herzegovinian cheese matured in a sheep skin sack, made generally on a small scale by individuals) or *Livanjski sir* with 45-60 % milk fat (produced from cow, sheep or mix of these milks by Mlijekara Livno). *Livanjski sir* started to be produced in the 19th century around Livno according to the production technology (BHEPA) used for French Gruyère style cheeses.

There are other types of aged cheese, but none of them is prominently linked with Srebrenica locality except *zarica* or *zarac* which is dry cheese produced in Eastern Bosnia (BHEPA). Even though none of my research participants was involved in its production, I have seen *zarica* in small grocery shops in Eastern Bosnia. Overall, the majority of households used almost only fresh cheese, *kajmak* or sour cream. I should also mention that other types of “foreign cheeses” such as camembert, blue cheese, mozzarella, ricotta etc. are imported and sold mainly in supermarkets. However, in my experience these cheeses are not consumed in the Srebrenica locality very often. Last but not least, industrially made and generally cheap cheeses made with vegetable oil (both soft and hard) are available in the area. These vegetable cheese substitutes are attractive for the less well-off because of their low price; alternatively, they are consumed by Orthodox Christians during the fasting period.

A type of milk product typical for the Srebrenica area, as well as many other Balkan countries, is *kajmak*. The knowledge of making *kajmak* spread to Bosnia and other Balkan territories with the introduction of Ottoman culinary techniques. Etymologically, the word is derived from Turkish *kaymak* which originates in the Turkic languages (Wikipedia, Kaymak). Regional versions of this product are made in the Middle East to this day. *Kajmak* is described generally as clotted cream but it can also be a type of fresh cheese made out of cream (slightly similar to mascarpone in the Apennine Peninsula). There are three basic variations of the product: “fresh”, “sweet” and “aged”. To obtain these various products, slightly different techniques are employed. For example, the sweet *kajmak* needs to be warmed up and simmered for a couple of hours. The aged *kajmak* is often made by heating milk to just below boiling point, cooling it and skimming off layers of cream that

forms on the surface. This technique also requires salt, which serves as a conserving agent (Field Notes M.S.).

In the municipality of Srebrenica like in the rest of the BiH, a wide range of dairy products are used as basic ingredients – milk, yoghurt, sour cream varieties (generally distinguished as *pavlaka*, *mileram* and *kiselo vrhnje*), cream, butter, *kajmak* and various types of cheese (from fresh to aged, there's also smoked cheese). In Srebrenica, I encountered people who at home produced mainly *kajmak* (which in Eastern Bosnia has a more sour taste quite similar to sour cream) and fresh cheese. They usually purchased the other milk products listed above in the local shops.

For example, Nura would get supplies of fresh *kajmak* from her mother Ramiza who produced it in the village of Nurići⁴³. On March 16, 2014 I was with the twins in Nurići at Ramiza's house where she introduced me to her technique of producing milk products. She generally kept in the house and used home-milked milk, *kajmak* and fresh cheese. I asked Ramiza how she made *kajmak*: she heats a little fresh milk (from her cow Lipa), then she adds a little bit of fresh cheese and the mass starts to separate. When cream forms on the top of the bowl she carefully skims it off the *sirutka* (whey). She generally throws whey out when she has no use for it. In comparison, when she makes cheese, she brings the milk to the boil then she also adds a little bit of cheese, lets the mass separate and then strains it through a cloth (field notes M.S.). Ramiza often mixes *kajmak* with cheese and serves it in a smaller bowl along with other foods. Nura, her daughter, does so identically. Also in other parts of BiH it is common to mix cheese with another thinner dairy product, generally *pavlaka*, since it is much cheaper.

⁴³The name of the village is coded in order to protect the privacy of my research participants.



Picture 16: Ramiza's is making kajmak (Photo M.S., March 2014).



Picture 17: Food served at Ramiza's place. First bowl from the left contains cheese mixed with kajmak (Photo M.S., March 2014).

Similarly to other milk products which have been known in the region for a long time, nowadays *kajmak* is also produced industrially by a number of both regional and international companies which supply food to the BiH: *Meggle* (headquarters in Germany) (see references Meggle AG, official website English), *President* (*Lactalis* – one of world's largest dairy product groups with headquarters in France, also owner of Croatian *Dukat* (see Lactalis International), *Naturela* (BiH), *Mlekara Subotica* (*AD Mlekara*, Serbia), *Mlekara Šabac* (Serbia), *Mlijekara Gradčac* (part of *Zott*, founded in Germany). This list includes only the companies which produce *kajmak*. The list of all dairy producers is, of course, more extensive, but for the purposes of this dissertation I consider it to be a sufficient example to represent the arena of dairy production in the region.

4.1.3. Bread and Pita

The most important source of carbohydrates and a staple in Bosnian eating habits constitutes white bread. Bread, which is surprising to many Westerners not accustomed to local eating patterns, accompanies also other meals “heavy on carbohydrates” such as pasta or rice dishes. White, common wheat, leavened bread (nowadays made generally with commercial yeast – *germa*) is typical for the local foodscape. Dark bread is not very popular amongst the locals (even though it was produced in the past) but some people consume it because they believe it is more beneficial for their health. Such views often stem from the influence of the contemporary discourses provided by nutritional science and its popularization.

There are also other types of bread variations including: *lepinja* (a type of flat leavened bread), a specific type of *lepinja* is *somun* (also known as *Sarajevski/Sarajevo* or *ramazanski/Ramadan somun*). *Somun* is a flat, leavened bread, sprinkled with *čurekot* (*Nigella sativa*) seeds, typically consumed during Ramadan. There is also *pogača* (flat bread both leavened and unleavened – sometimes with filling) and *kifla* (bread roll). These items are produced by baking. However, dough can be also fried to make *uštipci*, (fried dough balls) typically served with *kajmak*. The technique of boiling dough is used to make *klepe* or *knedle* (types of dumplings). Old bread can be used to make *popara* (a type of savory bread porridge).

The dish I probably encountered the most is *pita*. It is an important part of the everyday diet in BiH in majority of the households I have visited, regardless of ethno-religious origin. It is consumed during various celebrations as well as on an everyday basis. *Pita* is mostly translated into English as a Bosnian “pie”⁴⁴. It consists of a thin sheet of dough with a filling called *jufka* (from Turkish word *yufka*). In Greece, this type of dough is referred to as *phyllo* (Kunz, 2011). Its direct predecessor is the Ottoman *börek* (ibid.). Variations of the name are used to describe this dish on the Balkan Peninsula in general, although in BiH *burek* refers only to the version with meat. The basic variations of this dish in BiH are: *burek* (meat), *šareni burek* (meat and potatoes), *sirnica* (cheese), *zeljanica* (usually chard or spinach and cheese), *krompiruša* (potatoes) and *tikvenica* (yellow squash). There is also *pita maslenica* (literally “butter pita”). In fact *maslenica* is often made with cream and a little bit of *kajmak*, fresh cheese or *mileram*. However some people also add butter.

Pita, as well as strudel, belongs to a larger group of recipes that originated in the Middle East and spread to Europe from two directions: from the Ottoman Empire in the southeast and from the southwest via North Africa (see Kunz, 2011). In particular, *pita* spread to BiH as a part of the Ottoman culinary regime and this is also the reason why it can be found all over the Balkan peninsula and is the most prominent in areas which were part of the Ottoman Empire in the past. However, the terminology for describing the dish in these various countries differs, as well as the technology of preparation. It is also listed

⁴⁴“Pita” in BiH is a very different dish from “pita bread”, which is common the Middle East.

and promoted as a national dish in contemporary BiH. Apart from in households, pita is also made by various small scale and transnational businesses. The traditional establishment for purchasing pitas is a *buregdžnica* (a type of fast food establishment specializing in *pita* making) or often they are available in a *pekara* (bakery). The pastry *jufka* can be made from scratch or it is produced industrially. Also frozen, industrially made ready-to-bake pitas are sold in the supermarkets.



Picture 18: This collage depicts the process of making pita with Darko. First the ingredients for filling are cut. Subsequently dough is made and divided into smaller pieces. They are rolled to thicker circles. After the dough rests a little, it is stretched all across the table. The filling is sprinkled on the dough and rolled inside the dough. Spiral shaped pastries are created (usually but not always) and then baked in the oven (Photos M.S. and Darko, summer 2013).

Other important sources of carbohydrates apart from wheat (*pšenica*) include: buckwheat (*heljda*), barley (*ječam*), oats (*zov*), corn (*kukuruz*), potatoes (*krompir*), rice (*riža*) and various types of pasta (*tjestenine*). The list of meals which can be prepared from

these ingredients is rather extensive. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will mention only a fraction of them. For example, corn is a basic ingredient for making *pura* (a local variation of polenta). *Pilav* style dishes are made from rice (*pilav* originally from an Oriental rice, meat and vegetable dish). However, the word *pilav* can also be used to describe noodles in BiH⁴⁵. Rice is also the main ingredient of *đuveč* or *đuveđ* (meat and/or vegetables with rice).

There are also plenty of important vegetable dishes. A wide variety of vegetables is grown in contemporary BiH, amongst the most popular being: tomatoes (*paradajz*), peppers (*paprika*), carrots (*mrkva/šargarepa*), squash (*tikva*), eggplant (*patlidžan*), onions (*crni luk*), garlic (*bijeli luk/češnjak*), various legumes – *grah* (beans), *grašak* (peas), *boranija/mahuna* (a variation of the green bean - whole pods are eaten) and okra (*bamija*). Again, vegetables are either mixed with meat or they can be cooked on their own and served as a side dish e.g. *sataroš* (stewed tomatoes and peppers). Fresh salads also often accompany bigger meals. Vegetables are simply cut to pieces and served with a little bit of salt or mixed in salad e.g. cabbage salad, *lukmira* (sour cream or other dairy product with green onion) or *šopska salata* (mixed vegetables with cheese on the top – this salad is often known outside the region as “Balkan salad”). Vegetables are also fermented *turšija* or *kiseli kupus* (sauerkraut) and various preserves are made. Perhaps one of the most typical dishes in the whole of Balkan Peninsula is *ajvar* (a relish made generally from red peppers and eggplant).

4.1.4. Sweets, Preserves and Drinks

Various types of fruit are grown in the Srebrenica locality including: apple (*jabuko*), pear (*kruška*), quince (*dunja*), peach (*breskva*), apricot (*marelica*), plum (*šljiva*), cherry plum/*Prunus cerasifera Ehrh* (*džanarika*), cherry (*trešnje*), grapes (*grožđe*), mulberry (*dud*), berries – raspberry (*malina*), blueberry (*borovnica*) and strawberry (*jagoda*). Fruit is consumed fresh or used for making wide range of sweet dishes or preserves such as jams or dried fruit. Walnuts are also commonly grown in BiH and they are an important part of

⁴⁵This is most likely because in Turkey noodles are mixed with rice and the dish is referred to as “*Şehriye pilav*” (“little pasta” pilav). (Wikipedia, Pastina)

sweet dishes such as *baklava*. Walnuts are also a popular snack along with dried plums in eastern BiH.

People with a “sweet tooth” can indulge themselves with desserts ranging from “Oriental/Eastern” variations to “Western style” layered cakes. Both sugar and honey are used as sweeteners; however the first is much more common. The vast majority of my research participants consumed white sugar on everyday daily basis. The first group of desserts (*dezerti* or *kolači*) includes: *baklava* (layered pastry filled with nuts and submerged in sugar syrup – *agda*), *ružice* (variation on baklava), *tulumba* (fried batter soaked in syrup), *tufahije* (apples cooked in *agda* filled with walnuts), *slatko* (a type of fruit preserve served often with coffee to honor guests or simply as a desert), *oblada* (thin wafers layer on each connected with sweet filling), *pita od jabuka* (an older type of thin apple strudel made from *jufka* – often soaked in *agda*), halva (a sweet confection made from either semolina flour or various seeds and nuts).



Picture 19: Sweets made for Bajram (a holiday celebrated by people of Muslims origin). From left: tulumba, baklava and at the back European style layered cake (Photo M.S., August 2013).

Picture 20: Coffee, slatko and pita od jabuka at Almedina’s place in Srebrenica (Photo M.S., September 2013).

Other sweets which I believe have origins outside contemporary BiH include *štrudla* (Bosnian variation of strudel known in Central and Western Europe made with raised dough), *kuglof* (bundt cake),⁴⁶ and many modern variations of layered cakes filled with cream. There are also many “global cross-over” recipes, disseminated via various media

⁴⁶*Gugelhupf* in German, *bábovka* in Czech.

such as culinary television, magazines and internet. A good example would be “Nutella” cake (*torta sa Eurocremom*).

To quench the thirst, many non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks are prepared in BiH. I cite examples of the alcoholic drinks throughout this text, so in this chapter I will focus mainly on non-alcoholic drinks. A very important beverage in Bosnia in general is coffee. Coffee is made in the morning and for some it represents all that they have for breakfast, however it may be drunk at any time of day. There were occasions when coffee was prepared after midnight to energize its consumers during long nights. There is also a custom practiced in the majority of the households I visited when coffee is served when a guest visits the house. Overall, coffee is an important part of social events and even smaller gatherings – from informal meetings with friends to formal political gatherings and public rituals such as various commemorations or protests; coffee is commonly consumed and constitutes an important part of socializing.

In households, but also in many cafés, coffee is quite often prepared according to the “Ottoman/Eastern” culinary regime in a *džezva*⁴⁷ (this is because coffee drinking was introduced to the region by the Ottomans). Making coffee is usually the domain of women, but occasionally, like in Nura’s family, it might also be made by men (Adi and Adin would prepare coffee on a regular basis). Each cook has a slightly different method to make “the best coffee”. This is a good example of a culinary repertoire – it shows that adoption of culinary regime is always renegotiated. For example Nura first places *džezva* to warm up on the stove on a lower heat while she boils water in a kettle. When *džezva* is warm, she puts in couple of spoonfuls of finely ground coffee which she roasts a little to release aroma. Then she adds hot water and puts the *džezva* on a high flame to heat up. When thick foam creates on the top and the liquid starts rising she removes it from the heat. Foam (referred to as *kajmak*) is an important aspect on which the coffee’s quality is based when evaluated.

To serve the coffee, Nura places the *džezva* along with a sugar bowl and *fildžan/ findžan* (small cups without handles), saucers and spoons on a serving tray. Then she

⁴⁷Džezva – a metal (generally copper) conic dish with a handle, typical for preparing coffee and other warm drinks.

brings the tray to the main table and serves everyone coffee. First, she carefully spoons off the foam (*kajmak*), dividing it equally into individual cups. Then she adds sugar according to the consumers' preferences (either sugar cubes or granulated sugar) and in the end she pours the coffee. If there is milk in the house, she serves it on a tray in a small *džezva*, however in the majority of cases coffee is drunk "black". Coffee is sipped slowly during a conversation and the *fildžans* are slowly refilled until the *džezva* is empty.



Picture 21: Ottoman inspired style of serving coffee. Coffee in a café in Sarajevo is served in *džezva* and *fildžan* with rose flavored rahat lokum (sweet) and *šerbet* (Ottoman drink from sugar, cloves and cinnamon) (Photo M.S., August 2013).

Apart from coffee, other drinks are consumed. Hot drinks also include tea, but in the main herbal teas are consumed (mint tea/ *čaj od menti* is one of the most popular). The usual range of industrial teas portioned into tea bags can be purchased in the local supermarket. Black tea is consumed rarely and is often not available in small stores, especially in Srebrenica. On the other hand, the newly emerged hookah (*nargila*) style cafés in Sarajevo (or one in Tuzla) serve black "Turkish style" tea as well as *salep* (an Ottoman drink from *Orchis* tubers see Wikipedia, Salep). In the past, another drink of Ottoman origin called *šerbet* consisting of sugar, water, cinnamon and cloves would be consumed (see Lakišić, 1999)⁴⁸.

⁴⁸As Lakišić notes in his cookbook in the past *šerbet* was used for making coffee (Lakišić, 1999: 79).

In BiH there are also many chilled drinks. I have already mentioned drinking dairy drinks. Fruit based juices are consumed quite frequently. They are produced both in households and on large scale industrially. In general people in BiH make a distinction between natural juices (*prirodni sokovi*) which can have a form of freshly pressed juice from fruit or more often they are boiled with water and sugar to make a type of syrup e.g. plum (*šljiva*), elder flour (*zova*), rose (*ruža*) and spruce (*smrka*). There is also an old Ottoman drink called *boza* which is made by fermenting corn and/or wheat flour. Popular are also industrially made drinks which are generally distinguished according to the consistency of the liquid: “thick” (*gusti*) and “carbonated” (*gazirani*). The first category includes various flavors of juices thicker in consistency and the latter typical carbonated drinks such as Coca-Cola, Fanta and Sprite. Also regional instant drink *Cedevita* (based in Croatia) is fairly popular.

4.2. At the Intersection of "Western" and "Eastern" Culinary Regimes: Deconstructing the Notion of so-called "Bosnian National Cuisine"

In spring 2014, the twins and I were visiting Ramiza’s house in Nurići. In the evening we were lying in bed and watching TV. That night I watched a Serbian film made shortly after the war called “Pretty Village, Pretty Flame” (*Lepa sela lepo gore*) for the first time. The twins liked the film and told me I had to watch it as well. The film, depicting the absurdity of mass killing, nationalism and representations of war, “haunted me” for months. The story is based on true events which happened near the town Višegrad in Eastern Bosnia only about 36 km from Srebrenica (as the crow flies)⁴⁹.

In the movie, some “Bosniaks” are trapped in a tunnel with a journalist. They are “besieged” by “Bosnian Serbs”. There is a famous scene in which a nationalist Serb “Viljuška” (Fork) unexpectedly emerges on the “Bosniak” side. He demands to make a statement for the press. The journalist starts filming. As Viljuška speaks, his face is twisted in a grimace: *‘The Serbs are the oldest of nations! When the Germans, English and Americans, bro, were still eating pigs using their hands 600 years ago, we had this!* (He

⁴⁹This is a straight line distance. In reality, the journey by road is about three times longer due to the mountainous terrain and poor infrastructure in the region.

proudly shows a fork which he wears on a piece of thread as a necklace). [We were eating] We ate *nicely with a fork. At the Serbian court, we were eating with a fork and the German with hands, fuck him. The oldest [nation]...*' (He throws the fork on the ground and leaves). (Viljuška –*Lepa sela lepo gore* - released in 1996 and directed by Srđan Dragojević).

This scene is steeped in dark humor and it entails a powerful critique of extreme Serbian nationalism which tends to present Serbia as the “oldest nation” (perhaps needless to say such an argumentation is absurd for contemporary social sciences). From a historical point of view Viljuška’s statements are incorrect fictions (this is the humor), but at closer look they also contain an interesting remark on the imagined division between “Western” and “Eastern” culinary regimes. Thus, they enable us to understand the mechanisms of identity distinction. Viljuška perceives the fork as a symbol of “civilization”. And indeed it is interesting to ask where the roots of this metaphorical reference lie. The question why the use of fork to consume food European context should be considered as “civilized” and eating with hands as “cannibal like”, “barbaric” or “uncivilized”, was also posed by Norbert Elias (Elias, 2000: 107)⁵⁰. He also added that the notion of “hygiene” was generally used for the legitimization of these ideas, however he himself does not consider that convincing (ibid.).

Elias concludes that (within the European context) the development of elaborate table manners and changes in dining rules can be explained by embodiment of certain standards of emotion and revulsion (embarrassment) which at the same time is related to the control of instinctual behavior (Elias, 2000: 108-109). He continues that certain manners were prohibited because they were pronounced as embarrassing and repulsive (ibid.). Once these ideas were ritualized and institutionalized, they could also be reproduced within the future generations and thus also the structure of human relations became changed (ibid.). In other words, in the European context, eating with a fork became socially constructed as the “proper way” to consume food, so the fork can be seen as part of the civilizing process which became accepted by social actors without much reflection.

⁵⁰First published in 1939.

However, a closer look into history reveals how instrumental and contextual such ideas linked to the use of the fork are. Elias also argues that in medieval Europe the use of fork as an expression of civilization had not yet quite developed (see Elias, 2000: 108). Besides, the use of fork was not even established in Europe as a common practice until the 17th century amongst the wealthiest elites and only in the 19th century it came to replace the hand (see Coff, 2006: 76). The fork, of course, existed before that but it was used either for preparation of the dishes or their slicing, not as a tool of consumption within the European context. Historical evidence exists to suggest that in the Early and High Middle Ages when eating with fork was introduced to Europe through the Byzantine influence, it was seen as a very controversial matter. Elias mentions a case from the 11th century when a Venetian doge married a Greek princess who caused a scandal namely amongst ecclesiastics, because she was eating food with a two-pronged golden fork (Elias, 2000: 59).

These historical shifts concerning the perception of the fork clearly show that the ideas surrounding the use of specific tools of consumption or the consumption of certain food are not only socially constructed but are also subjected to social change. Meanings prescribed to these actions are, thus, always relative and need to be understood within a broader context. As Mintz has argued, these are all “outside perspectives” (Mintz, 1995) – external ideologies that are socially constructed and need to be internalized and embodied by the individual social actors.

Moreover, as British archeologist Andrew Sherratt has shown, foods and drinks were intentionally used already in Antiquity to distinguish religious-cultural groups. Sherratt emphasizes that food and drink choices are cultural processes and food is not only a "system of alimentation" but also a "system of non-verbal communication" (Sherratt, 1995: 11). As he further argues, for either society as a whole, certain groups, individuals or participants of specific gatherings, only certain edibles and their combination are contextually appropriate (Sherratt, 1995: 12). Specific rituals and social events are often accompanied by consumption of specifically prepared edibles. Exclusion or inclusion of certain foods, their specific preparation and consumption thus also defines membership of larger groups in society (ibid.). Also, in this sense, food and drink might become a

“competitive arena of social display in which alliances, boundaries and relative standings are negotiated (ibid.). Sherratt concludes that the preparation and choice of food and drinks is central to the definition and formation of social groups and classes (Sherratt, 1995: 14).

This serves as very helpful introduction to explaining the relationship of different groups in the Srebrenica area with specific edibles. I am going to illustrate this on the example of consumption of wine typical of Orthodox and Catholic Christians, but generally avoided by Muslims. As Sherratt notes, the opposition between the consumption practices of Judeo-Christian and Islamic societies is probably the best-known example of contrasting “drug cultures” (Sherratt, 1995: 20).

Sherratt has shown that the consumption of wine in the Mediterranean in Antiquity was a custom typical of both religious and secular traditions (Sherratt, 1995: 18). However, its role in Judeo-Christian tradition serves as an important entry point to many of its meanings (ibid.). Sherratt’s main argument is that the production of wine in the Near East, where it also originated, declined along with the spread of Islam, but needs to be further understood in terms of major historical shifts in the region, prominent namely around 700 AD (see Sherratt, 1995: 20-24). The dominance of the “desert culture” leads, amongst other things, to replacement of chairs and tables with cushions and brass trays on folding wooden frames (Sherratt, 1995: 22). These changes also resulted to changing attitude towards alcohol, wine in particular (Sherratt, 1995: 22-30).

I further argue on the basis of my ethnographic observations that these practices linked to food preparation and consumption, more than a millennium old, stood behind the rise of various prominent culinary regimes which enabled the emergence of religious and cultural distinctions. An important role in local Srebrenica’s culinary practices is played in particular by “Western” eating repertoires influenced by various branches of Christianity (Orthodox and Catholic), Judaism and those “Eastern/Oriental” ones, shaped by Islam. The “Western” culinary regime was shaped also by various Christian practices but also transformed by the concept of dining in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The “Eastern/Oriental” culinary regime, which drew on Islamic eating and desert societies’ customs, was introduced to the area in a modified form as the Ottoman Empire spread.



Picture 22: Dolma – an Ottoman culinary technique of “filling” or “stuffing” (Drawing M.S., summer 2015).



Picture 23: Sarma – an Ottoman culinary technique of “wrapping” or “rolling” (Drawing M.S., summer 2015).

It is also important to note that the Ottomans introduced the majority of the New World cultural crops such as tomatoes, peppers and maize to Southeastern Europe (e.g. Kia, 2011: 225). Therefore, the majority of the dishes prepared in the region with these ingredients stem from the “Eastern/Oriental” culinary regime. In this text I broadly distinguish between 1) “Western”/“Occidental” and 2) “Eastern”/“Oriental” culinary regimes. These two neighboring culinary regimes, derived from Judeo-Christian and Islamic prescriptions and religious texts, contain several oppositional approaches when it comes to preparation and consumption of food and organization of everyday life.

Firstly, perhaps the most thematized difference is the exclusion of certain edibles and beverages, namely of alcohol and pork in the “Eastern”/“Oriental” culinary regime. However, pork is also avoided in Judaism (for details see e.g. Douglas, 2001/ 1966). Douglas has argued from the position of structuralism that: *Defilement is never an*

isolated event. It cannot occur except in view of a systematic ordering of ideas... For the only way in which pollution ideas make sense is in reference to a total structure of thought whose key-stone, boundaries, margins and internal lines are held in relation by rituals of separation’ (Douglas, 2001: 42). I understand this “systematic ordering of ideas” as culinary regimes. But the avoidance of specific foods can not only be relevantly interpreted within the particular sets of rules it belongs to, it also helps to define the boundaries between various groups. Moreover, in contemporary BiH these exclusions are practiced by some but they seem to be more a matter of discursive practice and it is interesting to follow whom they are internalized by.

Secondly, these different culinary regimes use different methods of preparation, serving and final consumption of the dishes. For “Eastern”/“Oriental” culinary regimes it is typical to carry out the activities of preparation and consumption “closer to the ground” – also the sitting order is generally “low” and low tables with removable metal trays are used. Food is generally consumed with hands (and in the Bosnian context also with a spoon). Bread is often broken by hand. On contrary, the “Western”/“Occidental” culinary regimes are typical for a “high” sitting order at a table, elaborate sets of cutlery (knife, fork and spoon).



Picture 24: An old representation of pita making. Photograph at Jasmina’s house.

Original author is unknown (Photo M.S., August 2013).

Picture 25: Nura making pita on the ground at her mother’s place (which is the usually way how she makes it) (Photo M.S., August 2013).

This context enables a more in-depth explanation of Viljuška’s statement concerning the fork that I have described above. In Viljuška’s understanding, the fork represents “civilization” and for him it also becomes an argument of cultural superiority (based on the

idea of opposition between “civilized” and “uncivilized”). From an anthropological perspective, this is not an unusual stand. As for example Nicholas Thomas has pointed out drawing on Koselleck (1985) in the colonial context that group identity is symbolically created in an asymmetrical opposition between “us” and “them” – between those who perceive themselves “civilized” and the other “uncivilized” e.g. the classical distinction between "Hellenic" and "Barbaric" (see Thomas, 1992: 215-216). Viljuška’s ethnocentric statement reveals a similar oppositional line of thinking, in which a material object – a fork – becomes a marker and declaration of (“Western/ civilized”) identity and an ideological argument of the “cultural superiority of the Serb nation”.

Thus, on one hand, we can see that these historical culinary regimes create certain discourses within the area of food which transcends the act of consumption and enables the positioning of the individual within the social space in a manner which Bourdieu described in *the Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1996). On the other hand, the fact that the way in which these different edibles are understood and interpreted is always negotiated on local and individual level cannot be underestimated. I have already mentioned noticeable shifts in the perception of alcohol, namely *rakija*. Like in the case of the fork, I suggest that also when it comes to understanding the inclusion or exclusion of alcoholic drinks from the menu, Sherratt’s explanation (1995) offers an interesting interpretation of contemporary food avoidances.

In a previous section, I have suggested that the contemporary foodways in Bosnia stem from two major culinary regimes “Western” and “Eastern” which are further diversified, firstly, in relation to particular religious traditions (namely Catholic, Orthodox Christian, Judaic and Islamic) which I have suggested above and secondly, they differ on a local level. In this following section I am going to briefly explore the dynamics in between these contexts in relation to the notion of so called "Bosnian National Cuisine”. This is especially crucial for understanding the current situation and the processes in which food can be used as a marker or tool of construction of identity of its consumers.

Similarly to Appadurai (1988) and based on my previous arguments, I see so called “national cuisines” as intellectual constructs. I am also drawing on Anderson who has

proposed nation to be an "imagined community" (see Anderson, 1983: 15-16). Similarly Gellner has argued that: '*Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents the nations where they did not exist*' (Gellner, 1964: 169). Precisely, food here can serve as a means of internalization and embodiment of nationalist ideologies which are generally perceived by the social actors as a "natural" unit of self-identification. In fact, the nation-state is the one to "cook up" its national identity using a selective range of recipes which are tagged as "national".

Using the example of "Indian" cookbooks Appadurai emphasizes that cookbooks are not only practical manuals but they also: '*reflect shifts in the boundaries of edibility, the properties of the culinary process, the logic of meals, the exigencies of household budget, the vagaries of the market, and the structure of domestic ideologies*' (Appadurai, 1988: 3). As he further argues, cookbooks moreover presuppose literacy and a '*...variety of specialists to standardize the regime of the kitchen, to transmit culinary lore, and to publicize particular traditions guiding the journey of food from marketplace to kitchen table*' (ibid.). Some dishes are reduced to "a set of generalized gastro-ethnic images" of different "ethno-religious groups" (see Appadurai, 1988: 16). On the other hand, 'national' cuisines are represented by a few selected "characteristic" dishes (see Appadurai, 1988: 17). Generally speaking, as Appadurai concludes, a national category is often used to unify the regionally and ethnically diverse (Appadurai, 1988: 21).

The workings of the nation-building process are also well visible in the Balkans. During the existence of the SFRJ, different dishes were seen by insiders and outsiders alike more in terms of the Balkan Peninsula since many of the dishes are cooked all over South-Eastern Europe. Regional differences and food specialties were prominent in distinguishing foods. The spread of the "pita" aka "burek" can serve as a good example: Since the armed conflict, the new nation-states in the Former Yugoslavia began to shape also the foodscape and some typical foods were chosen to represent the newly emerged country. However, as many of the dishes were cooked in more than one nation-state, this often ended in a dispute about where the dish comes from e.g. *ajvar, burek, rakija*.

This mechanism is also well applicable on what is nowadays referred to as “Bosnian cuisine” which was most actively shaped with the emergence of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992. This process of creation of “Bosnian cuisine” was supported and shaped by the emergence of Bosnian cookbooks such as: Lakišić, Alija (1999) *Bosanski kuhar: Tradicionalno kulinarstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini* and Lamija Hadžiosmanović (2007) *Bosanski kuhar*.

Since this phenomenon is so recent, there are not that many books presenting “Bosnian cuisine”, but many websites featuring “Bosnian cuisine” are to be found on the internet. Cyberspace thus plays an important role in shaping and reproducing the image of what is considered to be “Bosnian”. Even though the cookbooks in many cases emphasize the various socio-historical and religious sources of “Bosnian cuisine”, the majority of dishes which are claimed to be “Bosnian”, such as *burek*, *ćevapi*, *dolma*, *sarma* or *Begova čorba* (Bey’s soup), originate from the culinary repertoire of the Ottoman Empire.

Here again, the “Eastern/Oriental” culinary regime is used as a tool of distinction, but at a national level. Similarly, like in the case of modern Bosnian language, “Bosnian cuisine” also seems to emphasize “Turkish influences”⁵¹ as part of the nation-building process which helps it to differentiate itself from its neighboring countries. Even though the influence of the Ottoman Empire is visible also in other places all over the Balkans, not everywhere is it appreciated in public discourse as much as in BiH. Thus, public embracement of the “Eastern/Oriental” connection enables in a broad sense differentiation the state from others. However this instrumental attempt to use foods for promoting certain identity is not inherent to many of the social actors who perceive the situation quite differently.

⁵¹This is an *emic* category commonly used in Bosnian. In fact, they are ottoman influences, linguistically stemming from Ottoman Turkish. These words are referred to in Bosnian as “Turcism” (turcizam).



Picture 26: Cookware typical of “Ottoman culinary repertoires”. Majority of the items are used in BiH until present day (Drawing M.S., summer 2016).

On the other hand, despite the introduction to the notion of national cuisines as part of the nation-building processes in the region there are noticeable differences in local repertoires, including culinary techniques and terminology (for example *pilav* can refer to both “noodles” or a dish prepared from rice depending on the geographic location or sometimes context of use). On the other hand, one can find the use of similar terminology and variations of characteristic culinary techniques across South-East European region. Therefore I suggest that it is helpful to explain contemporary Srebrenica culinary repertoires in this context with an emphasis on local specifics and characteristics.

On an everyday level, while employing the “bottom up perspective”, dishes and foods in the majority of the cases are not distinguished on the basis of its origin. Within the *emic* perspective the knowledge and differentiation of food seems to develop around the idea of: 1) local or, in many cases specifically, mother’s cooking which is generally acquired intergenerationally and through the process of embodiment – these foods are generally understood as Bosnian (or alternatively belonging to a different neighboring nation-state which the social actors identify with, for instance, Serbia); 2) other outside influences such as other foods from Balkan region, global novelty recipes, exotic foods

which are reproduced by different media, namely the internet, and sometimes by people of Bosnian origin living abroad. An important question concerning the latter case is how these culinary techniques and flavors became appropriated and internalized by social actors.

If we look carefully at the situation on a household level, the everyday food preparation is rather complex. The various culinary regimes have existed within the Srebrenica foodscapes for centuries and were generally appropriated as local. Thus they are, in a way, “forgotten histories” (Bourdieu, 1990: 56). For example, pita is cooked in households regardless of its declared ethno-religious origin, but it can be instrumentally appropriated by either of the ethno-religious groups during a performance of identity. Even though, historically speaking the local Srebrenica culinary repertoires are shaped by Eastern and Western culinary repertoires, it should not be forgotten that they are primarily shaped by the local resources and environmental possibilities. This material aspect is of great importance. As Appadurai noted, the remaking of fields and gardens is one of the ways of production of a locality (see Appadurai, 1996: 179, 180). Thus, an everyday level reveals a multiplicity of meanings, uses and values of different food items...

4.3. Contemporary Srebrenica Foodways: Eating Practices in the Households

Since the end of the war, foodways in Bosnia have undergone rapid transformations as a part of the transition towards the capitalist model of liberal market economies. These forces seem to result in diminishing private agricultural production by traditional means in many regions of the world and at the same time a rise in the amount of industrially produced food obtained through shopping. On a global level, the shift towards the model of a “more economically developed country” (MEDC) inevitably led to further industrialization and mechanization of agriculture that employs ideally about 2% of the country’s population. Global food industry also pushes for “deterritorialization”, “delocalization”, “professionalization” and “industrialization” of food production and seems increasingly to determine and dictate forms of contemporary consumption habits.

The town of Srebrenica is certainly no exception. In Srebrenica there is the *Zvorničanka* supermarket (private supermarket chain from Zvornik), referred to by locals also as *Robna kuća* (department store), which was the old name of the defunct shop located in the same building that existed in former Yugoslavia. Another important shopping venue is small *pijaca* (marketplace) - located generally centrally in Bosnian towns – in the *čaršija*. Then there are several small privately-owned shops (about 8 during the time of my fieldwork) selling food items. Many of the impoverished local population prefer to shop at these small vendors because they allow them to buy “on the slate” and pay when they manage to generate an income. The slightly wealthier undertake journeys to bigger cities in order to purchase special food items unavailable in the locality (e.g. to nearby Bratunac, Ljubovija in Serbia or even Sarajevo). Various food items are also brought by people who live now abroad in many of the European countries, the USA or Australia.

If we look at the food consumption situation in Srebrenica municipality on an everyday level, we notice a combination of both home and industrially produced edibles which are generally prepared according to the local culinary repertoires. Even though some of my research participants would cook a few “global fusion recipes”, the majority of the locals preferred the tastes of their childhood – food that was prepared generally by their mothers. The ingredients for preparing such food come mostly from local production – if not one’s own garden. The majority of my adult research participants stated that they preferred to consume home-produced (*domaći*) foods to which they ascribed higher value than to industrially produced food items. There are also exceptions of this attitude, namely in the category of dairy products – where quite on the contrary some youngsters disliked the homemade dairy products or some vegetables because they find the taste of these products as “too strong” and/or “animal-like”. However, in general, home-produced food is preferred.

Many of these home produced foods and other wild plants are also used as “folk medicine”. The certification and sale of “organic” or “bio” products was not widespread at the time of my fieldwork in BiH. On the other hand, some local retailers, more frequently the ones in bigger cities, namely in Sarajevo, certificated organic or other homemade, “additive free” products are sold. A few of these organic certified products were available

also at *Zvorničanka* in Srebrenica; the price however made them impossible to purchase for most of the population. Moreover, people in the Srebrenica municipality were aware of the discourses concerning organic products from “the West” and they used these discourses to legitimize their own homemade production and their understanding of what is “good to eat”.

On the other hand, despite the high status prescribed to homemade foods, the production of foods for self-provision is decreasing overall and many products are now obtained from the shops, which clearly gives an insight into everyday eating patterns of the local inhabitants. To illustrate this, I will use Nura’s house, where I lived, as an example. Nura always had some home-produced foods at the house, generally homemade bread, cheese, *kajmak*, milk, eggs and few vegetables (potatoes, onions, cabbage and other mostly seasonal products). In April 2014, Adin noted, that when Nura is at home, there is always bread (meaning homemade bread). Nura would bake bread several times per week. Additionally, sometimes, the family would buy white, industrially produced bread in the supermarket – often when Nura was not at home or when they felt like something different.

Milk products, eggs and vegetables came mostly from her mother Ramiza. Also if there was meat, it usually came from the surrounding villages. For example, cuts of mutton (*kurban*) from Kurban Bajram⁵² were carefully stored in a large freezer. If the meat products were purchased in the local stores, purchases would generally include the cheapest industrially made items such as sausages and sliced ham. In general, products that were primarily produced in the households were also bought in the local supermarket when the homemade ones were not available, namely milk.

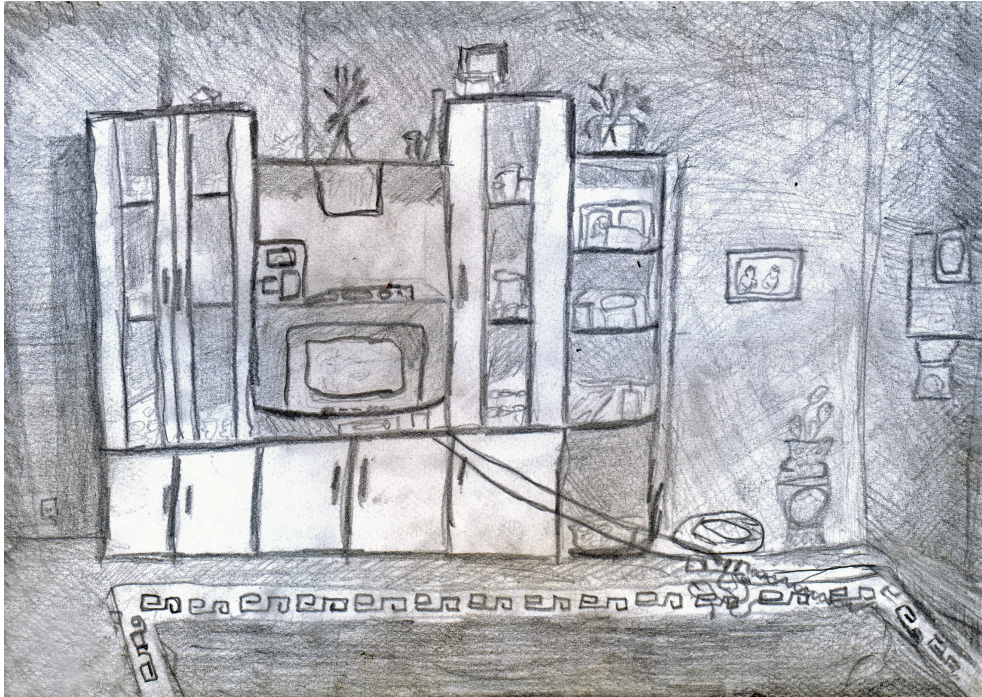
Nura would also buy flour, but she would order it in large quantities and store it in a big plastic barrel on balcony. It was also the main food reserve in the household. Apart from that, there usually were a few long-life industrially made products from the local supermarket such as sugar, coffee, sweets, spices, pasta, flour and inexpensive halal

⁵²Kurban Bajram is an expression used in BiH for one of the most important religious holidays in Islam, which is also known as the “Feast of sacrifice” (in Arabic *Eid al-Adha*). Kurban Bajram is the second of two Bajrams, which last for 4 days. The central part of the celebration is the “sacrifice” of an animal (most commonly a ram in BiH). The ram as well as the portions of meat are referred to as *Kurban*. Even though it is a religious holiday, the actual ritual as performed nowadays is often secularized.

sausages (specific for this particular household), sometimes also chips. Butter was used quite rarely as it is sold for a very high price - 250 grams is generally in between 3-4 KM (1 KM = 0.5 EUR) which is interestingly at least twice as much in comparison to prices in Western or Central Europe (in Germany butter produced by the same companies can be purchased for prices starting at 1 EUR). This made butter simply unaffordable for the majority of my research participants. For cooking and baking they used margarine or sunflower oil. Also sweet cream was used occasionally.

The presence of the food items purchased at the shop depended on very limited financial resources of a family that prevalingly survived on the mother's pension. Also sisters helped when they had income and occasionally minor humanitarian donations arrived – two of the children had sponsors from the Middle East at the time. The children were seeking employment during my fieldwork and sometimes they worked, other times work was not available. To cut a long story short, to get a decent employment was almost impossible for young people in the locality and the occasional salaries were generally too low in comparison to the living expenses.

The family started to reconstruct the house they had lived in originally before the war when they returned in 2002. It is currently still only partly repaired. It consists of two floors. On the ground floor there is a bathroom and a small flat with a separate entrance where a family of three relatives lived occasionally. Nura's family lived on the upper floor which consisted of two very small rooms (Adi's and Alma's) and a bigger room where Adin and I were sleeping. Nura and Azra were generally in the kitchen/living room with a balcony which was the largest room in the house and also a place where most of the activities took place. In the winter this was also the only warm room in the house. It was heated by a large metal wood-fired stove with an oven which was also used for cooking and sometimes for drying dishes and clothes. Next to the wood-fired stove there was also simple electric cooker with an oven and four hotplates, which was generally used for making coffee when the stove was not burning. Nura and the sisters preferred to use the wood-fired stove for cooking.



Picture 27: Drawing of a living room at Nura's house. Drawing was made by my teenage research participant Omer (Drawing Omer, 2014).

Many other families were in a similar situation. Also some impoverished individuals such as Sanela had to get by with very basic household equipment. Sanela, who I lived with in 2015, was renting a small apartment on the ground floor of a communal housing building built during socialism. The flat consisted of two small rooms filled with a few beds, sofas and shelves and an improvised "Turkish style" bathroom, where the shower hung from the wall above the toilet. The electric wiring was old and the boiler had to be tuned off before showering otherwise it would deliver electric shocks.

Once I asked Sanela if she was not scared of getting electric shocks, but she mumbled something like she had survived worse and has no choice anyway. There was neither a cooker, nor a washing machine. There was generally no food except for some sweets and occasional leftovers. An old TV, a pack of cigarettes and a laptop that she got from a German journalist and activist satisfied Sanela's basic needs when she was at home. She rarely cooked and would generally eat something from the local shops and restaurants. A large part of her diet was made up of inexpensive fast food meals. On other occasions, she would be invited to her friend's households to enjoy a homemade meal. In summer 2015, we were invited several times to Zineta's house for lunch. Other households were

better off in comparison. This was noticeable also by presence of more advanced electric cookers, other kitchen equipment and more food items available in the house.

However, an electric stove was not always necessarily considered the best for cooking, therefore some people preferred to keep both types of stoves, as different culinary effects were achieved by employment of these different cooking technologies. Additionally, some special dishes such as *ajvar* (a relish made generally out of peppers and eggplants) or *pekmez* (fruit syrup – in the studied locality generally made out of apples) and *bestilj* (or *pekmez od šljiva/* plum jam) are made by the use of “preindustrial” culinary methods over an open fire. Other “natural” or “homemade” things that are commonly used in local households and which I have not listed above further include: a wide variety of dairy products, meat, fish, honey, seasonal garden fruit and vegetables, walnuts, mushrooms, forest berries, *rakija* (distilled spirit), honey, other bee products and various wild plants, berries and mushrooms.

The most important food related activity for the majority of my research participants in the morning was to drink sweetened coffee (and smoke cigarettes). This was rather surprising for me at first since breakfast is quite an important meal in Western, Central European and Anglo-Saxon countries. People in BiH on the whole would not eat until around 10 to 11 am. Breakfast would often include different kinds of pita served with *tečni* (liquid) yoghurt or *pavlaka*, eggs (scrambled or omelette) with bread or just some type of pastry from local bakeries which included often simple *kifla* (bread rolls) or some other pastry with a filling such as *askifla sa eurokremom* (chocolate croissant).

In the early afternoon some people would eat a little, quick lunch, generally something similar to breakfast or a small menu from the restaurant. Dinner in BiH is the main and most important meal during the day (see Lakišić, 1999: 35-36). According to Lakišić’s cookbook a proper “traditional” dinner should include soup – *čorba* (thick soup) or *juha* (thin soup/ often broth) as a first course (ibid). This was generally not practiced in the households that I was familiar with. Soup and bread would be sometimes the main meal, while other times, especially for festive occasions, soup came as the first of the

courses. Dinner seemed to be more defined by something cooked and warm or how they say in Bosnia, “something that is eaten with a spoon” (*šta se jede kašikom*)⁵³.

Sherratt writes that: *‘Food and drink are perhaps the most fundamental, if short-lived, media of material culture. The serving and sharing of these essential elements make up one central daily activities of the human domestic group. It is the everyday practices of who provides sustenance for whom, and in what circumstances, that give family relationships and social classifications their substance; and it is here, both through the provision of daily bread and the rarer occasions of sacrifice, that the major metaphors of religious thinking have their origin’* (Sherratt, 1995: 11). This is why food in certain situations can serve as an important marker of different world religions.

Like in other places in the world, food in contemporary BiH is also an important part of various celebrations from personal events to religious and national holidays. Generally speaking, with festive meals ethno-religious and national culinary regimes become more apparent than in mundane eating practices in the households. However, it is important to keep in mind that these ethno-religious and national differences are not “inherited” or “essential” to food, they are learnt, renegotiated and embodied and in consequence lead to the emergence of eating patterns which can be tagged as “religious”, “ethnic” or “national” cuisines. However, distinct culinary sets of preferences and techniques of production that are transmitted across the generations seem to be of the greatest importance when it comes to the final menu. Yet these individual renegotiations and reinterpretations are often neglected in attempt to construct a “picture” of ethno-religious or national cuisines.

Three major religions have been shaping the locality since about 15th century and have created three major culinary regimes based on religious differences⁵⁴. This led to an increase in specific dishes and culinary techniques that were appropriated by local Catholic and Orthodox Christian and Muslims. These different religious culinary regimes ordered

⁵³In Bosnia, the spoon is the most important item of cutlery. The majority of meals are consumed with a spoon rather than with a fork. For example pita is “traditionally” served in a *tepsija* (round baking tray) on a round table and consumed with spoon by everyone from one dish.

⁵⁴The food and dietary preferences amongst the followers of the Bosnian Church are till great extent unknown. Little can be guessed based on the reliefs on *stećci* – tombstones. As well as hunting scenes, the edible most commonly depicted on the tombstones are grapes.

their followers to produce food in a specific manner (e.g. halal) or to prefer certain meals on specific occasions, and also to avoid certain foods completely or only during a certain period of the year.

The general avoidance of pork and alcohol in Islam constitutes a typical example. The avoidance of certain foods within Christianity is mainly connected with fasts e.g. the avoidance of animal products as part of the Orthodox fast is also a type of food avoidance after all, even if just temporary. Similar avoidances are practiced by Catholic Christians who avoid “meat” during the fast. On the other hand, they are allowed to eat fish because, in this case, the *emic* category of “meat” exempts fish and a few other creatures that live in water. Also, Orthodox Christians can sometimes consume fish during fast but only under specific circumstances.

To sum up, all of these three religious culinary regimes prescribe fasting in a specific manner in particular times of year. However, the structure of the fast and the exclusion of foods during the fast differ significantly. Moreover, food avoidances might not always be connected to religious culinary regimes they are also the result of contemporary nutritional discourses reproduced by the media and “Western” ideas concerning health. A good example would be the avoidance of “fat”, “white flour” and “white sugar” amongst some former inhabitants of Srebrenica who now live in Vienna. For example Bakir declared during our conversations in spring 2015, that he was trying to avoid “traditional” dishes, because they contain a lot of white flour and fat (Interview Bakir, 2015). Based on these discourses, the mother’s style of cooking which was considered “good to eat” before migration might be later evaluated as “fattening” and “unhealthy”. Such a change in attitudes does not have to be linked only to the migration but also other circumstances due to which food preferences shift.

Furthermore, on the basis of the narratives of my research participants, the differences in eating preferences became less practiced during the existence of former Yugoslavia. This was because the socialist regime was not in favor of religion and accentuated the public sphere. According to my research participants, people were generally allowed to practice their faith as long as they were not active involved with the

Communist Party (field notes M.S.). Importantly, the religious distinctions were suppressed which is apparent also in currently changing food preferences (Analysis of Fieldwork Data). According to my research participants many of the holidays were celebrated together by people of various religious backgrounds. I have also encountered people of Muslim background who tasted or started to eat pork – they were usually atheist or agnostic but sometimes also people who identified themselves as Muslims.

Many people in the Srebrenica locality (mainly adult men but also teenagers and some women) regularly consume *rakija* and other alcoholic drinks. *Rakija* is not only an important part of celebrations and rituals (e.g. placing *rakija* and other objects on orthodox graves as a sacrifice to the dead or burying a bottle of *rakija* under ground to age when a child is born (later to be unearthed for that child's wedding)). Moreover, *rakija* is also a popular folk medicine. It is used as a disinfectant and to treat different illnesses and injuries. I also encountered the use of *rakija* against coughs. Based on my observations, I suggest that many of the local Bosnian Muslims practice the avoidance of alcohol only during the *Ramazana* (Ramadan) (Field notes M.S.). In many cases cigarettes are also avoided during *Ramazana* at least from dawn (*sabah*) till dusk (*akšam*) when fasting takes place.

The division between consumers and non-consumers of alcohol in contemporary seems to be BiH more prominent around the gender division, but the age of the consumer also plays a significant role (drinking among children and teenagers under the age of 18, which is the country's legal drinking age, is generally perceived as a problem, yet in some cases it is tolerated). The avoidance of alcohol is also quite often instrumentally used to publicly declare ethno-religious identity. Some “Bosniaks”, both from Srebrenica and Sarajevo as well as those living in Vienna, exclude alcohol in order to promote sympathies towards Islam and to reconfirm belonging to a particular religious group. According to my research results, this phenomenon has been prominent since the last war, when the ethno-religious distinction became more accentuated again within the public discourse.

However, again on an everyday level basis, the idea that Muslims should abstain from alcohol consumption is actively renegotiated as I tried to point out with the example

of *rakija*. Beer is another alcoholic drink which serves as a good example. At the beginning of my fieldwork in 2013, I was shopping in the *Zvorničanka*. I got stuck in the chilled beer section, trying to choose between beers. I was not yet very familiar with the choices of beer and more importantly with the existence of the phenomenon which I later began to title (a little tongue-in-cheek) “beer politics”. Eventually I grabbed couple of *Sarajevsko*, most likely because I had often drunk it in the capital city. As I was contemplating over beers, Ivan appeared. He was in his mid twenties then and I met him together with the local young crowd that gathered at Tito’s. He looked at beers in my shopping basket and said: ‘*Why are you drinking Muslim beer? You should buy Serbian beer, like for example Jelen (Deer) or Lav (Lion)!*’ in his opinion those were “real” beers. I said diplomatically that I had no idea that beer was distinguished like that and with a smile I pointed out that my choice was purely random.

This conversation puzzled me and, as a result, I started to pay attention to when and in which contexts the ethno-religious identity was assigned to the consumption of beer. This was not only the case of Tito’s but even more so of the other bars. Generally, all of the other bars and café in Srebrenica (with the exception of Tito’s) were divided on the basis of the ethno-religious code which was, in most of the cases, decisive for the clientele and it also applied to the drinks served. Beers were generally linked to either of the ethno-religious groups based on the place of production. I inquired why *Sarajevsko* is tagged as “Bosniak”/“Muslim” beer as Sarajevo is the capital of the state of BiH. The answers would be that it is due to the long presence of Bosniak/Muslim inhabitants in the city and most importantly the logo is (partly) green (the color associated with Islam in BiH). The alcohol avoidance amongst practicing Muslims was ignored within the “logic of this “beer politics” and assigning *Sarajevsko* to “Bosniak/Muslim identity” was not seen as anything contradictory.

Overall, since the last war, religious exclusions or inclusions of certain foods have become more accentuated in an act of performing one’s identity. This is reflected by the general situation in the country which is frequently tagged as “divided on an ethno-religious basis”. As Gordy, amongst others, have suggested, this increased differentiation on an ethno-nationalist basis is also supported by the political and geographic division

introduced by the Dayton Peace Accord (see Gordy, 2014). Due to this, the division between the diets of various religions has also become more segregated. A father of a friend of mine in Sarajevo complained that now, after the war, he does not have anyone to drink with, since many of his friends stopped drinking for religious reasons after the war. The family also no longer has a Christmas tree for the festive season around New Year⁵⁵ which they used to have in former Yugoslavia so that the neighbors and family would not look down on them.

4.4. “No truth for empty stomachs”: Post-war foodways and the “hunger” of the poor

In his “Grundrisse”, Marx famously stated that: *‘Hunger is hunger, but the hunger gratified by cooked meat eaten with a knife and fork is a different hunger from that which bolts down raw meat with the aid of hand, nail and tooth’* (Marx 1993: 92). This statement cannot be read literally. By saying this, Marx was attempting to emphasize that “production creates the consumer” (ibid.). In other words, people need generally less in basic conditions but with increased production it is harder to satisfy all needs and greater elaboration is required. Unlike in the previous case of *Viljuška* who understood the use of the fork in terms of “civilization”, here we encounter the metaphorical use of the fork and knife for wealth in contrast to the lack of these tools as metaphors of “simple” conditions and poverty. In the findings of my ethnographic research of Srebrenica eating practices, poverty emerged as a central theme. Thus, in the last chapter of this section, I will elaborate further on this topic.

I have already illustrated serious socio-economic problems in the municipality such as unemployment while drawing on the latest Population Census in BiH. The limited access to employment and the lack of financial resources is compensated with self-

⁵⁵Amongst my research participants, if the members of the family were not of Catholic Christian origin, Christmas (Božić) was celebrated namely during the Yugoslav period more or less actively by the atheist, the agnostics and the members of all the 3 dominant religions. The Catholic Christians use the Gregorian calendar and celebrate Christmas Eve on December 24 and the day on December 25. Orthodox Christians in BiH are generally seen as part of Serbian Orthodox Church which uses Julian calendar, so Christmas is celebrated 13 days later (generally on January 7 in the region). People of Muslim origin in BiH do not celebrate Christmas as part of religious tradition, however many of them became accustomed to the holiday during the existence of the SFRJ. The major part of this holiday was the celebration of New Year. Also Christmas trees were decorated for New Year which I encountered several times during my fieldwork. The “Christmas tree” is referred to as “*novogodišnja jelka*”, literary translated the “New Year’s tree”.

provisioning strategies. About one third of Srebrenica's households keeps vegetable and fruit gardens for the purpose of food self-provisioning (Census of Population 2013, 2016). Also, the vast majority of households I visited produced at least some food for themselves. On the basis of my observations, local food produce continues to play an important role within everyday food production in Eastern Bosnia and many households in Srebrenica municipality keep vegetable and fruit gardens because they help them to stabilize, balance and satisfy the food needs of the economically marginalized population. Growing their own food is not just a voluntary activity, but, more importantly, a necessity.

On January 31, 2014 I was traveling in a van to Sarajevo. At about two o'clock, when Luka, the driver, stopped at Potočari, I heard a speech on radio that caught my attention. The mayor of Srebrenica at that time, Ćamil Duraković stated on the local radio that Srebrenica had many problems, but nobody was hungry⁵⁶. I could not help doubting his statement. Luka the driver and I briefly spoke about the speech. He agreed with the mayor – but he was in a position of the more privileged which, for many people in Srebrenica, simply meant having a job. Luka was a hardworking man, relatively well off and he often said that a lot of jobless people are just lazy. I could not agree.

Not that there is famine in contemporary Eastern Bosnia but I have been noticing this different, “second type” of hunger – one that seemed more omnipresent. This “second type” of hunger was not unlike the first, severe one of the war, directly threatening lives. Unlike during wartime, contemporary Eastern Bosnia certainly does not resemble any of those stereotypical images of hungry children that one sees on humanitarian aid agencies leaflets. A picture, as David Nally writes, that is: “*replicated hundreds and thousands of times – (that) presents a victim without an oppressor*”... (Nally, 2011b). Manifestations of this “second type of hunger” were harder to see; its representations were not as striking and shocking to the eye of the observer as in the first case. This hunger seemed to be “born” after the Dayton Agreement when BiH emerged as a new country “in transition”, striving towards an economic model driven by global capital forces.

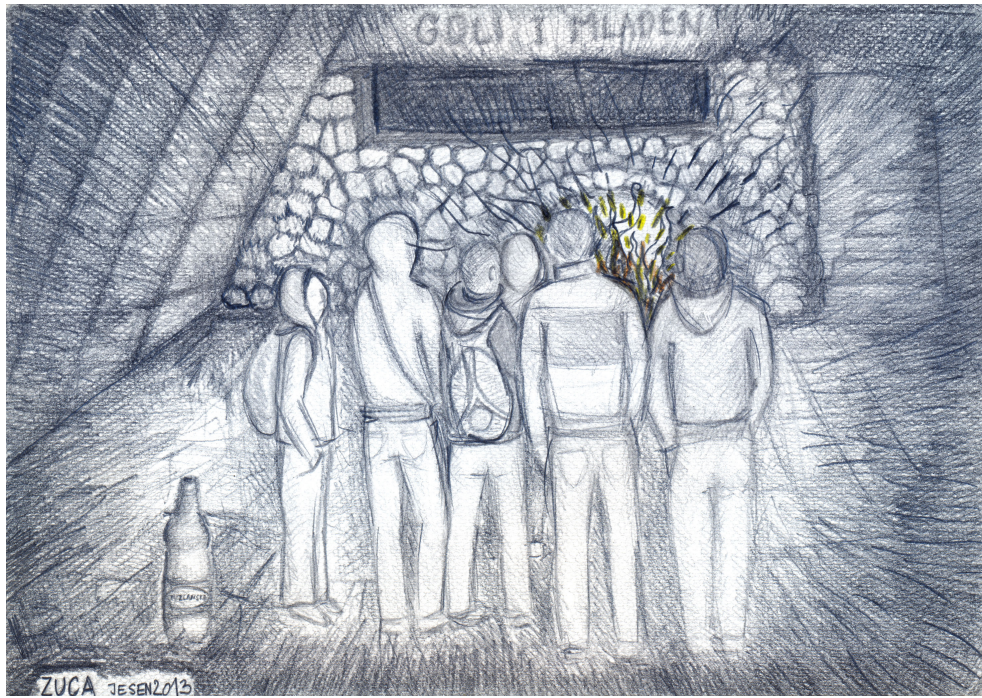
⁵⁶ Radio Glas Drine, January 31, 2014.

The haunting image of the previous night would not leave my mind: a few of the Srebrenica youngsters who had grown up as refugees and I were hanging out at an abandoned house on the hill above the town. We chatted, drank beer, smoked cigarettes and shivered with cold. Adi – the older twin started to rap about hunger, inspired by graffiti he had seen some time before. The inscription had been carved inside a love heart on a wooden bench which had recently been reconstructed by a NGO. It said: “*Ovde nema pravde za stomake gladne*” (literally translated, “*Here is no truth for hungry stomachs*” – a line from the song *Debeli lad* by Bosnian band S.A.R.S.).

Many times, I felt amazed about how much “starving” during the day people would take before eating their first meal. It seemed that they simply kept forgetting food. The guys I used to hang out with regularly sometimes did not eat anything almost the whole day. During the day many people smoked a lot of cigarettes and drank coffee with a lot of sugar. On other occasions, the men generally drank beer or other beverages and did not eat much food. In the afternoon and evening, those who lived with their mothers would eat a bigger meal at home.

For example, on April 16, 2014 I was taking notes on breakfast. It was about 11 o’clock. We had fried sausages, then warmed up tuna in oil (which was mostly for me: sometimes I would eat fish if I was served one) and homemade bread from the day before. Only Nura, Azra and I were eating. Alma was not at home. Adin did not eat at all and Adi had just couple of nibbles. I took some mayonnaise; it was usually in the house because the children like it. Azra gave me an extra plate for it and she joked that Amra (her sister who lives with her husband and children near Sarajevo) is overweight because she likes to eat mayonnaise as a spread on bread. Nura added bunch of spring onions.

That morning I had breakfast, but being an “ethnographer” attuned to the local environment after some time in Bosnia, I found myself eating only out of necessity as well. At the beginning of 2014 I noted in my field diary: ‘*One stops eating – your body becomes skinny, yet strong. Their stomachs, like mine, growled these days. Over past couple of months I have adopted this ‘bad habit’ of not eating. I still eat more than some of the young guys around me, yet I feel weak...*’ (Field Notes M.S.).



Picture 28: “Zuca” – A game of impoverished youth (Drawing M.S., combined technique, fall 2013)

I also vividly remember the feeling of shock, when Emir, one of my close friends without a stable income, admitted at one point that he had not eaten for three days (as he had no money and too much pride to ask for my or anyone else’s help). That made me feel upset and I got the impression that despite his toughness, being exposed to such an experience made him angry. I simply could not accept that Emir’s joblessness was necessarily his fault. He was 33 years old at that point and his body was covered with tattoos of names of his deceased relatives – many of them diminished in Srebrenica in 1995.

I have never met a person with such a horrifying life story before. When he was a baby, his father killed himself in jail and his mother abandoned him. Emir’s body was scarred and broken from growing up in orphanages. During the war he was a teenager and ended in a concentration camp. Then there was the life on the street and some experiences with prison — the “street university” as Bosnians often joked. In February 2014 he was undergoing compulsory treatment at the psychiatric ward at the Koševo hospital in order to be able at least to satisfy the criteria for the veteran pension that he was now eligible for. Yet, there were still months of administration process waiting for him before he would see

any money on regular basis. Regardless of this fact, that amount would just cover the bare necessities, but would not mean any decent standard of living.

For a second, I imagined “capitalist optimists” arguing that the open, liberal markets offer fair chance for employment for everyone who is willing, creative and not lazy. This was, of course, absurd in Emir’s case. His situation did not seem to me, after all, much different to Bourgois’ brilliant analysis that he develops in his book *In Search of Respect: Selling crack in el Barrio*, where he argues that Puerto Rican street subculture of crack-dealers is a form of resistance to macro-structural political, economic and social marginalization (Bourgois, 1995). Bourgois comes to the conclusion that: “*The concentration of poverty, substance abuse, and criminality within inner city enclaves such as East Harlem is the product of state policy and free market forces that have inscribed spatially the rising levels of social inequality...*” (Bourgois, 1995: 322). Even though it might seem surprising to some, to me this also somewhat characterized the situation that has arisen in BiH since the last war. I suggest that these inequalities can be traced in everyday “eating regimes” which are generally referred to as “free” consumer choices within contemporary food systems. Yet, do we really have a choice? Are these choices “free” or are they just regimes ready to discipline the consumer’s body?

David Nally has argued that starvation is a result of political and economic systems and thus he asks “what sort of ‘political violence’ creates and exacerbates famine?” (Nally, 2011b). In his book *Human Encumbrances: Political Violence and the Great Irish Famine*, Nally offers a typology of political violence which is helpful when it comes to thinking about mass starvation. He suggests that: “*A person or population can be “dominated” through brute force, but they might also be dehumanized or reduced to a position of virtual rightlessness through harmful economic policies, debilitating institutional programs, prejudicial legislative actions, or misguided political doctrines. In the first example, subjugation would require the repressive presence of a police force or an army; in the second instance, domination is achieved through greater organization and political design, or what Arendt termed the “solidarity of the masters”*” (Nally, 2011a: viii).

Whereas the images of hunger in the first case are more striking, in the second case they seem more discreet. As Nally argues that certain mechanisms like: *‘tariffs, poll taxes, rent systems and usurious credit practices are easily identified as “extractive forces” that strip populations of their assets, leaving scarcity and hunger in their wake. In these situations the directly affected populations are usually able to identify those responsible – that is, tax collectors, moneylenders, large farmers, and landlords – a fact that explains why these figures are very often the target of agrarian violence...’* (Nally, 2011b). This analysis also seems to fit Bosnia after Dayton well and “casting more light” on the anti-governmental-elite protests in February 2014. The Bosnian riots were no agrarian protest, but as the rural areas were generally some of the country’s poorest, the movement was broadly supported in the countryside as well. I will expand on the “February protests” further in the final chapter of this dissertation.

To conclude, in this chapter I have meditated over the eating practices in BiH with a focus on the municipality of Srebrenica in a historical perspective. First, I have given an insight into eating practices and the strategies of production and preparation of food in the individual households and I have tried to frame these practices within the larger context of eating habits in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina. Subsequently, I have shown that the contemporary culinary repertoires prevalingly stem from several “culinary regimes” influenced by different religious traditions in combination with climatic and environmental possibilities of the locality. In this text I argue that the culinary preferences are a matter of socialization and need to be internalized and embodied by individual social actors.

I also expand on so-called “ethnic” or “national” dishes and suggest that these are a product of an intellectual process of selection within the ideology of the nation-state. On the contrary, similar foods and dishes such as *pita* are prepared and consumed daily in all households, regardless of their so-called national or ethno-religious background. There are some distinct dishes and practices which are generally historically linked with specific religious norms and its production is linked to intergenerational transmission. These symbolic selective dishes can be used by the social actors to perform and legitimate a specific identity. However, my main argument is that when it comes to the domain of food, the limited financial resources of the majority of the contemporary Srebrenica inhabitants

determine most what is going to be eaten. I suggest that the ethno-religious focus overshadows the most important question – the one of poverty and social marginalization. The amount of financial resources dictates to the greatest extent who is going to eat what.

5. “Salt Worth More Than Gold”: Starvation in Srebrenica between 1992 and 1995

5.1. The Siege of Srebrenica: Military and Political Context

The privileged position of Srebrenica during the existence of the SFRJ drastically changed during the last armed conflict during the first half of the 1990s when Srebrenica became an isolated enclave under the siege. The Srebrenica enclave was a place where thousands of Bosniaks from adjoining areas of *Podrinje* sought refuge. As Halilovich notes, one of the many of the refugee groups that came to Srebrenica included for example the inhabitants of the village of Klotjevac (Halilovich, 2015: 37). This situation was a result of systematic ethnic cleansing which Honig and Both identify as one of the characteristics of the war (Honig and Both, 1997: 101). Similarly to numerous other authors, Carmichael (2003) argues that the term ethnic cleansing is appropriate to describe the series of events that took place during the last conflict in the Balkans.

In the particular case of the area of Podrinje these operations were carried out first by the JNA (*Jugoslavenska narodna armija/ Yugoslav National Army*) operated from Belgrade, Serbia (see Halilovich, 2015), the VRS (*Vojska Republike Srpske/Bosnian Serb Army*) (see Honig and Both, 1997), and various paramilitary groups (Duijzings, 2002: 102). At the beginning, operations were carried out by the JNA which was disbanded on May 20, 1992 and then the operations in BiH were officially run by the VRS. The VRS was officially created on June 1, 1992 (see ICTY, Judgment Prosecutor vs. Momčilo Krajišnik, 2006: 72). Therefore, in this dissertation, I shall call the army before June 1, 1992 the JNA and after that the VRS. However both, the weapons and the soldiers for creating the VRS were supplied by the JNA which was controlled from contemporary Serbia (at that point known as *Savezna Republika Jugoslavija* - the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). This is also the reason why some authors use multiple titles to describe the armies or the countries. It is also important to note that in the area of Podrinje persecution was not aimed only at “Bosnian Muslim” populations but at all “non-Serb” inhabitants of the region. The grave of a certain Rudolf (a “Bosnian Croat”) who was killed during the last war while helping to defend Srebrenica along with the others serves as an example of

this. Today, his grave is the only non-Muslim grave at the Memorial Cemetery in Potočari. Also Duijzings, with reference to Ivanišević, mentions that local Roma from Kazani (part of Srebrenica) were, according to the testimonies, present during some of the fighting (see Duijzings, 2002: 125). Additionally, Hasanović mentions his Roma neighbors in his memoir *Surviving Srebrenica* (Hasanović, 2016: 32).

Srebrenica did not become an enclave overnight. This situation had been slowly developing even before the war had started (April 6, 1992). It is important to note that the vast majority of the people in the enclave were civilians. However, to give a context of the situation, in the next several pages I will focus on the military operations conducted in the area and that are of crucial significance and I describe them to facilitate at least a basic understanding of mass forced displacement and the misery of those who were trapped in and around Srebrenica. For these purposes, I use the analysis of Ger Duijzings (2002) which, on the basis of both formal and informal interviews that I have carried out in the locality, I consider to be one of the most detailed and convincing studies concerning the military and political situation in the region. Later, I shall link this series of events to the issue of food.

In 1991, as political and nationalist tensions in former Yugoslavia were on the rise, daily life in the municipality of Srebrenica and the surrounding area was also marked by numerous incidents (see Duijzings, 2002: 91-92). The first victims of “ethnically inspired” violence in the area were two persons of “Bosnian Muslim” background who were killed in an ambush near Kravica on 3 September 1991 (Duijzings, 2002: 91). Duijzings argues that after the Kravica incident the situation worsened and armed patrols were organized (ibid.). There were also other incidents, such as at Lake Perućac where gunmen were shooting from the Serbian shore at the inhabitants on the Bosnian side (see Duijzings, 2002: 92). Moreover, in November 1991, the JNA, controlled by contemporaneous Serbia, started taking up positions within the region as well as in Sarajevo and other Bosnian towns (see Duijzings, 2002: 93). Moreover, Nele from Klotjevac stated that before the war actually started, the JNA had begun to withdraw weapons from the locality – they claimed that they were doing that because of cleaning and maintenance (Field Notes M.S.).

At the beginning of 1992, security in the locality deteriorated as the political situation, namely between the SDS (*Srpska demokratska stranka*/ Serbian Democratic Party) and the SDA (*Stranka demokratske akcije*/Party of Democratic Action associated with "Bosnian Muslims") was becoming tenser. Local political leaders of the SDS encouraged the "Bosnian Serb" population to move out from the area (see Duijzings, 2002: 96). As Duijzings writes: *'The Muslims of Srebrenica watched with growing alarm as their Serb neighbours packed their belongings and left for Serbia, loading furniture, electrical equipment, and even windows, doors and posts onto trucks. These developments struck fear in the hearts of the Muslim population, as they felt they had nowhere to go'* (ibid.). Several of my research participants also noted that the population of Bosnian Serb origin had been advised to move out of the area because of the upcoming armed conflict (Field Notes M.S. and interviews). The fact that the political and security situation was quickly getting worse was clear to many local inhabitants, yet almost no one believed that this would result in a war. Thus, it was not only because people did not have the anywhere to go as Duijzings claims, some persons of "Bosnian Muslim" origin had somewhere to go, but they did not want to leave their homes and they could not imagine that events would get so violent.

On the other hand, there were some who decided to leave. At the beginning of 1992, some of the buses were still working and some used the opportunity. Jasmina, who was around 10 years of age at the time, took one of the last buses to leave Srebrenica with her mother sister and brother on April 16, 1992 (Informal conversation Jasmina). Her father managed to get out on April 17 (Informal conversation Jasmina). On April 18, the VRS and Arkan's Tigers entered Srebrenica (Informal conversation Jasmina and her parents). Duijzings specifies that it was the JNA and various paramilitary groups under the command of Captain Reljic of the Novi Sad corps (Duijzings, 2002: 112). At that point, Sarajevo and other parts of the country were already in flames. In general it became hard to move around BiH as of the spring 1992, because travelers would be stopped by newly formed police controls on the roads. Also Haris, who now lives in Vienna, was urged to leave by his colleagues of "Bosnian Serb" background from work who helped him to escape (Interview Haris and Nina).

This brief description of the events helps to explain how Srebrenica (unlike Sarajevo) became prevailingly an enclave where mostly persons considered as being of “Bosnian Muslim” origin ended up concentrated. Also in other parts of BiH the situation was similar when the population, driven by fear started to move to different localities following the ethno-religious model for security reasons – even those, for whom any differences on ethno-religious basis had not presented any problem before the war (see e.g. Nuhanović, 2015). As Hayden has argued, the extreme nationalism in former Yugoslav countries made heterogeneous communities unimaginable (Hayden, 1996: 783). It was an attempt at reconstruction of an imagined community based on implementation of the essentialist definition of the nation which, as a result, produced real victims (Hayden, 1996: 783-784).

The fighting started in other places in Bosnia such as Sarajevo, Višegrad and Foča and other localities before this, on April 6, 1992 (see Duijzings, 2002: 97, 103)⁵⁷, the day on which the European Community recognized Bosnia’s independence (see Duijzings, 2002: 97). Eastern Bosnia was subjected to a military campaign referred to as Drina Valley campaign (see Duijzings, 2002: 102). As Duijzings points out, this area was an important part of the plan for a “Greater Serbia” that envisaged the geographical union of Serbia with eastern Herzegovina, Romania and the Bosnian Krajina (ibid.). Duijzings claims that the campaign was carried out by the paramilitary group Arkan’s Tigers with the help of other paramilitaries and the government of Serbia (particularly the Ministry of Internal Affairs) and that the JNA was directly involved in providing various support including bombardment and shelling of the areas where the inhabitants of “Bosnian Muslim” origin lived (ibid.). The majority of the towns around the Drina were defeated during the campaign with exception of Srebrenica, Žepa and Cerska – according to Duijzings, this was due to specific geographical characteristics (mountain terrain, weather conditions) and settlement patterns which complicated military operations (see Duijzings, 2002: 104).

At the beginning of April 1992, Srebrenica was literally surrounded by the heavy artillery of the JNA and various paramilitary groups and thus became besieged. At the same time, intense political negotiations took place between the local political leaders (Duijzings, 2002: 104-110), but unfortunately these negotiations could not stop the

⁵⁷In some places, such as Bijeljina, even before that.

bloodshed that was about to occur. As Duijzings writes, after Bratunac and Srebrenica was taken by Serb controlled armed forces (in the second half of April 1992), the large-scale ethnic cleansing operations were implemented (Duijzings, 2002: 113). During this period improvised groups of prevalingly “Bosnian Muslim” origin also formed armed resistance in the surrounding hills and villages – in the municipality of Srebrenica, two prominent groups formed: 1) Naser Orić’s militia in Potočari and 2) Hakija Meholjić’s and Akif Ustić’s groups of local armed men based around *Stari grad* (upper part of Srebrenica) (ibid.).

On May 1, the SDS issued an ultimatum to the local resistance to hand over their weapons, but they refused to do so (Duijzings, 2002: 114). After that the paramilitaries cooperating with JNA burned the houses of the population of “Bosnian Muslim” origin in the center of the town – Duijzings claims that 80 houses were destroyed and 30 inhabitants of “Bosnian Muslim” origin were killed during these events (Duijzings, 2002: 116). Attempts to destroy houses in the upper part of town which became known as the “Battle of Srebrenica” were stopped by the local militia groups (around May 7) after which Srebrenica became controlled by local militias of prevalingly “Bosnian Muslim” origin (ibid.). The ethnic cleansing and persecution intensified after the assassination of Srebrenica’s SDS president, Goran Zekić, on 8 May 1992 and persons of “Bosnian Muslim” origin were tortured and brutally executed, namely at the *FC Bratstvo* (Brotherhood) sports stadium in Bratunac (see Duijzings, 2002: 118-121). Duijzings estimates that these operations lasted till the end of May and over three quarters of the entire population of “Bosnian Muslim” origin in the Bratunac municipality (17,000 people) was cleansed from the area, during which at least 500 people were killed (Duijzings, 2002: 121). This is only one of the countless incidences of massive forced displacement that was taking place during the armed conflict.

Partly in response to the above events and partly due to professionalization of the local “Bosnian Muslim” militias, the attacks on territory controlled by Serbian military intensified (see (Duijzings, 2002: 124). This was also caused by the lack of food in the enclave (ibid.). In late July 1992, the “Bosnian Muslim” militias were reinforced from outside by a brigade of about 450 men consisting mainly of refugees. Due to political

support, some were well equipped and had ARBiH uniforms (Duijzings, 2002: 126). From fall 1992, the attacks by the armed groups defending Srebrenica intensified and the use of violence was not uncommon (ibid.).

Overall, Duijzings concludes that the death toll of civilians of “Serb” origin was around a thousand between April 1992 and January 1994 (Duijzings, 2002: 134). The greatest number of these people were killed in the period from the beginning of the conflict until the creation of the UN Safe Area; after that the number of casualties fell dramatically (ibid.). Those are precisely the years when no humanitarian aid was available and one of the possibilities of getting food was to seize it from the surrounding villages. Duijzings argues that a rough estimate of the “Serb sources” is that the number of persons of “Serb origin” killed between April 1993 and July 1995 is somewhere between 100 and 150 (Duijzings, 2002: 134). The number of casualties of persons of “Bosnian Muslim” origin in Srebrenica and Bratunac is considerably higher – the estimate is that about two thousand people who were killed before the July 1995 (ibid.).

5.2. When Food Becomes Radically Scarce: Wild Plants and the Recipes for Survival

‘Living in Srebrenica at the time was worse than life in prison, because we were shelled every day and were totally exhausted by the lack of food and other needs. I often imagined what it would be like to drink a coca cola again – a taste I had almost had forgotten!’ (Hasanović, 2016: 35)

The experience of hunger was common to the people who lived through the war, regardless their “ethnicity” or “religion” but naturally, this differed from case to case. Some starved more, some starved less and there were those upon whom the starving was imposed on in the harshest way — e.g. in the concentration camp for prisoners from Omarska, Keraterm or Trnopolje (see Halilovich, 2015: 68-69). There were besieged cities that were cut from the sources of food and everyday necessities for years. The survival of thousands of civilians depended on the amount of food and water supplies available on a day-to-day basis. People trapped in the enclaves were limited only to a few sources such

as: a few markets, where the prices of food “sky-rocketed”, international food aid, the residues of self-sustainable food production, food obtained from surrounding areas where it was possible to collect some food and in some cases by armed food raids (field notes M.S.). After all, many people sarcastically remarked that Srebrenica was neither an enclave nor “the Safe Area”; to them it more resembled one big concentration camp (Field Notes M.S. and also see Suljagić, 2005: 30).

One of the worse situations of the Bosnian War when it came to food scarcity arose in Srebrenica. The reason for this was precisely the fact that the town was besieged by the armies of JNA, VRS and other paramilitary groups that I mentioned above. Even though the territory controlled by the Srebrenica militias was enlarged during 1992, it was still impossible to produce or to import enough food that would be able to feed the people in the enclave. Halilovich states that “the town has swollen” with refugees from Podrinje region as the Serb controlled military progressed (Halilovich, 2015: 37-38). In the previous subsection elaborating on the prevailing political and military events, I attempted to explain how this has happened. Halilovich states with reference to Sudetic (1998) that the population rose from the town’s original 6,000 to 40,000 people (Halilovich, 2015: 38).

Moreover, as Nuhanović states, the people who sought refuge in the area had not known each other prior to the war, a fact which united the remaining local population, so for those displaced it was harder to survive (Nuhanović, 2007: 87). Here, it is important to point out again that the vast majority of these people were civilians, even though many of them were adult men. They did not have a professional army training (except compulsory basic training they had been through when on national service during the existence of the SFRJ) and certainly they did not have any proper military equipment to speak of. Then there were the women, the children and the elderly. The only exceptions were a few groups of self-organized militia that I mentioned above, however their numbers were minimal in comparison to the rest.

It is a universally known fact that strategies of food provisioning in armed conflicts became the biggest issue (e.g. Collingham 2012, Redžić, 2010). Redžić, amongst others, points out that war leads to shortages of food, water and medical supplies and therefore

generates undernourishment as well as acute and chronic hunger (Redžić, 2010). This is mainly due to the destabilization of the food production systems that commonly comes about during armed conflicts. Moreover, as Collinson and Macbeth argue, an armed conflict between groups of people often leads to disruption in the prevailing social order and transforms social and economic patterns of everyday life (Collinson and Macbeth, 2014). This, in the case of Srebrenica, clearly demonstrates this fact. In order to ensure food security for the population of town or a city throughout all seasons of the year, a developed agricultural system is necessary.

Mintz has pointed out that the major changes in consumption habits are usually brought on by major disruptions in ordinary routines (see Mintz, 1996 and Messer, 1997: 102). This was also the case of Srebrenica. As an illustration of these disruptions of ordinary routines I will use a description given by the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo which emphasized that the Siege of Sarajevo was the longest siege in modern warfare. The siege *“led to shortages of all supplies of life - food, water, electricity and gas. People survived on humanitarian aid, which was also sold at market places. People were often killed while queuing for water...On tables in Sarajevo there was less and less food. Consequently, the lawns around houses were turned into vegetable gardens. Dandelions and nettles were picked at the local green plots. A specific cookery book was compiled. People ate anything, they could find, but there was nothing... (Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo).⁵⁸* In Srebrenica, the situation was even worse as there was no humanitarian aid coming to the area during the first year of the conflict.

The food production industry in the Srebrenica area collapsed and people trapped in the enclave had to come up with new strategies of obtaining food. They depended on a few limited options which I will elaborate on in several following pages. It was impossible to have any sustainable food production for several reasons: 1) the population trapped in the enclave did not have an access to farm land, as Srebrenica is located in a valley in between

⁵⁸The description of the besieged Sarajevo summarizes some of the important changes in diets. There are some minor differences. For example, I have not come across any wartime cookbooks compiled in Srebrenica, however people still had to come up with new recipes and uses of food that they were not used to consuming.

steep hills (Field Notes M.S.); 2) the production of food in the small gardens was not sustainable because of shelling – the crop would be either destroyed by explosions or else, most likely, stolen by the masses of hungry people, however people try to grow vegetables and tobacco both in Srebrenica and Sarajevo in flower pots (Field Notes M.S.). Only the people that remained in the villages in the countryside had access to agricultural production and therefore they were generally better off food-wise than the ones trapped in the enclave. The villages were also places where the people living in the enclave tried to obtain food - an activity that was carried out in multiple ways.

Emir Suljagić, one of Srebrenica's well-known survivors, describes the lack of food in his book *Razglednice iz groba* (Postcards from the Grave) (Suljagić, 2005).

*'By July 1992, hunger had already become the focal point in lives of every inhabitant of the enclave. We ate once or, rarely, twice a day. The town was full of exhausted people, who spent the days wandering around without a particular aim or were resting in their apartments which offered a bit of shade and cool... Breakfast, lunch and dinner were the privileges of the few who were the closest to warlords and the caste of war profiteers who had already begun to form in the town. The regime of hunger that the normal world (people) had to endure meant one meal per day – generally at noon and it was never big enough to appease the hunger. Out of habit we used to call that meal lunch, in order to reject the new conditions – as if we wanted at least to retain the language what we spoke until yesterday. The second time we would eat was late in the evening, the later the better; if we had any food, we would put a few morsels in our mouths, but every morning we woke up hungrier than when we had gone to sleep and more exhausted than the morning before. With the summer, the days became longer, too long, and the sunset was no invitation for dinner. The afternoon was the hardest: hunger turned into pain, spasms in the stomach, an ache one could not chase away. After the war I met a young man from Foča in Sarajevo; he had spent the war in Goražde which was also besieged for three years. Together we calculated and came to fairly reliable conclusion that our caloric intake during those years was smaller than that of the captives of Stalin's gulags.'*⁵⁹ (Suljagić, 2005: 38-39).

⁵⁹Translation into English from the original, written in Bosnian. M.S.

Suljagić's statement could be further supported by findings of Redžić Barudanović and Pilipović (2010) made in the Podrinje area. Even though this research is carried out after the war, Redžić had conducted some research in Sarajevo during the war and thus has experienced life under the siege in person. Moreover, refugees from Podrinje who fled to Sarajevo were amongst his research participants (see Redžić, 2010). In the case of Podrinje, Redžić et al. estimate that during the initial months of the war, people lost up to 30 kg in some cases which clearly shows the extent of the mass undernourishment (Redžić, Barudanović, Pilipović, 2010:176). Many of my research participants described that they observed changes in their behavior and the ability to think (Field Notes M.S.). Their main driving force seems to be the desire to survive.

As Suljagić points out in the previously cited text, there existed different groups of people, with different options available to them. The majority of civilians who were severely undernourished had very limited options, unlike the farmers from the surrounding areas, soldiers and war profiteers who were slightly better off. First, I will look into the subsistence strategies of the civilians, later I will to elaborate on other strategies, including scavenging food from the surrounding countryside, which occasionally meant even food raids if the scavengers were armed. Last but not least, I am also going to discuss international humanitarian aid and especially its inability to improve the situation in the area. Overall, the biggest issue mentioned by people was the absence of flour and salt (which endangered their lives) but from a personal viewpoint, the lack of coffee and tobacco was also considered a big issue (Field Notes M.S.).

Drawing on Redžić's wartime research (Redžić, 1993), Redžić et al. argue that the general reaction to the new conditions was to obtain food from the surrounding countryside (Redžić, Barudanović, Pilipović, 2010: 176). One of the most frequently reported strategies for dealing with food scarcity (both short and long term) was the gathering and consumption of wild plants (Huss-Ashmore and Johnston, 1997: 83). Additionally, even items normally regarded as non-edible can be used to fill hungry stomachs. Overall, my fieldwork seems to suggest that extreme starvation and wartime conditions lead to loosening up of the generally practiced food exclusions and taboos. In other words, there are significant shifts in what is in Douglas' words "good to eat" and what is not (see

Douglas, 2001). Also, Redžić et al. wrote that: *‘People ate anything. Centuries long held myths about wild food, especially about mushrooms and lichens and some small animals, were disregarded’* (Redžić, Barudanović, Pilipović, 2010: 176). Moreover, Redžić (2010) emphasizes, that semi-wild and wild plants were a precious source of nutrients in the Siege of Sarajevo and in other parts of Bosnia. Older modes of cooking knowledge that rely more on self-sustainable production and local resources such as the use of dandelions or varieties of wild and semi-wild plants can play an invaluable role in the terms of individual survival.

The shortage of flour, which is one the most important staples in the Bosnian diet, was as permanent feature for the entire duration of the armed conflict, even when the humanitarian aid started to come. During the existence of the SFRJ, flour had been mainly the matter of industrial production, however, in times of scarcity people developed strategies to produce it themselves. Old watermills were renovated and pretty much everything that could be turned into flour was ground in them. Suljagić describes the situation flowingly: ‘After we had used up all the reserves of the white flour, we soon turned to grinding “black” [meaning integral], then corn flour and after that came oats, which could never be ground quite enough but tolerable, except that it was bitter and it slit and hurt our throats; even corncobs and hazel catkins were ground in the watermills (Suljagić, 2005: 41). This information was also confirmed by Armin, who also lived in Srebrenica during the war – he explained to me that hazel catkins were used to make flour and this was common strategy of making substitute flour (informal conversation Armin). However, also my other research participants mentioned oats – they often referred to it pejoratively, because this was something that they would generally give to horses (Field Notes M.S.).

Moreover, Redžić et al. mentioned that lichens were also used as an additive to flour and they were generally an important source of nutrition (Redžić, Barudanović, Pilipović, 2010: 181-182). Lichens are fairly abundant in the area because of the clean air and they grow from summer to winter (Redžić, Barudanović, Pilipović, 2010: 181). Lichen products were important for both people and cattle (ibid.). Lichens or lichenized fungi are generally first soaked in cold water over night and subsequently boiled in order to reduce the

bitterness or acidity (ibid.). They can be used in stews, soups, mashes or as additives to various meals (ibid.). Redžić et al. emphasize that lichens were especially important in the winter when other foods were unavailable (Redžić, Barudanović, Pilipović, 2010: 182). Apart from their nutritive values, many lichens have medical properties and they can be used as prevention against many diseases because of their high anti-oxidant content (e.g. *Cetraria islandica*) (ibid.). Other important source of nutrition was mushrooms – significantly in Podrinje a greater number of varieties of mushrooms were used in comparison to Sarajevo (see Redžić, Barudanović, Pilipović, 2010 and Redžić, 2010).

Since Redžić's research in Podrinje was more focused on the use of mushrooms and fungi, it does not contain much information about other wild plants used for nutrition in this area (Redžić, 2010). However, on the basis of my research, I have recorded the use of other wild plants mentioned above such as hazel catkins (Field Notes M.S.). For illustration, I am going to also add information about the most commonly used wild plants which Redžić (2010) recorded in Sarajevo. In total, Redžić identified 91 species of wild and semi-wild plants and three species of fungus that were eaten during the siege of Sarajevo (Redžić, 2010). Some of the most frequently used semi-wild and wild plants during the Siege of Sarajevo were nettles, dandelions and coltsfoot (Redžić, 2010: 553-554). Nettles (but also coltsfoot) were often used to make *pita zeljanica* ("Bosnian pie") or were simply cooked as a side dish, used as a beverage or condiment (see Redžić, 2010: 560 but also Field Notes M.S.).

Coltsfoot leaves were also used for making *sarma*, but they also served as tobacco if there was none (see Redžić, 2010: 560). Also dandelion had multiple uses: the leaves would be again turned into a pie or they could be served fresh as a salad; the root could serve as a substitute for coffee and "honey could be made" from the flowers (see Redžić, 2010: 560, 562). Another important substitute of coffee was the chicory root. As Redžić writes: '*Chicory root was picked during whole vegetation season. Dried in sun and fried was used for preparation of "war coffee". This is important, since coffee was unavailable in Sarajevo*' (Redžić, 2010: 562). Even though the uses of these plants have not systematically mapped for the Podrinje region, they were most likely used in a similar manner. Overall, in Podrinje, including Srebrenica and Sarajevo, wild and semi-wild plants

significantly decreased the risk of malnutrition and avitaminosis (Redžić, Barudanović, Pilipović, 2010 and Redžić, 2010). Redžić et al. conclude with reference to other studies (Johl et al. 1995-96; Esimone and Adikwu 1999; Mattila et al. 2000; Petrovska et al. 2001; Storeheirer et al. 2002) that the available nutritive diversity of wild mushrooms, lichens and plants made it possible to survive in the area of Podrinje without serious health consequences (Redžić, Barudanović, Pilipović, 2010: 184). The examples given above also show that the familiarity with subsistence agriculture, “traditional” knowledge of the environment and the ability to improvise offer great advantages in the terms of survival.

5.3. The UN Safe Area, the Limitations of Humanitarian Aid and the Use of Food as a Weapon

While the majority of the civilians were surviving on very little, the armed groups of Srebrenica’s militia (later on, some of them became soldiers officially) were slightly better off as they had the possibility to seize some of the VRS and “Serb paramilitary” supplies, which included weapons and, most importantly, food. As I will show in the following section, food also came from village production in the area. The sources of food that remained were the ones of the above mentioned military formations linked to Belgrade and the villages, where prevalingly persons of “Bosnian Serb” origin lived as they were not affected by shelling and attacks by the JNA, VRS and other military groups and thus they could sustain agricultural production (see e.g. Suljagić, 2005, Nuhanović, 2015). It has been a well-known fact ever since Antiquity that the key to successful warfare and survival is access to food. The Srebrenica’s militias were also well-aware of this.

Likewise, Duijzings writes that since people were suffering from acute hunger, persons of “Bosnian Muslim” origin started to return to the villages in the surrounding area to search for food and they were joined by the numerous refugees from summer 1992 onward (Duijzings, 2002: 124). These groups did not include only men, but also women and children who went to search for food – they were referred to as *torbari* (bag-people) (ibid.). The Serb forces attempted to prevent these groups from scavenging by organizing ambushes and by laying mines in the countryside (ibid.). Many were killed (ibid.) however the pressure of starvation was greater than the fear of losing life.

The Srebrenica's militia was aware of the existence of *torbari* and thus groups of armed men at some point started to escort these civilians (Duijzings, 2002: 128). Duijzings claims that the organized food raids were led by Naser Orić, Zulfo Tursunović, Akif Ustić and Hakija Meholjic (but Meholjic did not always participate) (ibid.). Duijzings further notes that this proved an extremely effective tactic because the people of the “Bosnian Serbian” origin, even though they were much better armed, could not defend themselves against these masses of desperate hungry persons (Duijzings, 2002: 127). Duijzings gives following description: *‘They were terrified by such attacks, which usually started with the deafening noise of baking utensils being banged by women to create panic among the Serb defenders. The Serbs could take on small groups of armed soldiers, but hundreds, or even thousands, of torbari were invincible. They set up mines and booby-traps in fields, but were unable to stop the massive raids. Because such staggering numbers of torbari took part in the attacks, there were no real civilians in Srebrenica as far the Serbs were concerned’* (ibid.).

Here Duijzings touches on an important controversy that many still argue about until the present – who precisely is “a civilian”. In this dissertation, I suggest that the majority of them were civilians, as these people were generally not armed nor did they have proper military training or equipment. They did not want to get involved in fighting against armies – they were fighting for bare survival. When you live on the verge of starvation, under shelling and “face to face” with death, the mind seems to function differently and actions are to a large extent driven by the “instinct” to survive (see Hasanović, 2016, Nuhanović, 2015, Nuhanović, 2007 and Suljagić, 2005). However, amongst the people there were also groups of armed militias whose primary interest was to protect these people and those who were involved in fighting. This needs to be taken into account. Yet, there is a big difference between this type of warfare and the state sanctioned violence, systematic torture and elimination and ethnic cleansing carried out by the professional armies of VRS and paramilitary groups under the leadership of Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić and the support of Slobodan Milošević (for the interrelation between these people with the military operations see e.g. Honig and Both, 1997; Duijzings, 2002).

Besieging the cities was not the only strategy for starving out populations applied by the JNA and VRS. Nele from Klotjevac mentioned that they were intentionally shelling the crops that he had managed to grow in wartime (Interview Nele 2015). As he was hiding inside his house in order not to get hit, he watched his crop burn (ibid.). He said that they also targeted the cattle. He said: *'It's a terrible sound listening to the cattle scream, when it's being burnt alive'* (ibid.). The described situation also shows that food or, more precisely, the lack of it can be used as a tool of control and/or an attempt to “wipe out” the entire targeted populations. As Collinson and Macbeth have argued the intentional restriction of food by either of the sides of conflict is a “weapon of war” (Collinson and Macbeth, 2014: 2). Concentrating and besieging the targeted populations is one of the mechanisms of eventually starving them out. Ultimately, those who are denied access to food can use violent behavior towards those who deny them access to it who are thus defined as the oppressor.

A few weeks before Srebrenica was pronounced a Safe Area on February 19, 1993 the UNHCR (The UN Refugee Agency) report describes the situation in town as follows: *“According to our findings there is no food in the city. The inhabitants haven't eaten properly for months and they are living on wheat husks and roots, so many of them die from hunger and exhaustion”* (Honig and Both, 1997: 106). Not long after that, at the beginning of March 1993, Supreme Commander of the UN forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, General Philippe Morillon, arrived at Srebrenica (see Honig and Both, 1997: 109-113; Hasanović, 2016: 41; Suljagić, 2005: 41). Honig and Both write on March 11 1993, that Morillon was granted the permission by the VRS to enter, however, this was seen as an attempt to trick him as they sent him down a forest path which was mined (Honig and Both, 1997: 109). Despite minor incidents, Morillon arrived and he negotiated with Orić about demilitarization (Honig and Both, 1997: 110).

During this stay in Srebrenica, Morillon was “famously” prevented to leave by the locals and the children who surrounded his vehicle and did not want to let him go – this was organized by a local leader of the “Women’s League” Fatima Huseinović (see Honig and Both, 1997: 111). That was the moment when he promised the protection of the enclave by the UN (ibid.). Suljagić remarks that during the visit Morillon was offered

bread made out of hazel catkins to show him what people trapped in the enclave survived on (Suljagić, 2005: 41). Suljagić said Morillon looked a little bit ashamed as he answered: *'It's healthy and good for digestion'* (ibid.).

On April 16, 1993, Srebrenica was officially pronounced a “UN Safe Area” by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 819 (see Honig and Both, 1997: 127). Honig and Both claim that this was confusing for UNPROFOR (the United Nations Protection Force) itself, therefore Generals Morillon and Wahlgren organized a meeting with General Mladić (VRS) and General Halilović (ARBiH/ Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina) (see Honig and Both, 1997: 128). In the end they agreed that a Canadian peace force would be able to enter Srebrenica and help to demilitarize the zone and also 500 heavily wounded people could be evacuated by helicopter (see Honig and Both, 1997: 128, 129). As Honig and Both claim further, the arrival of the Canadians (on April, 17 1993) temporarily stopped the shelling of the city, however the Canadians had only 143 men whose heaviest weapons were 50mm machine guns which logically did not help to build much trust amongst the people in the enclave (see Honig and Both, 1997: 130). So as they claim, the local militias handed over weapons but not all of them (see Honig and Both, 1997: 131). They also kept their presence within the enclave despite the protests of VRS and the UN (see Honig and Both, 1997: 155-156). After not even a year, at the beginning of March 1994, the Canadian UNPROFOR soldiers were replaced by a Dutch Battalion (Air Mobile Brigade of the Royal Netherlands Armed Forces) which consisted of about 570 men (see Honig and Both, 1997: 153).



Picture 29: The former military base of the UNPROFOR Dutchbat in Potočari (Photo M.S., July 2013).

Under the UN protection, the reason for the severe malnourishment of the persons in the enclave was very much a result of checks and confiscation of food by the VRS. As Honig and Both write, the humanitarian convoys were often stopped and searched (see Honig and Both, 1997: 153-154). Frequently they were returned (ibid.). The VRS were making sure that there was only a bare minimum of supplies reaching the enclave since they were well aware of the fact that a modern army cannot function without them (ibid.). From time to time, the VRS would also hold the Dutch soldiers as hostage to scare them and also to prevent NATO airstrikes (ibid.). As a result, it was commonly accepted that the VRS would take part of the supplies from food convoys. Also Tim confirmed that the VRS would commonly stop the convoys and also UNHCR vehicles and take half of the supplies (Interview with Tim). The VRS would often argue that the UN did not have proper clearance even if they did (ibid.). They would take medications, diesel and everything else they needed (ibid.): *'If Serbs said no food, there was no food'*, Tim remarked (ibid.). He said that when he came at the beginning of 1995, he believed that the UN would help them, but he was part of a convoy which was stopped by the VRS and to his surprise the responsible UN commanders told him to let them take what they want (ibid.).

Honig and Both argue that Bill Clinton (president of the US at the time) suggested airdrops in order to resolve the convoy issue, thus from March to June 1993 about 1900 tons of food and medicine were dropped around Srebrenica (Honig and Both, 1997: 106). However, the UN saw the operation as possibly problematic since it was giving the VRS a sign that Washington wanted to stay away (ibid.). On an everyday basis, the airdrops had other problems that are not generally discussed. The airdrops were likely to be wasted if the parachute did not open, which supposedly happened quite frequently. They were inconvenient for the receivers as they were thrown at night into surroundings that were hard to reach. Moreover, it was never certain where the aid was going to land and thus could be potentially life endangering. In his memoirs Hasanović describes these issues and claims to have witnessed at least one death due to the airdrops.

Hasanović writes: *‘People were desperate for food; there were no humanitarian convoys, and everyone was on the verge of dying from hunger. Then the international community decided to drop food from the air for people of Srebrenica. The drops were at night, in the forest around Srebrenica. I decided to go to search for food, because my family had totally run out of food supplies.*

My friend Elvir and I had decided to go together to try to seize food. We had witnessed a lot of people going to a hill in the old city in the evening and we also headed there. We came to the forest where a lot of people had gathered, waiting for the sound of planes. I was looking for a huge tree to protect myself from the falling parachutes of food, and when my friend Elvir saw me under a tree he made fun of me by saying that I was a coward.

I heard the sound of the planes and I saw the parachutes with the food coming down to that place in the woods where we were. Suddenly I heard the terrible sound of a parachute that had not opened up in the air, and it was falling rapidly. It weighed several tons and the noise was awful. Suddenly I heard my friend Elvir shivering and crying, because he was too afraid that the unopened parachute of food of food would fall on him and kill him. I told him why I wanted to hide under the tree, and I asked him, “Who is the coward now?” He tried to push me away from the tree that I was hiding under but there

was not room for both of us. Then just a few meters from us a cargo of food fell on a 16-year-old boy, killing the young man. On this occasion we did not take any food, terrified to death. My friend Elvir was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and he told me he would never go again to search for food.' (Hasanović, 2016: 38-39). On another occasion, Hasan looked for humanitarian aid that had been dropped the night before, he claims that many of the parachutes did not open up and food was destroyed. He wrote: *'I saw ruined cheese that was stuck in the surrounding trees'* Hasanović, 2016: 39).

Honig and Both emphasize that, several months before the Fall of Srebrenica in July 1995, not even the Dutch soldiers were getting enough supplies for themselves, because food and diesel were being confiscated (Honig and Both, 1997: 159-160). At the beginning of June 1995, a doctor from one of the battalions even writes an alarming report about the state of health of the soldiers (Honig and Both, 1997: 160). Tim, a former Dutchbat III soldier, also said that they did not really have enough food for themselves several months before the fall (Interview Tim). He said that in the last 3 or 4 months of his tour he lost about 15 kg and also his colleagues were weak and did not have the strength to do the job (ibid.). Tim said that in the period when there were no convoys, they would only get cans and he especially hated the ones containing ravioli (ibid.).

Thus, despite UN protection, the living conditions in the enclave did not improve much (Field Notes M.S.). One of the main reasons for this was the intentional blocking and confiscating of the humanitarian aid (see Honig and Both, 1997) by the VRS, as well as the nature of the humanitarian aid itself (see Redžić, 2010). Cathie Carmichael mentions a British officer, Garry Donaldson, who visited Srebrenica before the genocide in 1995 (Carmichael, 2003: 84). Carmichael writes: *"He was reminded of the Warsaw ghetto: the quiet hungry eyes of the children crouching around the food distribution points, the vulnerable old men and women pushed to the back of the queue by the strongest, the figures combing the rubbish dump for food. He, like many of the foreign observers, was numbed by his inability to prevent this humanitarian disaster. He could only think 'the sadness of the poverty and deprivation was overwhelming'"* (ibid.).

During my fieldwork I met former Dutch soldier Tim, who was serving in Dutchbat III under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Karremans. Tim mentioned that people from the enclave would come to the fence of the UN Dutchbat hoping to get something (Interview Tim). Especially children would follow them around. He said: *‘If I had something to eat – here and there a convoy or I got a package from my parents, family or friends and when there was some food in it like chocolate... I gave to children... For example yellow M&Ms...When we walked around the surrounding area, the children were always following us and called: Mr. Bonbon, Mr. Bonbon... I had small pack of M&M, so I gave one to each child. The next time the children come back to the fence they call: Mister, look, I still have it!... At home in Holland, try that. When I give to my son a pack of yellow M&M, he’s eight now, the bag is empty in ten seconds. And here: Mister look, I still have it... I have to tell them, eat it, tomorrow you will get another one. Eat it! (ibid.).⁶⁰*



Picture 30: A painting made by former Dutchbat member depicting a Dutch soldier (“Mr. Bon Bon”) who gives local children sweets (Photo M.S., August 2014).

In his novel, Suljagić remarks that one of the most serious issue in the enclave was the lack of salt (Suljagić, 2005: 61). This was a problem already in 1992, but the situation persisted even after Srebrenica became a UN Safe Area (ibid.). He claims that every

⁶⁰Also Honig and Both mentioned that the children called the soldier Mister Bon Bon (see Honig and Both, 1997: 157)

convoy which was supposed to bring the promised salt was turned back by the VRS (ibid.). Salt was sold on a black market but its price rose to 50 German Marks per kg (ibid.). Therefore it was unavailable for the impoverished starving populations. People tried to even collect the “black” unrefined salt that was used for salting roads and cook it over and over (see Suljagić, 2005: 61-62). Here, it should be mention that salt deficiency (hyponatremia) leads to serious health issues and result in seizures and coma (The Free Dictionary by Farlex, Medical Dictionary, Salt Deficiency).

Tim also spoke about how desperate the people trapped in the enclave were. With a disturbed look in his face, he stated: *‘If I wanted, but I didn’t do it, I could have a Bosnian girl at the time for one bag of sugar... You know the small one’* (Interview Tim). *‘That really happened?’* I asked. *‘Yes, it happened...’*, Tim uttered and continued explaining: *‘Fathers and brothers came to the fence and they brought their daughters and sister and asked through the fence: Do you want her? It will cost you sugar, salt or something similar. In those days people would do anything because of food. It happened but I didn’t do it. Everything I had, I gave away... Here food had an invaluable price. It was like gold’* (Interview Tim).

In July 1995, the town suffered a heavy military offensive conducted by the VRS (Honig and Both, 1997: 22-92). The town fell in the afternoon on July 11, 1995 (Honig and Both, 1997: 52). After the defeat of the town, Ratko Mladić made a statement for the television stating that the moment of revenge against the ‘Turks’ had finally come and that Srebrenica was now “Serbian” – it was a gift to the "Serbian nation” (see Carmichael, 2003: 33-34). Once the town had fallen into the hands of VRS, deportations of the refugees followed and at the same time several thousands of men unsuccessfully attempted to escape through the forest (see Honig and Both, 1997: 53-92) but were killed by the VRS.

The massacre of the men and boys of prevailingly “Bosnian Muslim” origin has been well described (see Honig and Both, 1997: 53-92). The Report on the Number of Missing and Dead from Srebrenica offered by ICTY summarizes these tragic events as follows: *‘When the enclave of Srebrenica fell on 11 July 1995 a number of men tried to escape by walking through the forest, and many of them were killed on the way or after surrendering*

or being captured. Others were separated from their families in Potočari and later executed. Several women, children and old men were also killed’ (Brunborg and Urdal, 2000: 1). Analysis of the mass graves exhumations, demographic expertise and the testimonies of the victims and the accused led the ICTY to the conclusion that approximately between 11 and 19 July 1995 the Bosnian-Serb Army (VRS) and other forces executed between 7,000 and 8,000 civilians or prisoners of the war (POW) — the majority of them were men and boys of Bosnian Muslim origin (ICTY, Facts about Srebrenica)⁶¹. According to the findings of ICTY, the massacre and subsequent cover-up operations were planned and well organized and this is precisely the reason why it was classified as an act of genocide (ibid.).



Picture 31: Interior of the former military base of the UNPROFOR Dutchbat in Potočari (Photo M.S., July 2013).

⁶¹Estimations of the numbers of victims of Srebrenica genocide differ and are in a certain sense a controversy. I use the information given by the ICTY. However, the number of victims might be higher. For example, an association of Mothers of Srebrenica claims that they counted around 11,000. In my research findings, I cannot find the speculations about much lower numbers of victims than what has been stated by ICTY and ICMP a relevant argument.

At the end of July 2014, I was helping Nura with the preparations for Bajram. I was mostly preoccupied with cooking. We prepared many dishes such as bread, *sarma*, *pita* and *baklava* (Field notes M.S.). However, what caught my attention that Bajram was halva. One type in particular. Nura made semolina halva which is a sweet dish of oriental origin that generally consists of flour, butter/margarine, sugar, water and nuts. Flour is roasted with fat on a pan and when the mixture turns golden, hot sugar syrup (*agda*) is added. The ingredients form a flexible ball which is divided by spoon into small servings and decorated with nuts. It is moderate in appearance but it smells sweet and seductive. Nura commented that when the aroma of halva lingers in the room, it is the "real Bajram" (Field notes M.S.).

The festival and the preparation and consumption of certain foods invoked memories. It was in that context when Nura and other family members spoke more frequently about the war and the ones they had lost. At one point, Nura also mentioned that they say that halva attracts the souls of the dead (Fieldnotes M.S.)⁶². This remark made me shiver a little: only the day before she had spoken to me for the first time about having lost her husband.

Nura and her family live in a house at the very end of the southern part of the city. This is also the direction from which the VRS, led by Ratko Mladić, entered the city. When it was clear that the town was defeated, she and her mother Ramiza took all five children and they went to seek refuge in Potočari like the other remaining civilians in the town. She was 35 years old (Portal E-Srebrenica). Her youngest children, the twins, were about two months old. They had to carry them in their arms. The distance that they had to walk was about 8 km. While they were waiting along with the other refugees at the former UN Dutch Base, a former Battery Factory, for deportation, Nura's husband, father of her children, was killed by the VRS.

Time passed by and Nura's husband did not come back. They were waiting and hoping. However, when the first mass graves were discovered, Nura lost all hope. Around

⁶²This belief is probably linked to the beliefs common in Turkey. Dr. Ayşe Çağlar Univ.-Prof. explained to me that in Turkey the semolina halva is known also as "halva of the dead". Its preparation is part of the funeral rite. However, this is not practiced in BiH but the belief that "the souls of the dead" are attracted by the smell of halva is probably related.

that time the ICMP (International Commission on Missing Persons) introduced a DNA-based identification program which had been developed for these purposes. They refused to believe that he was dead until 2007, when his remains were identified. Azra writes in her autobiography that the painful years of wartime and especially her father's death took her away her childhood and she lost any sense of home. She is never going to feel the same in Srebrenica again.

She wrote: 'Some, like my father stayed in the woods. They've become shehids - meat, food for animals and the victims of the savages. Srebrenica is now barren and horrible. Everything got fucked up. My pine trees are no more, some burned them, cut them, took them away, he took my little childhood house, which I once really liked and cared for. Now it only exists in my heart, without the pine trees, branches; there are no traces that it ever existed. There is no more green, big meadow, where we played as children. It turned into the forest, ferns and thorns. I stop believing that it ever existed...' (Azra, Autobiography)

6. Conclusion: “Ko sije glad, žanje bijes”/“Who Sows Hunger, Harvests Rage”

During my fieldwork in Bosnia I happened to be reading Dreyfus’s and Rabinow’s *“Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics”* (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 2002). Of course, I kept comparing the statements to the food situation in Srebrenica. At first, I did not see clear connections between food and Foucault but after about six of months of fieldwork, I became increasingly convinced that what sex was for Foucault food represented for me. I was not the first one to think that. Chloë Taylor explores food as the “new sex” with reference to Probyn’s argument (1999) against Foucault that food, in the modern West, is a more significant marker of subjectivity than sex (Taylor, 2010: 76). Taylor herself does not prioritize either sex or food; she explains that: ‘...it is not so much that food has replaced sex as our privileged form of self-constitution, or the other way around, but that gastronomy and eroticism have become intertwined’ (ibid.). This could be indeed interesting for further enquiry and can be useful while theorizing about some of the aspects of consumer consumption.

My thoughts circled around both sex and food as the means of population control in general in relation to Foucault’s idea of bio-technological power and the use of sex (or, in my case, food) as a tool of administrative control (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 2002: 221). As also Zwart suggests when pursuing the topic of “food and Foucault”: ‘...we can still think about human subjectivity in the food domain as an effect of technologies and arrangements of power’ (Zwart, 2005: 36). Here I would like to close this PhD dissertation with a last story from my fieldwork – that of so-called February protests in BiH in 2014.



Picture 32: Memorial Cemetery in Potočari – July, 11 2015 (Photo M.S., July 2015).

6.1. “Revolutionary Pancakes” and “the National Strike Against the Corrupted Homeland”

On February 8, 2014, I got up after only couple of hours of sleep and descended from my apartment at the fifth floor to “check out” the damage on the Building of Cantonal Government in Sarajevo. I did not have to go far – it was just across the road. Dunja and Sead, whom I had known from Srebrenica and who arrived the night before from Ilidža to give me “psychological support”, were still asleep. The streets were closed for traffic and order was maintained by heavy duty police cordons. Apart from that, everything seemed to be the same as any other day. Cafés, shops and tobacco stands had reopened, people were passing by individually or in groups, just like any other day. However, no one could resist having a peek at the burnt out governmental building – now cordoned off by tape and guarded by police. I walked over to the nearest newspaper store and bought the *Dnevni Avaz* (trashy yet popular newspaper) and a soft pack of *Drina* (iconic Bosnian cigarettes). The front page headlines read: “National Strike Against the Corrupted Homeland”.⁶³ I returned home and made “revolutionary pancakes” for breakfast...

⁶³ *Dnevni Avaz*, 8. 2. 2014. “Narodni udar na korumpiranu vlast” (National Strike Against the Corrupted Homeland)



Picture 33: “Revolutionary pancakes” and “the national strike against the corrupted homeland” (Photomontage M.S., February 2014).

Before the protests broke out I was busy with fieldwork activities and volunteering with children at EMMAUS Potočari – a boarding school and day care center. One evening when I returned to Srebrenica, I noticed that people were paying unusual amount of attention to the news. On February 6 there were two items of “breaking news”. I wrote down few quick remarks into my field diary: The two “hottest” pieces of news from today were: the first one concerned Naser Orić and Hakija Meholjić (leaders of Srebrenica defense in the last war) –Serbia was demanding their extradition. Naser appeared on TV. “Hush,” snapped Sanela, the waitress and turned the volume up. The *kafić*⁶⁴ where I was watching TV was a place where mainly Bosniaks gathered. Many of them were Naser’s and Hakija’s supporters and they sharply dismissed the extradition of the two for the “war crimes”.

The second wave of excitement was sparked by the events in Tuzla – the cantonal capital in North-East Bosnia. Mass protests were triggered by the outrageous mass layoff of factory workers, who mobilized themselves and “flooded” the streets. Gordy explained their motives using the example of salt factory SODASO to illustrate how the privatization is closely related to the local unemployment issue (Gordy, 2014). He explains that: ‘The

⁶⁴ *Kafić* in Bosnia refers to a small café, where generally food is not served.

local chemical factory SODASO used to produce 80 % of the table salt consumed in Yugoslavia, 208,000 tonnes of it in 1991. By 1999 it was producing 21,000 tonnes. Privatized in 2002, by 2013 the company employed only 422 people, down from 2500 in 1998. That local government building that was at first defended by police with batons and tear gas, then overrun by citizens and then set ablaze? That's the former SODASO headquarters, being used by the local government as the company languishes in receivership. It is probably not too difficult to imagine the anger attracted by a building that has come to symbolize how once a big functioning industry provided a livelihood for people, and now a bigger functionless bureaucracy lives off them' (ibid.).

The events were broadcasted by all of the TV channels and were closely followed in living rooms and cafés. The images on TV reminded me of the scenes from relatively recent protests in Greece. Stones and eggs were flying in the air. The footage shocked me. Should I be afraid, I wondered? The protest had started around February 4 in Tuzla but it seemed to be getting more and more serious every day. Later in the evening on February 6 at my “second home abroad” the youngest sister said that she heard about a group made up of about eight people who informally organized “the event” (unconfirmed information). According to her someone from Srebrenica was going too. She admitted that she also considering going to support the protest. In my head I was reconciling whether violence is a necessary means of struggle for the “right” to work – a future – a life? Now the demonstrations spread to several bigger cities – that was new. Even in Sarajevo, but it did not seem to be too serious so far...

My “crew” (aka “research participants”) toyed with the idea of going to Tuzla. If they went, so would I. Amongst the locals the protests were passionately supported. That day even the mother – generally smiley and kind – uttered: *‘If I had money for the bus to Tuzla, I would go and throw stones, too!’* I felt the chilling sensation of goose bumps. I sent a message to my own mother, saying not to believe anything on the news (in case they covered the uprisings which seemed unlikely, but just to be sure) and that: “everything was ok”. Some of the locals joked that Srebrenica was now the “safest” city in BiH as the police was bored and watched over everyone and on the top of it and Dodik (the president

of the “RS”/*Republika Srpska*), would simply not allow bigger protests in the RS and certainly not in Srebrenica.

On Friday 7 February, I decided to go to Sarajevo to see what was happening. Friend of mine, Ahmet, was in town and he offered a lift in the car along with his colleague from the ICMP (International Commission on Missing Persons). Before the journey, I was drinking coffee and smoking *Drinas* in the *kafić* next to the mosque, joking about going to photograph the protests. Locals were enthusiastic and they supported my idea. I promised some good photos. We said good bye and I was off. The atmosphere in the car was jovial – we chatted, joked and sang loudly along to Dubioza songs playing from the USB stick. As we started descending from the plateau of Romania, Ahmet received a message from Paulina – a journalist for BH Dani at the time – with a photo of governmental building in Sarajevo in flames. We grew silent. Later, we found out that the protests had escalated into violent clashes with the police and the buildings of cantonal governments in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica and Mostar had been set on fire by radical elements.

The inner city of Sarajevo resembled an “apocalyptic movie scene”. There was a strange silence, black smoke in the sky, the absence of traffic – fear and confusion “hanging” in the air. They dropped me off at the first blockade on Maršala Tita Street. They had both experienced the 1990s war and hence did not seem disturbed by the burning houses. I stopped at the bench to take my camera out. A lady in her fifties observed me and said in Bosnian: ‘*You cannot go there, they are burning the building and throwing stones!*’ I replied that I knew but that I lived that direction anyway and had no choice. I wished her all the best and continued walking. Then I saw a large crowd of by standers staring into flames and a smaller part of radicals actively burning and destroying the presidency building. One of them, wearing a balaclava, yelled at me: ‘*Do not take pictures!*’ I took one anyway and “intuitively” got lost in the crowd.



Picture 34: February Protests 2014 – Building of Cantonal Government in Sarajevo aflame (Photo M.S., February 2014).

Picture 35: February Protests 2014 – Burning police cars (Photo M.S., February 2014).

I reached the city couple of hours after the demonstrators had dispersed the police and “anarchy” overruled the centre of Sarajevo. The main part of the riots was over and therefore the usual mob of journalists was already gone. Denis Džidić described the situation before my arrival in the Guardian as follows: ‘...as fire raged through the presidency building and hundreds of people hurled stones, sticks and whatever else they could lay their hands on to feed the blaze. Police used rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannon trying to disperse the crowd. Buildings and cars were also burning in downtown Sarajevo and riot police chased protesters’ (Džidić, 2014). When I reached Sarajevo, the majority of the crowd consisted of people simply standing around, smoking cigarettes, staring at the flames. Some were just bystanders. However, a smaller group actively burning the building must have been somehow organized – it is technically impossible to set a massive building, over a century old, aflame with a box of matches – at least some petrol is necessary. Hence, I would not define the protests as just “mob vandalism”; the situation was far more complex.

6.2. Poverty, Embodiment of Hunger and the February Protests 2014

Many of both the local and international media, along with other experts, explained the protests in a broad sense as a reaction to high unemployment (over 40 %), pretty much non-functioning government and its ineffective structure and corruption amongst the political representatives. These were the main concerns, verbalized by different groups or individual protesters (some more active and some less) that I often heard at the demonstrations. For example at the (non-violent) protest on February 10, 2014 in front of

the *Alipašina džamija* (the Ali Pasha Mosque) in Sarajevo, three of the many banners said: “*EU please help to change these scammers*”, “*I am Sejdić and Finci*” (reference to the constitution of BiH breaking convention of human rights) and loosely translated – ‘*You come at us with Lagumdžija (Bosnian politician from Social Democratic Party), we come at you with stones*’ (in original ‘*Vi nas Lagumdžijom, mi vas kamenom*’).

In this sense the protests may be seen, with a big dose of exaggeration, as *Dnevni Avaz* puts it, as a “national strike on the corrupted homeland”. Damir Arsenijević sharply comments on the country's socio-economic situation when he writes for the Guardian: ‘*By maintaining a dysfunctional, nepotistic and parasitic bureaucratic power structure, local and international politicians have exhausted the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina for almost 22 years. Out of rage and despair, those who have been forced to rummage through dustbins to survive, and to give bribes for basic services, have finally stood up to demand change*’ (Arsenijević, 2014).

What becomes clear from Arsenijević’s proclamation (2014) is that the protests did not just emerge “out of the blue” rather they were an expression of undesirable situation that arose as an outcome of the war and was linked to current political-economic and social situation in the country. Arsenijević sharply states: ‘*Ours is a life that has survived war and genocide, but has been brutalised by the corrupt privatisation of public companies; a life that now only dreams of fleeing the country to avoid dying in solitude and hunger*’ (Arsenijević, 2014). I suggest that ideas similar to these described above by Arsenijević were also the reason why the protests were so widely supported all around the country, particularly in the countryside. The majority of the supporters refused violence, but the call for change seemed omnipresent. Džidić cites Dunja Tadić from Tuzla who simply for The Guardian: ‘*You have really hungry people who decided to do something*’ (Džidić, 2014).

Another interesting feature of the protests included its precise target – police cars, governmental buildings and their equipment. For sure a couple of technical devices got stolen “here and there”, but most of everything else that was not “authorities-related” stayed intact. The radical core of protesters burnt mainly documents from the BiH archive

in Sarajevo. Džidić mentions a student Mirna Kovacević who recollects the situation in Tuzla: *‘The people entered the government building, they climbed to the fourth floor and started to throw files, computers, chairs from buildings. They burned parts of the building’* (Džidić, 2014). Jaroslav Klepal explains this in terms of an “attack against documents” which was aimed in a broader sense against: *‘Power that inhabits the governmental buildings and their offices, card indexes, telephone exchange, printers and computers. Indignant demonstrators burned and threw away files with records, office desks and chairs, computer monitors: the instruments of power of corrupted managers of the state’* (Klepal, 2014).

Eric Gordy suggests that as “every political problem in BiH” the protests go back to the Dayton Agreement as well; this eventually led to the rise of what he calls a “Dayton political class,” that established *‘an enduring model of officials who believe that citizens exist to serve them, and act on that belief’* (Gordy, 2014). Gordy’s radical, brief, yet, in my opinion, fitting depiction, does not leave us far from Dreyfus’s and Rabinow’s understanding of Foucault when they write that the idea of a state having its own legitimacy and its own target leads to intensified attempts of the state to interfere with the lives of individuals; thus, the importance of human life itself, in terms of political power, grows (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 2002: 219). The workings of these highly complex political techniques for expanding their power result in a type of animalization of humans and most importantly, as Dreyfus and Rabinow warn, its historical emergence was encouraged by the possibility of protecting life, but at the same time also by the opportunity of conducting a holocaust (ibid.). Thus, precisely in this sense, the idea of humanistic discourse concerned with the “health and well-being” of the population is also related to terrifying modern methods of mass extinction...

The reaction of those who were blamed - the “political elites” – was rather interesting – Paulina Janusz offers an interesting insight in her critique of the local media coverage of the events titled “The propaganda machine in the service of the regime” (Janusz, 2014). She argues that burning of the BiH archive helped to bring the theme of destroying the culture into the discussion (ibid.). However, as Janusz points out, *‘the lowest blow in the media campaign against the demonstrators will be remembered as*

the drug story. The news that 'police confiscated 12kg of drugs' during the protest first appeared on Saturday at 1PM on klix.ba, and was taken up by all of the web portals. The information was "incidentally" included in the press release of the Sarajevo cantonal police with statistics on arrests. To make sure, it was not denied until the evening, but by then the damage had already been done. By then also Mirsad Kebo, the vice-president of FBiH, had already told journalists: "I did not see any fighters, I did not see serious people, I did not see invalids. I saw some people on drugs," while on the street interviews on TV1 (dedicated entirely to condemnation of vandalism) spontaneously appeared passersby who spoke of "kids on drugs". Nermin Nikšić went so far as to say, during his appearance on Face TV that somebody was passing out pills to the demonstrators' (ibid.). Personally, I did not see any drugs at the protests – the whole claim seemed rather absurd. It seemed more like the politicians' and media rhetoric simply trying to suggest that these people must have been unpredictable, dangerous and "crazy". And as for vandalism, there were no robberies or mass looting of shopping malls that there had been in the London riots in 2011, even though there certainly could have been.

Thus, at first, the radical core of protesters were tagged as "drug-addicts" and "hooligans" and after about a week the rhetoric of terrorism was applied to them by the authorities and repeated by the mainstream media (author's field notes). The day after the peak of the violence was over and the streets of Sarajevo were flooded by cordons of heavily equipped police. However, the demonstrations continued on a daily basis for another several months. The first month, the protesters blocked the traffic in Sarajevo centre for several hours every day – previously busy roads turned temporarily into pedestrian zones. After that the authorities no longer allowed this practice. As there was no clear intellectual leadership, the protests, unfortunately, did not seem to "bare much fruit". The anger cooled and diffused, some politicians resigned, the government "fell" yet the questions remained unanswered and serious socio-economic problems unresolved.

On February 10, 2014, Slavoj Žižek proclaimed in the Guardian that: '*Protesters were carrying three flags side by side – Bosnian, Serb and Croat, brought together by a radical demand for justice*' (Žižek, 2014). As he suggests, the people of Bosnia have finally understood who their true enemy is – not the other ethnic groups but the nationalist

elites (ibid.). This realization, as Žižek suggests, gave new actuality to the Titoist motto of “brotherhood and unity” (ibid.). It is true that all three flags flapped above the heads of demonstrating crowd and Žižek was also right that it was an upheaval against the elites, but from my observations mainly against the political elites. Generally, the critique was aimed at the new unequal, post-socialist, post-war division of the country; poor and unemployed citizens sent a message to affluent corrupted authorities. After all, only governmental buildings and police cars targeted were (with few exceptions).

In this perspective, Žižek’s “new relevance” of the slogan “brotherhood and unity” or the attempts to title these events the “Bosnian Spring” are far more optimistic and due to poor familiarity with the situation “on the ground” – the everyday life struggle of the majority of the people of Bosnia. Gordy fittingly comments on this when he emphasizes: ‘...it is also not any kind of spring. It is February’ (Gordy, 2014). Perhaps, the ethnic identities were temporarily put aside, but they were certainly not forgotten. Thus, contemporary BiH has to deal not only with outbreaks of nationalism but also more increasingly with issues of poverty and unequal access to power. As the graffiti sprayed on the Building of Cantonal Government in Sarajevo reminds everyone who passes by: “Who sows hunger, harvests rage!”



Picture 36: Graffiti made by the protesters: “Ko sije glad, žanje bijes” (Who Sows Hunger, Harvests Rage) (Photo M.S., February 2014).

6.3. A Visit to the Psychiatric Ward in Koševo Hospital

In the afternoon of February 8, I headed to the Koševo hospital psychiatric ward to see Emir, bring him cigarettes and tell him about the riots. In the psychiatric ward visiting room, this man, “officially” declared “crazy”, seemed quite enthusiastic about the protests. I had brought a laptop with me as I wanted to play a Bosnian rap song by Adnan Hamidović aka Frenkie for Emir. He had not seen the video clip before and what Frenkie was rapping about seemed to be fitting scarily. Some of the other patients watched as well out of curiosity. Most of the room broke out in laughter, a male nurse walked passed to check what was going on. Emir and I went a bit “nuts” and rapped along:

‘Industry owners suck at nature like leeches and they tell us to go and buy power-saving light bulbs. Also I would like to go to the seaside, but my wallet says I can’t. The bourgeoisie and their nationality, capital and permanent occupation... We are the ones we were waiting for, no one else will come, nothing falls from the sky. Dayton (Agreement) burns, Laktaši⁶⁵ burns, they burn, we burn, Tuzla burns, fucking fire – even the Panonian lakes, gardens, cafés, theatres and the artists burn. “B” burns and “H” burns, you burn and so I burn...’⁶⁶

To conclude, in this article I have elaborated on the current larger socio-economical contexts in BiH focusing on the topic of food and the 2014 February protest in BiH. I also tried to show that the studies of social life can be useful when approaching complex issues and impacts of macrostructural forces on local communities. The special significance of food stems from the fact that its primary function is the nourishment of the body, therefore, the assurance of survival.

In this dissertation I have proposed that food does not function as a tool of distinction only in terms of individual and collective identities, but more importantly also within the contemporary global food system (based on capitalist ideas of liberal economy). In the

⁶⁵ *Laktaši* is a town near Banja Luka.

⁶⁶ Loose translation of Frenkie’s song *Gori* (It’s burning), which was released in 2011 (meaning stays intact). Perhaps, it would be good to note at this point that, I, personally refuse violence and I was certainly not singing the song to legitimize burning of governmental buildings.

second case, very complicated political techniques seem increasingly to dictate who is going to eat what; in this sense food serves as a powerful tool of social distinction. Nally argues that: *‘There is ample evidence to suggest that when markets move against poor communities the consequences can be deadly... The internationalization of global markets and the financialisation of the food system in particular, mean that acute food crises could become more regular and more difficult to diagnose... Among many other things, ‘globalization’ means that life-and-death decisions of a terrifying scale are woven into the very fabric of international economic relations’* (Nally, 2011b).

Since the Dayton Agreement, the above increasingly applies to Bosnia and Hercegovina as well, as I attempted to show through fragments of ethnographic situations, academic literature, media representation and a few photographs. In this sense, the protests in February 2014 can be read as an expression of anger of the marginalized against the rich political elites and certain features of the contemporary global food systems. The given example of food and the February protests seems to underpin what Friedman has written in a slightly different context (Friedman, 2002). Friedman warns that: *‘the reality of cosmopolitan existence may not be a wonderful bazaar of mixed-up differences for the great majority of people. It may be closer to the story of Ridley Scott’s Bladerunner, a world that is divided into ‘ethnically’ differentiated classes (however mixed), one in which skyscraper dwelling elites can enjoy the variety of the world by consuming its differences in the form of objects, recipes and menus that can now be recombined by cross-cooking, but where the world becomes increasingly divided in conflictual terms as one descends into the depths of competitive poverty where potentially deadly boundaries are everywhere’* (Friedman, 2002: 34).

The protests seemed to be a reaction to intensifying economic pushes which can be traced in many references to hunger and desperate political, economic and social situation in contemporary BiH. Along with Gordy (2014) and others, I suggest that most of these problems stem from the Dayton Agreement that transformed the country into a non-functioning state that was not able to provide for the well-being of its citizens. After all these explanations, I presume, it should be clear that the protests could not have been just a case of “crazy war-veterans,” “hooligans,” “vandals” and “junkies”. Most of these claims

seem to be at the core of what Janusz (2014) said: the political parties and media in BiH, in this sense, had been united against the demonstrators. In other words, the wealthy political elites attempted to mask the reason why the protests were so widely supported – the questions of social inequality, oppression and hunger.



Picture 37: “Happy Easter” – map of post-Dayton division of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Drawing M.S., combined technique, spring 2014).

6.4. Closing Remarks

In this PhD dissertation I have attempted to bring a closer insight into the topic of everyday strategies of food production, preparation and consumption in Srebrenica (BiH) within the context of the war in the 1990s in former Yugoslavia, mainly within a scope of sociocultural anthropology. Apart from everyday technologies of producing and consuming

food my focus was on the economic, political and sociohistorical contexts in which the activities are located. The overall aim was to offer an interpretation of current foodways observed in the locality with a focus on social change the region has undergone, namely the breakup of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) in 1991 and the subsequent violent armed conflict (from 1992-1995 in BiH) and the economic transition of BiH to a global neo-liberal market system, constitute a major historical conjuncture within which these changes have taken place. This is a relevant area of study within the subdiscipline of anthropology of food. As Mintz (1995) has pointed out, the reasons and mechanisms of food change have not been satisfyingly clarified.

In order to be able to follow this complex set of relations, I attempted to problematize the conventional understanding of “locality” on a theoretical and methodological basis. I have argued using the example of Srebrenica that the idea of locality cannot be simply understood as a place and, drawing on Feldman (2011), that participant observation is not enough to provide detailed comprehension of these processes. This is also the reason why I decided to implement some theoretical updates from the subdisciplines of transnational migration and forced displacement studies and also the reason why the historical perspective plays such an important role in this dissertation. Moreover, I have also reflected on this issue in my methodology and designed my research as multi-sited ethnography situated primarily in Srebrenica, Sarajevo and Vienna with a focus on macro-structural processes that shape these places but cannot be simply located in either of these places by itself. Although I did not have space to explain the dynamics between these various localities in detail, I have attempted to emphasize its existence throughout this PhD dissertation.

Furthermore, in this research I constantly highlight the importance of the temporal dimension. Sometimes I make detours deeper into history because (as also Mintz 1995 has pointed out) culinary practices are rather resilient to change. In order to understand the contemporary eating patterns they should be contextualized within specific “culinary regimes” which mark a specific “great change” in history. In the case of Srebrenica the last armed conflict from 1992-1995 constitutes a major historical disjuncture without which the present situation in the locality cannot be understood. This I reflect by using the *emic*

perspective of temporal division amongst the inhabitants of Srebrenica who often (both knowingly and unknowingly) distinguish the time into categories: 1) before the war (*prije rata*), 2) during the war (*u ratu/ za vrijeme rata*) and 3) after the war (*poslije rata*).

The two aspects of the studied issue – temporality and spacial dispersion are not only important for methodological reasons, but also play a significant role when it comes to the topic of food. As Mintz has pointed out, large-scale structural changes such as war and migration install new conditions and therefore lead to a change of everyday strategies of consumption and a shift in the meaning of specific activities as well as particular foods (see Mintz, 1995: 12). In order to understand the contemporary eating patterns it is necessary to contextualize them within specific “culinary regimes”.

As I have suggested previously, I use the idea of “culinary regimes” to concretize broader structural forces which Mintz (1995) describes as “outside meaning” or “structural power” and Feldman (2011) labels in the context of migration as “apparatuses”. By culinary regimes, I mean systems of culinary preferences including distinct culinary techniques and methods of food production which historically emerged in relation to specific cosmologies/ideologies and in the context of the possibilities of the locality in which they developed.

These culinary regimes are primarily outside influences which need to be internalized and appropriated and embodied by the social actors. Older culinary regimes are often shaped by religious beliefs (this I show mainly in Chapter 4). Currently, we can see another such regime - the industrial production of food shaped by the various nation-states as well as the transnational corporate food producers. In all these different contexts and within these “culinary regimes” it is of crucial importance, as Mintz has also emphasized, to follow the way in which power enters these processes of change (see Mintz, 1995: 8). In Chapter 5 I attempted to show what role power and food play in an armed conflict using the example of wartime starvation in Srebrenica. Moreover, I attempted to show that the deprivation of food can become “a weapon” against the targeted populations, describing how the defense forces of Srebrenica used food as a weapon by taking the advantage of *torbari* – masses of starving people in order to fetch food from the

surrounding “Bosnian Serb” villages. I have suggested that during the last war the acute lack of food resources within the enclave was caused by the VRS siege, as well as the intentional depriving the targeted persons of access to food. I show this on the international blockages of the international food aid and confiscation of great amount of the convoy deliveries. Not only do I refer to other authors but I also give an example of these processes by story of a former Dutchbat soldier.

Collingham (2012) and Redžić (2010) have suggested on a similar line of thought that in armed conflicts strategies of food provisioning become universally the biggest issue. This is mainly due to the destabilization of food production systems which commonly happens in armed conflicts. Moreover, as Collinson and Macbeth argue, an armed conflict between groups of people often leads to disruption of the prevailing social order and transforms the social and economic patterns of everyday life (Collinson and Macbeth, 2014). As Mintz (1995) and also Messer (1997) have pointed out, major changes in consumption habits are usually brought on by major disruptions in ordinary routines. Both individuals and groups of people are forced to adapt their subsistence strategies to the new limitations. It is necessary to comprehend the so-called “food raids” and acts of violence of the hungry against the groups of people perceived as the oppressors.⁶⁷

I tried to illustrate how the deprivation of food put the self-organized Srebrenica defense forces into a position in which the “food raids” became part of their military strategy. Since access to food is necessary for survival, a regular supply of food becomes the key concern of armies or other armed forces. As Mintz has pointed out: ‘*Armies travel on their stomachs*’ (Mintz, 1995: 8). Additionally, Duijzing (2002) has concluded that the number of armed violent encounters initiated by the self-organized Srebrenica defense forces were the highest in the first several years when the humanitarian situation was one of the worse. The arrival of the UN forces brought occasional food aid. This helped to lower the disparity a little. On the other hand, despite their presence, the situation of acute undernourishment of the people trapped in the enclave did not improve much (see Honig and Both, 1997: 106 and Carmichael, 2003: 84). These are precisely the contexts in which

⁶⁷Here it is necessary to note that personally I do not consider any sort of oppression or violent acts against the other persons (with exception of self-defense) acceptable no matter which side of the conflict caused them.

we can see deliberate restriction of food being used as “a weapon” (see Collinson and Macbeth, 2014: 2). Moreover, the differences in power relations between the different groups become more pronounced.

There were also other power relations arising for example between the UN Forces and the local inhabitants. Generally, they show the gap between the ones in power and the powerless. Overall, I suggest that the international humanitarian food aid in the case of Srebrenica was not very effective. My research participants had access to a very limited amount of food items that they considered “not good to eat” - "tasteless", “disgusting” even but beneficial for the organism (opposite to Douglas’s “good to eat”). Many of them felt that these forced, yet desperately needed foods were underpinning their helplessness and their inferiority at the same time. ‘*The UN fed us with garbage*’ is a comment one might hear quite commonly in postwar BiH. I suggest that these narratives can be usefully thematized as “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 2001).

The consequences of the armed conflict on eating habits are visible to this day. A good example of it is the embodiment of “hunger”. In other cases, the experience of displacement and, more importantly, the loss of countless relatives triggered in many of my research participants an ambiguity concerning the sense of belonging and the perception of their identity. A large role in this is also played by the experience of the war terror and violence where people were categorized despite their own ideas of their identity into ethno-religious and national categories. This ambiguity can be traced in the everyday eating habits. As I attempted to show in Chapter 4, some edibles are prescribed the connotation of being component to a specific ethno-religious and national identity and they can be used instrumentally nowadays to reconfirm this identity on both personal and collective levels. I have also briefly suggested that food becomes used as an identity marker by persons living abroad who seem to cook, especially for festive occasions, dishes from the place of origin in order to emphasize the notion of belonging with BiH. On the other hand, this can be also explained as an expression of disconnection with a place of settlement – as Halilovich (2015) has written, as a result of being “neither here, nor there”. In this context, food is closely linked to the memories and the tastes of dishes known from childhood, its

reconstruction also evokes the sense of home – the community that has perished and is no more.

The majority of the above listed cases of the relation of food to violence and power concern both individuals and social groups. I have also pointed out some structural forces such as armed units, who participated in oppression and killings of the others. However, from the perspective of socio-cultural anthropology it is also important to ask what motivated these acts of violence. This is, as I suggest, also linked to the question of the Srebrenica genocide which ultimately was also a question of identity and social cohesion. As Gordy has pointed out, the last conflict in the former Yugoslavia was misinterpreted by some authors and policy makers as the explosion of an “ancient hatred” (see Gordy 1999: 3). On the contrary, Gordy suggests that the nationalistic consciousness needed to be awakened (Gordy, 1999: 3-4).

What the war in former Yugoslavia indeed illustrated were the possibilities of radical nationalism and the misuse of power as a result of which populations targeted on the basis of their prescribed identity were being starved out. Unfortunately, even at present, the handling of identity in post-Dayton Bosnia still continues using the “ethno-nationalistic war scheme” as a tool of distinction. However, as I attempted to show using the case of Srebrenica, categorizations of population based on the exclusion of others are potentially very dangerous and can have destructive results.

For those reasons, I connect Glick Schiller and Çağlar's argument (2013) that both the chosen methodology and the final analysis need to go beyond the “ethnic lens”. In other words, it is necessary to take a stance which rejects the idea that ethnic, ethno-religious or national identities, beliefs and practices are central to the lives of people (see Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013: 495). Glick Schiller and Çağlar argue this using the example of migrants (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013: 495) and I add that this approach can be extended also to the subdiscipline of anthropology of food. I tried to show how these ethno-religious discourses penetrate the food domain in relation to the continuous process of negotiating one's identity on an everyday basis. From this point of view, ethno-religious origin might constitute a specific variable in food patterns.

Malkki has argued that the identity “from the bottom up perspective” is, ‘*always mobile and processual, partly self-construction, partly categorization by others, partly a condition, a status, a label, a weapon, a shield, a fund of memories, et cetera. It is a creolized aggregate composed through bricolage*’ (Malkki, 1992: 37). This can be also well illustrated in the individual appropriations of eating customs and their “inside meaning” (that I demonstrated mainly in Chapter 4).

Instead of automatically presuming ethno-religious differences, it is helpful to look at how different foods, eating practices and even recipes are used by different ideologies (religious, political or economical) to differentiate the populations and to make them embody specific “tastes”. The needs of a human being are fairly universal when it comes to food. We need to ingest food to sustain our lives, regardless of national and ethno-religious origin. However, the most important aspect that determines who is going to eat under what conditions seems to be the aspect of power as Mintz (1995) has also suggested. This reminds us, as Webb (2010) pointed out, that: ‘*Food is not neutral, not ordinary, not obvious. It is — or, it can be — a site for struggle, a site for the working out of relations of power. It tells us who we are, it divides us...*’ Thus, for the aphorism ‘You are what you eat’ to be able serve as a relevant reflection of social reality it would have to include the dimension of power.



Picture 38: Srebrenica at dusk (Photo M.S., January 2014).

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