Urge For Engagement

Conditions of social change

Engaging for Social Change

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Even though social change is a "buzzword" in contemporary academia, it is also one of the age-old problems though elusive one in spite of the fact that rather sophisticated theoretical and scientific models have been around for quite some time to explain it and enact it. For example, sociology of the nineteenth century specifically aimed at ending unavoidable tensions and conflicts that follow social change. Ever since the early days of Comte (1853) and Durkheim (1893) the greatest epistemological hope for many sociologists has been to find some way to deploy scientific methodology and statistical analysis which will achieve prediction, thus rendering social processes controllable and ultimately providing a practical way to direct social development. And yet, as we all know, this grand project of sociological prediction never came to fruition. Moreover, social scientist became somewhat notorious for their inability to predict social change; there was no relevant and systematic "theoretical foreshadowing" of October

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Revolution, or, for that matter, the fall of the Berlin Wall;[4] and, more recently, economists have failed to warn us about when are different kinds of economic bursting bubbles, as well as what are social and political ramifications of this sort of "great historical events."[5] But nevertheless, interest for social change goes even further with such claims that all sociology is about change (Sztompka 1993) or, if not all, than surely large portion of sociology (e.g., Bauman 2003; Latour 2005; Giddens et al. 2011).

Things are even more complicated bearing in mind that modern social science and humanities must find way to deal with the fact that the sheer pace and scale of social change associated with what we call today globalization sets up entirely new type of challenges to the traditional views and theories on social change. As Christopher Chase Dunn and Salvatore J. Babones (2006) argue Durkheim, Marx (Smelser 1973) and Weber (1905) all grappled with social problems arising from the then unprecedented social changes occurring in the nineteenth-century Europe, but today's rapid, large-scale social changes are creating problems that classical thinkers could never have imagined. Most of distinctly contemporary events (e.g. the advancements in information technology, global terrorism and the never-ending asymmetric wars which aim to combat it, the scale and complexity of environmental problems, financialization of capitalism, new social movements) are hybrid in their character. These events fluidly cross conceptual boundaries between,

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4   But is this really true? Could we also not think about colonialism and imperialism in terms of "social change". Such an attitude would complicate the very notion. However, we will not dwell on this issue here but recommend to read Walter Mignolo and his 2005 *The Idea of Latin America* and 2003 *The Darker Side of the Renaissance.*

5   This is perhaps why Robert Nisbet in his *Social Change and history* (1985) famously claimed that, although we are here simplifying his main thesis, there is no way to theoretically understand outside the confines of history, that is to say only *post hoc.*

global and local, public and private, structure and agency and blur the clear-cut distinctions. And it is precisely this shift from inherent duality to their relation, which causes problems for old theoretical models of social change, producing demand for a new, more contextually sensitive kind of social theory of social change.

Furthermore, increased levels of social differentiation caused by globalization have made contingency of reproduction of social system considerably more pervasive, thus, making the notion of crisis inseparable from social change. Having in mind the increased precarization of labour, vulnerability of marginalized populations, the crises of legitimacy of governments and parliamentary democracies, it seems that crisis is the way in which we live our lives, experience our genders, races, and classes be it on the local, national or global scale. Wendy Brown's joyful proclamation in her 2010 book *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* that the erosion of nation-states opens up a space to imagine a different horizon and future surely makes sense. Nonetheless, the waning of sovereignty has also resulted in reactive and conservative responses in form of new right-wing populisms, nationalisms and withdrawals into the celebration of traditional values: families and individuals across the world, but mainly in Latin and North America as well as Eastern Europe. If there is a consensus it is one in which we are faced with the deficit of democracy, increasing level of citizen's apathy and concern about the growing politico-social uncertainty. The underside of this crisis is the ceaseless affective production of irrational fears, hatred toward the Other, angers, and often times, destructive aggressions and unprecedented violence performed by the State.

However, it is urgent to safeguard Brown's optimism. No matter how difficult it may seem to think of it as an opening, the notion of crisis today is also a chance, a possibility that

mobilizes our wavering desires for a world to be changed and transformed. Crisis, after all, are there to be solved, negotiated, transformed into a more equal, dignified and free world. Therefore, crisis is also a call to rethink the relation between social structure and human agency. The opening that crisis engenders point to the simple fact that there can be no social change without engagement. Such a strong thesis lies at heart of this volume.

In attempt to avoid rigid conceptual frameworks which are, as we already stressed, ill-suited for the (post)modern ubiquity of crises, this volume adopts a different strategy and intends to provide tools with which to analyze the change from a more contextual, case-specific perspective. The main productive heuristic tool we offer here for thinking, analysis and practice is the phenomena of *engagement for social change*. We see engagement as a spectrum of ways in which the citizens of a given society reflect on the norms and rules of social action (legally institutionalized, culturally dominant or specific to certain spheres of social action: professional, private or economic), which constitute the structure of their institutional reality, and ways in which they act, on the basis of this reflection, either in order to change parts of this institutional reality, or in order to reinforce them. Not all norms are "bad". Therefore, engagement is any collective practice characterized by reflection on the existing social norms and rules, and consequently acting upon or against their change. Change and engagement become inseparable and irreducible and it is this relation we want to bring into light with this collection.

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Why engagement and why today? Bearing in mind the above-mentioned insights, it is difficult to gauge *why* social change happens and *who* makes the change. Engagement proves to be heuristically fruitful notion since it has the potential to answer, albeit obliquely, to those two questions.

Change does not happen by itself. Actors are needed who reflect and act in such a way as to make change possible. Furthermore, *engagement for social change* obliges us to think across spatial and temporal axis. It refers spatially since it refuses to delimit in advance what is and what is not engagement. Engagement is a matter of process that changes the notion of space itself. On the other hand, engagement today is crucial since, as we have mentioned above, the production of negative affects tends to lead to paralysis where any form of acting is deemed, from the start, as unsuccessful.

To be engaged, as Adriana Zaharijević argues in an 2017 edited volume *Engagement: Introduction to Engagement Studies*, "means to be drawn to something, dedicated – to a cause that involves attention and demands our commitment; to be involved – contractually obliged to do so something" (Zaharijević 2017: 18). Engagement calls for action and acting, it bypasses the paralysis and despite difficulties it opens up the possibility of social change. The notion of engagement has the potential to disturb our common beliefs and values that we take for granted since its intrinsic quality is that engagement is always directed toward desirable change of norms, beliefs, and habits that we deem unchangeable, obsolete, invisible or irrelevant.

Something *urges* us to engage and change. Contributions gathered in this volume point to the challenges of thinking in terms of the umbrella syntagm: engagement for social change. While we are sympathetic to the current research on social change, these articles take a step back and dwell on the difficulties of desirable social change. The main question leading this volume is what is the condition of possibility of engagement for social change today? What new forms of engagement are visible and created in our global world? What kind of language, grammar and analysis do we

need in order to argue for social change that will lead to a better, equal and freer world *for all*? What are the obstacles and barriers actors face when engaging Others? The goal of these articles is precisely to capture that something that forces us to engage for change.

Even though articles presented here come from different intellectual traditions, they share a commitment to interdisciplinary research and cultivation of pluralism, heterogeneity, and the notion of equality and justice that guide desire for social change and seek to democratize democratization. The vision of social change and the reason for engagement come from the dissatisfaction with the current state of crises. Desire is to bring about the change in norms, habits, and beliefs within the public sphere. And yet, all articles are dubious about the notion of public sphere, today, when it seems to be eroded or filled with the lack of adequate information. While relying on the traditional concepts of deliberative democracy, articles in this volume somewhat challenge deliberation by supplementing it with different sets of concepts and relations between them. What happens when public sphere is populated with hegemonic forms of power that seek to occlude the "right" information? How do we engage to make the public sphere more just and open to others? How public is online engagement? Does it intervene in the public at all? If the underlying premise is that the call for engagement comes form the injustices committed in the local context, than these articles reflect on how to create knowledge, practices, and environment suited for such an endeavor.

Francesca Forle's article is an invitation to think engagement through a joint action. While reflecting on the question what makes for sufficient conditions for an action to be actually joint, her article introduces a possible tool that

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would reduce the uncertainty of joint actions. Forle advocates for *rythmos*, an organized structure of perceptual reality that allows us to recognize the horizon of the action. The notion refers to a dimension of action that stands between rhythm coordination and emotional attunement that has the potential of eliminating or reducing the uncertain outcomes of engagement. Such a dimension takes into account the role of emotions and affect, at the pre-reflective and non-personal level, pointing to the sense of belonging to the group and the possibility of gauging if the action will be successful or not. Following the importance of affect, Sotira Ismini Gounari's provocative article seeks to take into account a different approach to desirable social change. She moves away from engagement based on rational deliberation, construction of political identities and notion of free will. While offering the thought of Spinoza and Deleuze and Guatarri, the author proposes to focus on the passion and affect as the condition of possibility of engagement. Refusing to align affect with irrationality, she suggests that passion of being affected by the other and agency as the capacity for interconnection is what defines progressive social change. She proposes that thought around social change would profit from a philosophy of difference, immanence and affect that problematizes the idea that change can be the result of strong, unchanging identities and that it is causally linked to relatively stable rational and intentional political actors. Continuing along the lines of passion and affect, Mónica Cano's article seeks to relate the notion of engagement with the theoretical insights provided by Judith Butler's notion of performativity and vulnerability through the analysis of new forms of engagement in the digital #metoo movement. From a feminist perspective, Cano argues that the condition of possibility of engagement for social change lies in the double-edged dimension of vulnerability. On the one hand, women expose their common

vulnerability by giving testimonies and making visible the sexual violence that they experience, but on the other hand, women risk further harm and unpredictability of the effect of engagement. Even though vulnerability and precarity do not guarantee social change, Cano argues, without it, the #metoo movement would not shed light on the problem and normalization of sexual violence.

The question of technology is becoming more important when we consider the potentials for engagement. Not only it has the capacity to mobilize large groups of people, the temporal aspect cannot be ignored. It is fast. As Jelisaveta Petrovic's case study suggests, in the case of a call for an urgent action, the digitalization of urban movements has the potential to engage others quickly and effectively. As reaction to the urban megaproject "Belgrade Waterfornt", the grassroots reactions have shown that change some-times is performed as a reaction to the unjust actions by the government. Tamar Katriel's article places the question of engagement for social change in the realm of practices of knowledge production as grounded in experiential knowl-edge in two activists movement from Israel. His under-standing of the condition of possibility involves bringing to the wider public the notions of testimonies that seek greater transparency, promotion of public discussions and demands for accountability of the government. Implicit-ly, Katriel suggests that such practices of gathering new information through the testimonies are more adequate than deliberation since they point to the excluded sub-jects who do not have access to the public sphere. While moving away but not abandoning deliberation, the author suggests that activists' knowledge seeks to expose to the public the factual information that is ignored by the gov-ernment and encourage citizens to act in accordance to the new knowledge they have gained. Such engagement seeks

to create a sort of counter-public sphere where citizens will be actively engaged in reflection and possible action. Igor Stipić case study on the movements of students in Jajce in Bosnia and Herzegovina offers a similar case study to the Katriel's while placing the engagement along creative acts of students who built a classroom not based on antagonism. The students' refusal to be segregated by nationality and creation a counter discourse to the official state hegemony paves a way to embracing difference and plurality in classroom. The new notion of "being together while different" breaks with the homogenizing principle of the ethno-nationalism prevalent in BIH since the war. Even though such a change might be considered a small scale one, it is significant since schools are still prevalent forms of socialization where change of habits and beliefs takes place.

The articles gathered in this volume, as a whole and as examples, seek to provoke a thought on the senses, possibilities and limits of engagement for social change. As this piece suggests, these articles are introductory and invitation for further thinking. Nonetheless, as such, the volume points to the complexity and urge for engagement for social change. As such, it can also be considered as gateway for acting that will only benefit from the problems, challenges and successes we face today in the midst of the millennial crises. The choice is on us: we either create new tools or we desperately dwell on the impossibility to capture and understand social change.

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Rythmòs, Joint actions, and Uncertainty Reduction

Francesca Forlè[6]

Our everyday life is characterized by several activities that we do not simply accomplish on our own. We can go out for a walk with a friend, organize a business meeting with our colleagues, prepare a meal together with our partner or participate in a meeting of our political party. Activities such as these – which are usually called *joint actions* – require us to act together with someone else and present features that are arguably different from actions we can perform by ourselves.

What is the nature of such joint actions? Are they something different from the mere sum of individual actions or are they reducible to them? What are the necessary and/or sufficient conditions in order for an action to be actually joint?

Questions such as these are at the center of a large con-temporary philosophical debate, in which many different models of joint actions have been proposed (e.g. Searle 2010; Gilbert 2013; Bratman 1992, 2009; Bacharach 2006). However, despite these differences and following Michael and Pacherie (2015), we can broadly define joint actions as

> any form of social interaction whereby two or more individuals coordinate their actions in space and time to bring about a change in the environment. (Sebanz et al. 2006: 70)

One of the aspects that emerges from this definition is that *coordination* is crucial for a joint action to be successful. If I want to prepare a meal together with my partner, I need to have an idea of what he is doing and what he is about to do, in order to make my actions complementary and not competitive to his own. Hence, coordination is enhanced by my ability to *predict* the other's actions, whereas, it can be undermined if I am *uncertain* about what my partner is about to do, what his intentions really are, how committed he is to our joint enterprise, and so on. Which factors are capable of reducing the risk of uncertainty, therefore rein-forcing joint actions and improving their stability, has been a crucial question of research both in the psychological and in the philosophical debate on these issues (Michael and Pacherie 2015; De Vecchi 2009; Valdesolo et al. 2010; Ves-per et al. 2010).

The present paper aims at presenting a possible *tool* for re-ducing uncertainty in joint actions – namely coordination in *rythmòs*, i.e. the expressive rhythmic style of an unfolding action (Zhok 2012). *Rythmòs* will be presented as a dimen-sion that stands between *rhythm coordination* and *emotion-*

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al attunement, which have also been proposed as potential tools for improving joint action stability (Knoblich et al 2011; Candiotto 2017; Gill 2012). Picking up an intermediate dimension between the two, the notion of *rythmòs* will allow us not only to highlight some specific ways in which joint actions can emerge and develop – and how agents can be involved even at a pre-reflective level, as we will see –, but also to stress the radically embodied nature of our affective states and our relations to others.

Joint Actions, Coordination and Uncertainty Conditions

As we have already mentioned, *coordination* of agents' goals, plans, actions and intentions seems to be a crucial aspect in joint actions. As Pacherie clearly points out (Pacherie 2012), it is not sufficient for agents to control their own *individual* actions (e.g. predicting their effects and monitoring their correct execution), but they also need to track *their partners*' intentions and acts, trying to predict their outcomes in order to adjust their own actions to those of others.

However, this is still not sufficient to ensure successful joint actions. Indeed, the ability to predict and monitor other people's actions in order to decide what to do is typical also of *competitive* contexts, such as a football match or a fight, where trying to grasp what one's opponent is about to do is a normal basic strategy for every player or fighter. Differently, joint actions are those in which co-agents share a goal and *cooperate* to achieve it. In order to cooperate successfully, the agent does not just need to predict her partner's intentions and actions, but also to make her own actions and intentions predictable and quite clear to her partner(s). Therefore, what is needed is not just pre-

dictability, but *mutual predictability* among co-agents. On the contrary, in competitive contexts, the subject tries to predict her opponent's moves but she also tries to make her own moves unclear and unpredictable for her opponent (Michael and Pacherie 2015: 98-99). For our purposes, therefore, the most interesting features of competitive and cooperative actions are that both of them are facilitated by the fact that agents are able to predict the intentions and acts of their co-agents; however, in the competitive case, agents try to be *unpredictable* for their rivals, whereas, in co-operative cases, agents should aim at *mutual predictability*.

Mutual predictability, however, is not always easy to achieve and can be undermined by many forms of *uncertainty*. Since they tend to make it extremely difficult to predict other people's moves, such forms of uncertainty make coopera-tion much more complex, thus undermining the successful realization of the joint action itself. Michael and Pacherie (2015: 99-100) have listed three kinds of uncertainty, which we will summarize below to give some examples of the phenomenon at stake.

The first category that the authors consider is *motivational uncertainty*. The idea is that we can be unsure about how much our partners' interests and goals are convergent to our own – at least to what we think our interests and goals are.[7] Moreover, even in the case we know that they really are, we may be unsure about how *stable* these interests and goals are. Such an uncertainty is likely to undermine one's inten-tion to undertake a joint action: following Michael and Pach-erie's example, maybe you will not start a walking tour of Scotland with your friend Andrew if you are not sure whether he will change his mind a few days later and leave you alone.

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7   This does not imply, as we will see in dealing with common ground uncertainty, that we are always *aware* of our *real* interests, goals and motivations. I thank an anonymous referee for letting me make this more explicit.

However, let us suppose that Andrew is trustworthy and you are pretty sure he will not abandon you in the Scotland mountains. You can still be unsure about how to proceed in your joint action, what is the best itinerary to take, who is buying the tickets and reserving the accommodation, who is bringing the appropriate equipment, and so on. In other terms, you could be unsure about what you and your friend should do to achieve your goal, how the roles should be distributed, and when and where you should act. Michael and Pacherie call this category of uncertainty *instrumental uncertainty*.

A third category is the one of *common ground uncertainty*. The idea here is that, in order to ensure coordination and the smooth unfolding of a joint action, it is not sufficient for the agents to be actually motivated to achieve the same goals and have a sufficiently well-organized plan about how such goals could be reached. If they do not think that this is the case – or if they do not think that their partners are aware that this is the case – they will probably not engage in or be fully committed to the joint action itself. If you or your friend Andrew are not aware of the fact that both of you are motivated and have all the instruments to make your trip in Scotland, maybe you will not begin the journey. Moreover, if you are not sure that your friend Andrew is aware of his motivations and instrumental possibilities – or, *viceversa*, if Andrew is not sure you are aware of them – probably you, or Andrew, will not engage in the joint action. In other terms, Michael and Pacherie's idea is that the alignment of co-agents' motivations and plans has to be *transparent* to the agents themselves, in order for them to be more likely to engage in a joint action.

Obviously, the three-fold categorization just presented does not aim at being exhaustive of all kinds of uncertainty that

can characterize joint actions, nor does it imply the idea that all joint actions are characterized by uncertainty to the same extent. Indeed, some joint actions can be characterized by a greater level of uncertainty with respect to others, for instance if they are not regulated by any agreement of the co-agents about rules of behavior and mutual commitments.[8]

Moreover, talking about uncertainty conditions of joint actions does not imply the idea that, to engage in joint actions, absolute certainty about co-agents' motivations, plans and beliefs has to be achieved. On the contrary, following Michael and Pacherie, we can recognize that uncertainty can never be fully eliminated: we cannot be completely sure of what others really know, what they aim at, and how committed they are to our joint action. However, we can try to reduce some uncertainty factors, in order to make a joint action smoother, better-coordinated and stable in time. The point, therefore, is not trying to find and analyze possible *uncertainty-elimination tools* but, rather, *uncertainty-reduction* ones (Michael and Pacherie 2015: 100).

As we mentioned in the introduction, the aim of this paper is to propose and analyze one of the possible uncertainty-reduction tools – namely, what we will call *rythmòs alignment*. In what follows, *rythmòs* will be presented as the expressive rhythmic style of the temporal unfolding of an event (Zhok 2012). Among different alignment factors, I will argue that coordination in *rythmòs* stands between *rhythm coordination* and *emotional attunement*, sharing some features with them and constituting a dimension in which some aspects of the two merge into each other. Both rhythm coordination and emotional attunement have been studied as capable of fostering alignment and cooperation, so that

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8   See Searle 2010 and Gilbert 2013 on this point.

they can be arguably considered as uncertainty-reduction tools (Knoblich et al. 2011; Candiotto 2017; Gill 2012). Less attention has been paid to that intermediate dimension that we aim at illuminating in the second part of this paper through the notion of *rythmòs*. However, before introducing *rythmòs*, let us briefly look at rhythm coordination and emotional attunement to see in what sense they can be considered as alignment processes, capable of improving stability within joint actions.

Rhythmic alignment and emotional attunement

Phenomena of rhythmic alignment – i.e. the process of synchronizing the rhythmic behavior of two or more individuals – are common events in everyday life. People walking side by side often assume the same rhythmic walking pattern (Nessler and Gilliland 2009), people speaking to each other sometimes synchronize their body sway (Shockley et al. 2003), and an audience easily synchronizes its clapping (Néda et al. 2000). Synchronization often happens also in cases in which background conditions are not completely favorable. Richardson et al. (2007), for example, have shown that people sitting in adjacent rocking chairs tend to synchronize their rocking movements even in the case in which the natural rocking tempos of the chairs have been manipulated to be different from each other.

Contemporary research has focused on the processes at the basis of such widespread cases of synchronization, trying to understand the perceptual, motor, and cognitive mechanisms of entrainment and coordination. In this framework, ecological psychologists have studied occurrences of rhythmic synchronization in order to study the relation

between the dynamical principles of intrapersonal and interpersonal coordination (Marsh et al. 2009). This line of research has shown, for example, that in many cases, the limb movements of a group of people follow the same dynamical laws as those of an individual (e.g. Schmidt et al. 1990). The principles of interpersonal coordination seem therefore to reproduce those of intrapersonal coordination.

The cases we have described refer to occurrences of emergent, non-voluntary alignment, where synchronization occurs spontaneously between individuals who have no plans to perform actions together (Knoblich et al. 2011: 62). However, obviously, rhythmic alignment can be also planned and voluntary, as it can happen in the case of actual joint actions, where two or more individuals share a goal and *program* their actions in order to cooperate with co-agents in trying to achieve their common goal.

It has been posited by different thinkers, both in the philosophical and psychological debate, that the phenomena of rhythmic alignment can act as a key facilitator for joint actions (Butterfill forthcoming; Gill 2012; Marsh et al. 2009). Indeed, synchronization can make partners in a joint action more similar and thus more easily predictable to each other. In Michael and Pacherie's terms, such augmented predictability is likely to reduce uncertainty about goals, plans (instrumental uncertainty) and co-agents' awareness of the two (common ground uncertainty) (Michael and Pacherie 2015: 104). Moreover, there is evidence that rhythmic alignment may lead agents to an increase in cooperative behavior and to a greater sense of belonging to the group. Wiltermuth and Heath (2009), for example, show that in a coordination game, participants who had walked in step in groups of three made more cooperative choices than participants who had not walked in step. The same participants

who had walked in synchrony also reported feeling more connected to each other. The same was true for groups of three singing in synchrony. This last point highlights how synchronization between co-agents and with music can foster an even greater sense of belonging and rapport within the group. Gill (2007), for instance, stresses how singers and musicians in a choir who are collectively engaged in the synchronous production of complex patterns of sound are likely to be very predictable to each other and to develop a high degree of coherence. The latter can help very much in establishing a strong sense of group identity (Cross 2006; Arom 1991; Blacking 1973; Stobart and Cross 2000).

> By fostering a greater sense of belonging to the group and positive feelings among co-agents, rhythmic alignment can also strengthen subjects' commitment to achieve a shared goal, proving therefore to be also a potential tool for *motivational uncertainty* reduction (Michael and Pacherie 2015: 104).

This last point introduces the other crucial alignment process we mentioned above, that is *emotional attunement*. We have just said that rhythmic alignment can act as a tool for motivational uncertainty reduction since it can foster a *sense of belonging* and *positive feelings* among co-agents. Indeed, the role of emotions and feelings in how joint actions unfold seems to be crucial, especially in motivating people to act. Michael and Pacherie (2015: 106-107), for instance, argue that social emotions, such as fellow-feelings or sense of belonging, and moral sentiments – such as sympathy, guilt or shame – serve as useful and effective tools for promoting cooperation. Such feelings would (at least partly) explain, for example, people's tendency to behave far more

generously than their narrow self-interests would require in various economic games, such as the prisoner's dilemma and the dictator game (Camerer 2003; Rand and Nowak 2013).

In a similar line of research, Candiotto (2017) explores the ways in which positive emotions can boost cooperation. She considers a specific joint action – namely *dialogical inquiry*, that is the practice of knowledge building based on interaction and exchange between agents, as in the Socratic dialogue model (Candiotto 2017: 61-63). Candiotto argues that, in cases such as this, positive emotions (e.g. love, gratitude, patience, joy) can help build a favorable environment for the inquiry to take place. Indeed, positive emotions can enhance confidence and the sense of togetherness among members of the group; they can help to establish trust in each other's testimony, and they can enhance a sense of responsibility for the collective. In other terms, positive emotions reinforce those dispositions – trust, confidence and responsibility – that are crucial for a kind of group knowledge such as dialogical inquiry (Candiotto 2017: 71-72). Empirical evidence seems to support this hypothesis, since it shows that the disposition to positive emotions helps collaboration and problem-solving, while negative emotions, on the contrary, undermine them (Clore and Storbeck 2006; Clore and Hutchinger 2007; Paxton and Dale 2013).

Obviously, Candiotto does not maintain that positive emotions are necessary or sufficient conditions for cooperation and group knowledge. Even in the case of dialogical inquiry, we can admit that an increase in group-knowledge can sometimes happen under pressure and in a competitive climate – hence positive emotions would not be necessary. Moreover, we can also imagine a case in which positive

emotions are not sufficient – for instance, if the members of the group are investigating a very specific scientific issue on which they do not have sufficient competencies.

According to Candiotto, positive emotions are rather *facilitating conditions* for joint actions such as dialogical inquiries. The idea is that such emotions serve a beneficial function because they can strengthen cooperation and then play a crucial role in enhancing group-knowledge building. So, even though they cannot be considered as necessary or sufficient conditions, positive emotions are central conditions to take into consideration because they can be advantageous for the process, they can facilitate it and boost its power (Candiotto 2017: 72-74). In this framework, positive emotions are not just crucial as *individual* dispositions to cooperate with one another, but they assume an even greater role since they help to create a positive *affective environment*. Embedded in the environment, in fact, positive emotions help to create a positive climate, which boosts the we-mode cooperation and helps, in turn, to reinforce co-agents' positive attitude towards each other. Adopting an embodied, embedded and distributed theory of cognition and affectivity (Fuchs and De Jeagher 2009; Griffiths and Scarantino 2012), Candiotto stresses therefore how individual emotions contribute to generating affective environmental atmospheres, which can then affect individuals in a continuous circle of co-influence between the subjects and the environment itself (Candiotto 2017: 64-68).[9] Against this background, we can talk of *emotional attunement* as the process of constructing and sharing a common affective environment, which emerges from individual tendencies to align emotionally with one another, but is also

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9   Emotions are considered here as one specific case in a set of different affective phenomena that also involve, for instance, sentiments and moods. For an outline of the differences between affective phenomena, which we cannot deal with here, see Scheler 1916, De Monticelli 2008, Deonna and Teroni 2009.

able to affect individuals, leading them to share that particular affective climate. In the case considered by Candiotto, co-agents' attunement towards positive emotions allows for a positive climate of reciprocal trust, confidence and responsibility to emerge, which, in turn, can lead co-agents to maintain that emotional attitude towards each other. This, as we saw in Candiotto's analysis, would facilitate the joint enterprise of dialogical inquiry and group-knowledge building.[10]

It is worth noticing, however, that emotional attunement is a far more widespread phenomenon than just described and cannot be limited to the positive emotions case. There are situations in which affective states such as resentment or fear characterize the members of a group towards a rival and can lead (or reinforce) them to pursue aggressive joint actions towards their enemy. Let us think for instance to the case of an attack by an ethnical group against another. This joint action can be fostered by common (negative) emotions of the members of the group. In this negative-emotions case too, therefore, emotional attunement (i.e. common resentment and aggressiveness towards others) between co-agents helps to create an affective environment that strongly binds the members of the group to one another and can facilitate cooperation against a common 'enemy'.

Based on the described features, we can argue that emotional attunement can act as a motivational uncertainty reduction tool. Common emotions between co-agents are a very strong bond, capable of creating and reinforcing

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10   Obviously, as in the case of positive emotions described by Candiotto 2017, emotional attunement would not be a necessary nor a sufficient condition for successful joint actions. Rather, it would often be a facilitating condition with a possible beneficial function for the successful realization of the action itself.

rapport, sense of belonging and group-identity. As we have already posited via Michael and Pacherie's model, the latter play a crucial role in reducing uncertainty, in particular *motivational uncertainty*: as we know, this is a kind of uncertainty about how much our partners' interests and goals are convergent to our own and how stable they are. In other terms, we could say, it is a kind of uncertainty about the actual intentions and, more generally, the actual mental states of others towards the common joint action. Knowing that our co-agents are animated by emotions that are similar to our own (in particular in pursuing the aim of a specific joint action) can lead us to be less uncertain about their intentions and dispositions. Moreover, given that emotional attunement can lead to a greater sense of belonging and group identity, it can reduce uncertainty about the loyalty of the agents to the group, its interests and goals, and so, again, it can reduce uncertainty about agents' intentions and dispositions.

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In this paragraph, we have therefore analyzed how rhythmic alignment and emotional attunement can act as crucial uncertainty reduction tools. As mentioned before, however, the main aim of this paper is to consider a further tool, which refers to a dimension that stands exactly between rhythmic coordination and emotional attunement.

In the literature reviewed here, rhythmic behavior and affective states have been mainly considered independently from one another. This might lead us to think that there are no important connections between the two and, moreover, that rhythmic alignment has to do with a more physical, behavioral level (e.g. movement synchronization), whereas emotional attunement has to do with mental states and dispositions. This would depict a kind of dualistic picture of human beings, where mind and body are considered as two different dimensions that are not connected in essential

ways and that can be considered independently from each other. However, today many philosophers of mind have criticized such a *disembodied* theory of the human mind, underlining on the contrary both the role of the body in shaping our perception and cognitive abilities, and the interconnection between affective states, expressive behavior and the environment (Clark 2008; Gallagher 2005; Colombetti 2014; Slaby 2014).

Against this background, I aim at emphasizing, in the debate about the uncertainty reduction tools for joint actions, a dimension in which rhythmic coordination and emotional attunement merge. This dimension highlights how emotional attunement can have a strongly embodied basis and, *viceversa*, how rhythmic coordination is not just confined to a behavioral, physical level but can already have an expressive, emotional connotation. The dimension I will describe – which, as I said, I will call *rythmòs alignment* – will reveal the radical embodied nature of our mind and will help us to stress the crucial connections between rhythm coordination and emotional attunement. As the latter, it will be presented as an uncertainty reduction tool for joint actions.

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Rythmòs alignment as an uncertainty reduction tool

In order to make my proposal clearer, a brief characterization of the notion of *rythmòs* is needed. This notion has been largely analyzed by Zhok (2012) and I will refer mainly to this analysis in what follows.

According to Zhok, *rythmòs* refers to the organized structure of perceptual reality that allows us to recognize and anticipate a perceptual diachronic course. A bouncing ball, a musi-

cal rhythm, a collapsing scree present typical *rythmòs*-traits that allow us to follow the perceptual course and have motivated expectations about the way such perceptual phenomena will develop. In this sense, *rythmòs* implies regularity, albeit in a minimal way: indeed, *rythmòs* emerges when there is the possibility of recognizing even a minimal rule of development, which allows the anticipation of a dynamical style (Zhok 2012: 130).

Rythmòs is a much wider notion than the ordinary notion of rhythm. While the latter refers to a pattern of temporal intervals with specific and quantifiable relationships between them, the former refers to a more general structure with a recognizable and somehow predictable *style*. Temporal organization is just one of the aspects of *rythmòs*. On the contrary, what characterizes *rythmòs* more specifically is the fact that *rythmòs*-occurrences show an internal teleological organization. *Rythmòs* appears as a general structure of impulse and relaxation, opening and closure, protention and fulfillment: each *rythmic* percept emerges as an organized unity that requires a closure when something has been previously perceived as an opening. For instance, a musical piece is characterized by a specific *rythmòs*-style that does not rely just on the piece's rhythm, but depends also on the specific teleological tendencies between intensity differences (e.g. a 'forte'-dynamic which calms down on a 'piano'-dynamic) or harmonic relationships (e.g. the leading tone which tends to the tonic in a diatonic scale).

Since *rythmòs* is a general structure of impulse and relaxation, many different phenomena can show *rythmòs*-traits: there are teleological tendencies in a bouncing ball, in a collapsing scree, in the dynamical style of a zig-zag line, and so on. Now, such teleological tendencies contribute to

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give phenomena an appearance of vitality, so that according to Zhok any occurrence of *rythmòs* shows an *expressive, dynamical* dimension (Zhok 2012: 131). Zhok refers here to Köhler's (1929) "tertiary qualities" as those physiognomic, expressive qualities that even inanimate things can have. We can say that the movements of a dancer are *graceful* or that the walking-style of a person is *clumsy*, but we can also metaphorically say that the course of a line is *elegant* or that a musical rhythm is *nervous* and *anxious*. The idea is that the 'opening-closure' teleological structure of *rythmòs* is able to confer phenomena (at least) an appearance of vitality and expressivity: indeed, actual animated phenomena such as human actions or gestures are characterized by expressive teleological (i.e. goal-directed) profiles.

All the mentioned examples of *rythmòs*-occurrences concur to highlight another fundamental point. *Rythmòs* can be shared by so many different phenomena because it is a transmodal structure. *Rythmòs* occurrences can be seen, heard, or even bodily exemplified. According to Zhok, this is a particularly interesting feature since it can motivate the constitution of a transmodal perceptual reality. We are able to recognize an object as the same one even though we experience it first only by sight, then only by touch. This seems to be a primary ability of ours. Meltzoff and Borton (1979), for instance, show that one-month old infants seem to recognize visually a pacifier they previously had just sucked. The hypothesis is that, like adults, even very young children can recognize the same *rythmic* perceptual course by touch and sight. Exploring an object by sight we can apprehend its profile, developing and 'fulfilling' specific expectations about the *rythmic* style of the perceptual course; exploring the same object by touch we can perceive the same style again, even though by a different modality. In this sense, we

can come to the constitution of one single, external, and stable perceptual reality, which can be explored by different sensory modalities (Zhok 2012: 97-129).

As this description clarifies, many different temporal phenomena show *rythmòs* traits. For our purposes, it is worth underlining that also individual and joint actions, as phenomena unfolding in time, are analyzable in terms of their *rythmòs* styles. When we perform an (individual or joint) action, the movements we make are connected by specific teleological tendencies, in which what comes first is open and tends towards what comes next.

However, what is particularly interesting for us to notice, is that Zhok's characterization of *rythmòs* highlights not just that the latter emerges as the temporal structure of teleological tendencies between the different moments of a diachronic course, but also that such a temporal structure shows *expressive* and *dynamical* traits. Based on the way movements are connected to one another, an action can appear *elegant*, *clumsy*, *nervous*, *calm*. Such affective qualities can be grasped in actions themselves, as qualities *of* movement.

The idea here is that *rythmòs* is the dimension in which an organized structure of movements acquires a dynamical and expressive connotation. This is in line with what the phenomenologist Max Scheler underlines when he says that human actions are not mere physical movements but *expressive unities*, in which physical behavior itself has emotional and affective meaning. In this sense, according to the author, also in perceiving others we are never confronted with mere bodies nor with disembodied minds but with expressive unities (*Ausdruckseinheit*) of body and mind (Schel-

er 1923: 261). The psychologist Daniel Stern underlines a similar idea when he introduces the notion of *vitality forms* (Stern 1985, 2010). The latter characterize the *style* of an action and are detected on the basis of movement dynamics. According to Stern, four main basic components enable vitality forms to emerge: time profile (start, duration and the end of an action), force, space and direction. Such components contribute to give the action a quality of *vitality* and *expressivity*. As Di Cesare et al. say:

> By recognizing the vitality form of an action, one can appraise the affective/cognitive state of an agent as well as his/her relationship with the action recipient. For example, if an action is performed energetically or gently, one can understand if the agent's mood is aggressive or kind, whether the agent performs the action with willingness or hesitancy. (Di Cesare et al. 2014: 951)

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The capacity to understand, as well as the expression of, vitality forms seem to be already present in infants (Condon and Sander 1974; Nadel and Butterworth 1999; Rochat 2009). Moreover, as Di Cesare et al. (2014) underline, Stern posits that, well before developing linguistic abilities, infants actively engage in non-verbal exchanges with their caregivers. In such exchanges, actions' vitality forms are (mostly unreflectively) exploited both by children and by their caregivers in order to interact and communicate and understand each other's affective and cognitive states (Shai and Belsky 2011). Vitality forms – or *rythmòs* traits – seem to be, therefore, among the first vehicles of intersubjective relations.

This feature is particularly interesting for our purposes. If *rythmòs* traits are among the first tools we use to interact with others and understand their mental states, then they

seem to be crucial for joint actions too, where, as we know, being aware of one's co-agents' intentions and plans, as well as predicting their actions, is of the greatest relevance.

However, there may be much more. My proposal is that, just as emotional attunement is capable of creating and reinforcing the rapport between subjects and a sense of belonging, thereby reducing uncertainty about the actual motivations and commitments of co-agents in pursuing the shared goal, so *rythmòs* alignment – that is, alignment in the expressive and dynamical features of co-agents' actions – may have a similar role.

The idea is that there is a level at which we can align with our co-agents that is not just rhythmical nor already affective and emotional. Co-agents' actions can align in their vitality forms (or *rythmòs* traits), such as gentleness, vigor, nervousness. Such features, as we mentioned, are qualities of movement that confer an expressive emotional content on mere physical behavior. Because of such expressive connotations, *rythmòs* occurrences are not simply rhythm occurrences, and *rythmòs* alignment is not just rhythm coordination. However, expressive qualities are not already personal feelings or emotions: the latter are complex entities that are arguably not reducible just to the dynamical style of actions.[11] In this sense, *rythmòs* alignment is also not yet emotional attunement. Rather, the former stands between mere rhythmic coordination and actual emotional attunement.

However, *rythmòs* alignment may also be crucial to joint actions because it can constitute a prior level of coordination from which actual emotional attunement may emerge. In other terms, an alignment in the expressive qualities

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11   Some contemporary philosophers have proposed that expressive behavior can be considered not as identical to affective states but as part of them (Krueger 2012, Overgaard 2012).

of co-agents' gestures and behavior can lead to the construction of an affective environment that can boost specific emotions and feelings in the group members. Going back to a previous example, this is what happens sometimes, for instance, in episodes of aggressiveness of one group of people towards another. Aggressive gestures and behavior towards others can produce (or reinforce) an aggressive climate in the group, which in turn can lead to the emergence of actual affective states such as hate and anger against the opponent. Indeed, *rythmòs* alignment can characterize a very pre-personal, non-reflective level – as in cases of emotional contagion and mass phenomena (Scheler 1923) – and can then influence a more personal, reflective level, such as that of actual emotional attunement.

Given this description, it seems plausible to argue that *rythmòs* alignment might be a way of strengthening the rapport between co-agents and a sense of belonging to the group. Since it contributes to creating a common affective climate, *rythmòs* alignment can boost a common sense of identity and can even trigger a more complex form of attunement, such as the emotional one. In this way, it can act as a motivational uncertainty reduction tool because, as we have already proposed via Michael and Pacherie's model, a sense of belonging and group-identity are crucial in reducing uncertainty about the actual motivations and commitments of co-agents in pursuing the shared goal.

It is worth noticing that, in this account, *rythmòs* alignment can be crucial on two levels. First, it can reduce uncertainty in the accomplishment of a *specific* joint action: indeed, it can foster rapport and sense of belonging, thus reducing uncertainty about co-agents' dispositions and motivations towards a shared action and about

the sense of loyalty to the group's interests and goals.[12] Moreover, it can create a more general sense of group identity, which can bind the members of a group even *independently* from a specific joint action to pursue. This could be a crucial trait in the process of group formation, which, however, we cannot adequately describe here.[13]

The last point I would like to highlight here is that in this paper I have mainly focused on cases in which *rythmòs* alignment *produces* or *reinforces* cooperation between co-agents and can function as a (motivational) uncertainty reduction tool. However, it is obviously also possible that *rythmòs* alignment happens where a high level of cooperation is already in place: in this case, *rythmòs* alignment can even be the result of cooperation – which could have been established by means of other tools, such as prior stated agreements or forms of joint commitment (Gilbert 2013, Pacherie and Michael 2015). However, even though these cases are possible and interesting to analyze, the most crucial cases for the purposes of this work are the ones in which *rythmòs* alignment is the one that boosts cooperation and acts as an uncertainty reduction tool. This is the reason why we concentrated on such cases here.

Conclusion

Joint actions are tricky for several reasons. One of them is that co-agents need to predict each other's actions and intentions in order to cooperate to achieve a shared goal. Such predictability is often undermined by different kinds of uncertainty. Reducing the risk of uncertainty seems to

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12   See, for a similar phenomenon, the analysis of emotional attunement as a tool for reducing uncertainty, which we developed above.

13   I thank an anonymous referee for letting me make this point explicit.

be, therefore, a crucial (even though not sufficient) aspect for a successful joint action.

In this paper, I presented two main tools for reducing uncertainty – that is rhythm coordination and emotional attunement. However, I also proposed another possible tool – namely coordination in *rythmòs*, i.e. the expressive rhythmic style of an unfolding action (Zhok 2012). *Rythmòs* alignment has been presented as particularly interesting because it illuminates a connection between the other two examined tools and a dimension in which mere rhythmic movement and affective states, such as emotions and feelings, can come together. However, *rythmòs* alignment is also interesting since it illuminates a possible pre-reflective and pre-personal level of attunement that can influence actual emotional attunement and have an effect on the affective environment of the considered joint actions. Based on these reasons, *rythmòs* alignment reveals itself to be a very fruitful dimension to investigate, also capable of contributing to an embodied account of our affective states and of our relations to others.

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Thinking Engagement for Social Change: Intentionality and Affect

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The contemporary global political scenery consists of an amalgam of contending and conflicting tendencies of progressive and antidemocratic voices. Moreover, progressive voices, directed towards the idea of social change, appear mostly in dispersed, non-continuous and unforeseeable ways. Their circulation being mediated by the mass media, wishing to satisfy event-seeking but often amnesiac publics, social struggles occupy public discourse in a non-continuous manner. At the same time, the decline of trust in old ways of political organization, such as party and labor-based political organizations, and the emergence of new ways of social engagement and relationality, such as social media, trouble traditional ideas of political participation, belonging and struggle. Furthermore, the diversity of motives mobilizing the support of progressive social change, and the blurring of the line between social struggles and mainstream policies[15]

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15   A current example of the ways in which mainstream policies incorporate radical social claims for their means is the case of feminist and lgbtqi objectives used for state racist propaganda, as in the case of 2016 Orlando shooting, after which, Donald Trump backed lgbtqi claims, in order to support the alleged link between Islam and terrorism.

make contemporary thought and practice around social change a highly complex issue that urges us to find new ways of understanding how social change does or could come about. In what follows, I argue that in the endeavour of finding new ways to understand social movements, the thought of what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari name forces, overflowing political actors' conscious intentions, and the acknowledgement of affections that influence us might be clarifying. The idea of Deleuze and Guattari is that the character of affections that spur us to action, distinct from consciously perceived emotions, consists in unconscious forces, the understanding of which could have liberating consequences.

In the beginning of this essay, I will use three examples of contemporary political mobilizations that will help me illustrate my point on the little relevance of the intentional character of engagement in social change, and the significance of an affective understanding of political struggles in our times. Consequently, after having analysed my theoretical hypotheses in the main part of the essay, I will revisit the same examples at the end of the paper and try to see them under the theoretical light that I will have set forth.

A common definition of civic or public engagement in political science is the collaboration of individuals with the aim of achieving a public good (Zukin et al. 2006: 51). Extending the above definition for the purposes of social change, by the notion of engagement, here, I will be referring to a – relatively durational – active commitment of an individual or a group to the idea of socio-political change. In both cases, this activity of engagement is supposed to be based on the capacity for rational deliberation and favourable choice-making, supporting the interests of the individu-

al or the group. By intentionality, I will be referring to the commonsensical (that is non-philosophical) idea of purposefulness. In other words, I will be referring to the commonly expressed idea of the directedness of human actions and thoughts to certain conscious aims. This idea is generally underpinned by the assumption that people choose to direct themselves to certain aims out of free will. Only secondarily, and due to the limited scope of my essay, will I be referring to the phenomenological conception of intentionality as directedness of our consciousness to objects in the world, and to the relation between subject and object implied in this conception.

Three examples of dispersed contemporary political struggles

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The examples of Women's March in Washington against Trump's misogynist statements in 2017, the five-day riots in London in 2011, and the struggles against austerity measures between 2011 and 2012 in Greece are three more or less contingent examples of contemporary movements of political defiance at the centre, or the relative periphery, of the so called "developed", Western world. A common element of all three examples is that from the point of view of social change, their effect could be considered provisional or even feeble, and their nature could not be understood through a concept of engagement to social change, based on rational deliberation. People without stable or coherent political identities gathered in order to protest against a perceived injustice and shortly withdrew from this protest. In the case of the Women's March, the importance of the mobilization was implied in the title of the demonstration as the largest single-day demonstration in the history of the USA, yet it could be considered discontinuous with

other moments of feminist struggle, since more than half a year passed between this demonstration and the #MeToo movement. In the case of London riots, following the fatal shooting of a young black man, Mark Duggan, by a police officer, the result as presented by the media was largely negative, whereas the events themselves were soon ignored by the public discourse, despite their great intensity and their roots in the structural and institutional racism of the UK. In the case of Greek struggles against imposed debt and subsequent austerity measures, the declared aim of the movement was obviously not achieved. What is common in all these examples is the unpredictable and contingent way in which the movements appeared, against the circumstances and power structures that continued to exist before and after their appearance. Could the above examples be considered under the lenses of a conventional idea of engagement?

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Engagement in social change and intentionality

Civic engagement denotes the practice of participation of individuals in movements and associations beyond the realm of the states and the market, and is considered to tighten social bonds and strengthen democracy. Nevertheless, this latter, supposedly obvious claim has been contested by the argument that civic participation may function towards the perpetuation of social privileges (Armory 2004: 28, 29). While the association of engagement and change has been challenged, considerable effort still remains to be done in contemporary political theory, in criticizing the centrality of the idea of the subject (Widder 2012: 135), and hence the supposed centrality of the subjects' political engagement in attaining social change. Within political theo-

ry, common assumptions on agency, intentionality, duration and subjectivity have been questioned in many respects by the Deleuzoguattarian philosophy of affects, forces and becomings. Indeed, this philosophical approach does put the idea of intentional engagement into question.

Traditional ways of social engagement and social movements, such as the Labor, Women's and Ecological Movements, were based on the idea that the act of political struggle was a case of forging some kind of political identity, as for example, a feminist, communist, syndicalist, ecologist one and so on, that would lead to actions positively linked with an expectation of social change. As a consequence, these social movements have historically been characterized by forms of political engagement, creating a dividing line between engaged, and hence politically sensitive and active participants and those outside each movement, those who could be allies, but who, nevertheless, constituted the Others of each movement. This division subsequently coincided with differential emotional responses to those who were considered as outside of the movements (Goodwin, Jasper 2006: 623).

The underlining assumption in the above model of engagement is the idea that a sovereign thinking, intentional agent or subject consciously forms a political identity and decides to become involved in struggles to pursue social change, out of free will. This model denies the structural yet contingent ways in which individuals become involved and engaged in groups, and enters movements that may result in social change. Moreover, this view creates a dualist model separating the intentional subject from its action, and a clear-cut subject/object distinction where the subject is supposed to have a prior causal existence resulting in the

action, or, in other words, the subject becomes engaged and then change, the object of action, comes about. Although this idea, based on an ethics of political participation, is not without value at the actual level of life, it is nevertheless fraught with fantasies of the omnipotence, with which people invest their actions and reasoning capacities. Whereas I do not intend to show that subjects and identities may not be necessary political tools and means towards progressive ends, I would like to propose that thought around social change would profit from a philosophy of difference, immanence and affect that problematizes the idea that change can be the result of strong, unchanging identities and that it is causally linked to relatively stable rational and intentional political actors.

Intentionality and passions in Spinoza and Deleuze and Guattari

Underpinning the assumptions of intentional engagement in social change, the above model of sovereign individuality has been seriously undermined by Deleuzoguattarian and Spinozian philosophical theses. Spinoza contends that the idea of free will is a fantasy with which people cover their ignorance of the true causes by which they are defined. What people actually ignore, according to him, are their affects and desires, which lead them to consider what they desire "good" and what they reproach "bad", and not the reverse (Spinoza 1994: 160, Part III, Prop. 9, Schol.). His idea was that, contrary to what is commonly believed, concerning the primacy of rationality in defining human actions, people and their supposed rational judgments are actually defined by their *affects*, namely their capacities of affecting others and being affected by them. As embedded and non-exceptional parts of nature, humans are subjected to

infinite affections and interactions that are comprise their environment. Their intellect does not protect them from always being exposed to these affections, it can only help them regulate those affections towards their interest of persevering in their existence and augmenting their power (this interest is what Spinoza calls conatus). Therefore, he suggests that it is only the clear knowledge of these defining affective capacities that can lead to freedom.

Spinoza does not abandon the idea of intentional action, but he contends that the latter is attained through a long and painful process that consists in the positive understanding of affects and passions. According to him, the aim of a person or a society aspiring to be free is the attainment of active affects, linked to the emotion of joy, which enhance one's capacity for action and interaction. This state of elevated existence, when one can attain active affects, is only the result of the rigorous study of passive affects. While considerable criticism has been addressed to the prioritization of the emotion of joy in Spinoza and Spinozian literature, his claim is not that negative affects are not welcomed emotions of social interaction. The aim of philosophy, and therefore of every person or science interested in analyzing human behavior, is to know in great detail the function of all kinds of emotions-affects (characterizing specific groups or institutions and their relations) including the negative ones, rather than judge them as petty. Nevertheless, it is only under the guidance of positive affects that an individual – be it collective or singular – can reach their highest capacities for action and interaction. On the other hand, Deleuze and Guattari alter this thesis, stressing the importance of constraint as the motivational force of thought and action.

Deleuze and Guattari use and transform the above Spinozian argument, in their attempt to more fully overcome

the hypothesis of the intentional subject. For them, life transgresses the actual bodies that we perceive and the subjects and intentions that we attribute to them (Cole-brook 2002: 142). They argue that life is a multitude of machinistic processes and non-human forces in which subjects and forms are not actually the defining elements of action. What they retain from Spinoza is his concept of the affective aspect of reality, out of which they forge the idea of the affective formation of assemblages. According to that model, individuals and groups are parts of assemblages that become associated to each other according to the relations of speed and slowness, movement and rest,[16] which characterize their constituting parts, as well as their corresponding degrees of power, or else, affects, pertaining to these relations (Deleuze, Guattari 2014: 256). Consequently, bodies constitute or are part of assemblages, which contain a passionate affective element binding them together and bringing them into contiguity with other bodies-assemblages. This very possibility of forging connections between bodies is the criterion for freedom, as established by Deleuze. As Chrysanthi Nigianni puts it: "The primary agency for Deleuze then is passion and not action: the passion of being affected by the other, being effectuated by it" (Nigianni 2010: 113), as agency is primarily the capacity for interconnection. We will return to this point in a subsequent section.

Socio-political change follows the force of an encounter

As we saw above, for Spinoza and Deleuze and Guattari, passion is the motivating force of all reality (Meiborg, Van

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16   Stuart Hampshire offers an intelligible explanation of this point, placing this idea in the scientific context of Spinoza's time and proposing that one could substitute the idea of speed and slowness with our more familiar concept of energy.

Tuinen 2016: 12). The same is true of thought itself. For Deleuze, an indifferent claim for truth does not have any internal link with truth claims. It is only through necessity and the violence of an encounter that thought acquires its motivating force to reach truth. Extending this argument to political action, Kieran Aarons contends that we must overcome the idea that "an innate or default will to political change [...] resides in all of us". Consequently, we must discard the idea that the people who become involved in political struggles are morally superior to those who stay outside these struggles. On the contrary, "something must force us" to become engaged in, and undertake political action (Aarons 2012: 6, 10). We must be affected through an encounter to become mobilized, be it in the direction of social change, or otherwise. Change, therefore, is the result of a necessity that derives from encounters and the conjunction of disparate forces, of which we may not always be aware.

At the same time, for Deleuze and his philosophy of difference, change is an ever-occurring process. The above derives from a central argument of his philosophy, according to which, difference precedes identity, contravening a long-established philosophical tradition and common-sense idea. According to this principle, the emergence of the new is inextricably linked with Being itself (Smith 2007: 18) and does not depend upon our rational decision to effectuate it. Change is always occurring underneath the seemingly unchanging power relations and hierarchies, as well as stereotyped social roles and functions that organize social life. Change comes about through a process of becoming that substitutes the notion of being. The possibility of being affected by and allowing for change to spread lies in encounters that permit us to go beyond cemented assumptions about sociality, politics, life, humans and non-humans.

The possibility of effecting a positive social change lies in the chance of letting one's self, group or assemblage, enter a process of becoming, and specifically a process of becoming minoritarian. Far from being intentional, this process consists in succumbing to lines of flight that permeate the social body, permitting desire to overspill the social codes and roles that normally organize it. In order to let pure difference occur and therefore for actual change to happen, we need to distance ourselves from dominant nodes of power and let them become affected by non-dominant social positions, what Deleuze and Guattari call minorities. Minorities in this case, are the opposite of the majority, namely the dominant model for subject formation. In other words, minority denotes whatever differs from the dominant model of subjectivity in our times (and still now fifty years after the writings of Deleuze and Guattari), namely the adult, white, male, heterosexual, property-holder human.

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Moreover, Deleuze identifies the virtual, namely the potential of change and the advent of the new, with affect itself (Deleuze 2017: 119). For him, affect is distinct from the subjective emotions of everyday experience and states of things, and it denotes the de-personalizing function that is effectuated in cinema close-ups. Consequently, and expanding the concept outside cinema, affect is a non-personal force that sweeps away the distinction between self and other. It is not linked with a subject or, in our case here, a collective, understood in terms of sovereign subjectivation. It is the effect of an encounter with a force, or more specifically, as we saw above, with the force of a minority. Affect is not apt to provide rational explanations of our moral actions but goes beyond established morality, bringing about the new, or else change. Whenever there is a new production, this is brought about by an encounter with a

force circulating, contaminating the social field. Therefore, the production of a real change in the social field consists in the moment when everyday emotions reach their liminal point, and this can only happen either through art or collective micropolitics, that is a politics of becoming.

Intentionality and free will in practice: life attrition

Continuing, I would like to pass from the above philosophical arguments concerning intentionality, to a line of thought questioning how useful the concept is in rather practical political terms, and in understanding the positions and struggles of certain social groups against power structures. Lauren Berlant argues that in certain subordinated populations, the idea of sovereign subjectivity is a burden that does not describe the ways survival becomes a form of maintenance in the face of economic and bodily attrition. Using the example of obesity in relation to poverty to illustrate her point, and by reference to the current conjuncture of permanent global crisis, Berlant shows that, when life is deprecated and constantly threatened, then, intentional agency, which is normally directed towards thriving, is hindered or excluded all together. Individuals in those cases may act in ways that give them relief, like succumbing to unhealthy but soothing consuming practices, but cannot liberate them from the nets of structural inequalities, be them social, economic, racial and so on, in which they are caught. In these cases, as Berlant describes, slow death substitutes thriving and becomes a way of coping under the weight of a crisis that has become ordinary, rather than an exceptional event. Intentional agency then constitutes a fantasy that only perpetuates attrition. Disregarding these unsurpassable obstacles to the exercise of agency, domi-

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nant conceptions of it result in individualizing responsibility for structural factors of oppression, beyond the control of individuals. This individualization of the structural is linked to an attribution of guilt, as people belonging to affected social groups are seen as carrying a destructive agency. Contrary to that, therefore, Berlant underlines the necessity to develop a model of what she calls "lateral" agency, that is agency without intention (Berlant 2011: 18, 100).

To empower the above point, we can draw an analogy with the Spinozian questioning of free will, which we analyzed above. As Spinozian scholar Dimitris Vardoulakis puts it: "[T]he idea of free will is tightly connected with an idea of the separation between an ideal world of freedom and a fallen world in which the human is imprisoned" (Vardoulakis 2016: xvi). Berlant's argument identifies agency and intentionality with a prescriptive model that ultimately deprives the least privileged people from agency, in that its fulfillment poses as both imperative and impossible. Similarly, free will ultimately provides a prescriptive model for freedom, which condemns actual actions to the status of subordinated ones, that is subjected to external power. If we understand that all our actions are always responses to some external power (either to reverse, inflect, concur with or be subjected to it), we might acquire a rather immanent picture of the actions and passions that define us and therefore be able to think of our states of deprived power or passivity with greater compassion. That awareness could, in turn, contribute to attaining more equal interactions and models of relationality and therefore conduce to changing the current model of social interactions praising and maintaining hierarchy.

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Intentionality of the unintentional

The above line of thought does not simply suggest that all action is a result of passivity and we have no power over whatever happens to us. Spinoza and Deleuze and Guattari perform an undermining of the concept of intentionality that is nevertheless not absolute. There is certainly a place of indeterminacy and freedom in Deleuze, which he understands as the gap between incentive and reaction. Nevertheless, he contends that action – as well as thought – arises through constraint and emerges from the discord of faculties, rather than the rational will to avoid error, or in the realm of political action, to "do the right thing (sic)". The concept of the affective formation of assemblages and actions leads Deleuze to a conception of intentionality and agency, which is expressive, as Sean Bowden puts it. This means to say that Deleuze does not deny the idea of intentionality altogether but he proposes that "[...] an agent's 'willing' is not *behind* an action in the causal sense; it is, rather, *inseparable* from the incorporeal action-event that expresses it" (Bowden 2015: 250). This leads to an immanent understanding of action that does not separate the political actor-subject from the change-object that she incites, but sees them in a reciprocal relation of becoming, where the actor is transformed in the action.

Moreover, the dismissal of intentionality is not absolute, in the sense that, in order to place less importance to the rational, voluntary, sovereign self, to let go of the idea of intentionality, there is intentional effort that is needed, as we saw in the description of becoming. Letting oneself become affected by passion is the result of activity. If the idea of intentionality in political action is to be of any use to us, we have to understand it as what Jan Slaby calls affective inten-

tionality, commencing from a different, phenomenological perspective and pointing towards things in the world that is dictated by our affective encounters, capacities and dispositions (Slaby 2008). Subsequently, the notion of engagement is to be understood as an affective process, namely as a condition of being passionately engaged part of assemblages and forces. The emphasis Spinoza and Deleuze put on passions and passivity is not used to deny people's ethical responsibility, but rather to propose a different ethics of relationality, one that displaces the fantasized omnipotence of human rationality and embraces humans' power to affect and be affected by each other and by their non-human environments. This ethics of relationality could alter our understanding of politics, away from the popular idea of politics as reasoning activity towards an end, and towards the understanding of politics as forging of provisional affective communities or else assemblages. In this case, the understanding of the affective interactions between the parts of each assemblage would be crucial.

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Social change as new affective bonds

In *What is philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari develop the idea that the affective-emotional bonds produced in each struggle or movement of political radicalism is the criterion of change induced by this movement. They write:

> [T]he success of a revolution resides only in itself, precisely in the vibrations, clinches, and openings it gave to men and women at the moment of its making and that composes in itself a monument that is always in the process of becoming [...]. The victory of a revolution is immanent and consists in the new bonds it installs between people, even

if these bonds last no longer than the revolution's fused material. (Deleuze, Guattari 1994: 117)

As we saw above, for Deleuze, affective bonds are created depending on the differential speed and slowness of the particles comprising each body, be it individual or collective, and are formed through a process of becoming. Affect is a pre-individual intensity that exceeds subjects and distances, or brings them in contiguity. It is a dynamic force of either attraction or repulsion that is created through encounters and that influences a group's or a person's power to act. Moreover, as we saw, according to Spinoza, a positive affective interaction or encounter is one that enhances a person's or a group's power to act, namely to further affect and be affected (Ruddick 2010: 26). Transferred to the scale of collectives, positive affective interaction is a transformative experience and the sensation of a collective flourishing and empowerment. As Hasana Sharp puts it, arguing for a politics of imperceptibility in contrast to a politics of subjects, "[...] political practice might be analyzed and assessed in terms of the corporeal capacities, energies, and pleasures to which it gives rise". These elements cannot be assessed through an impartial objective point of view that measures the success of a struggle, but can only sensed by those who are affected by it.

Furthermore, according to Deleuze and Guattari, liberating affective exchange occurs, as we saw, in the process of becoming-minoritarian. This process creates an opening to virtual possibilities exceeding the actuality of present codified experience. However, this virtual is not dualistically opposed to actuality, but differentially contained in it. Moreover, in becoming, both terms of the process, the one that becomes, the major, and that through which one

becomes, the minor, become fused in a process where the distinction between the two loses its meaning. Deleuze and Guattari further describe this process of collective affective becoming as an active discharge of emotion, unlike the more personal notion of feeling (Deleuze, Guattari 2014: 400). Unlike feelings that may appear in repetitive patterns, and refer to the interiority of subjects, affects are indices of transformation that arises from interaction and influence. (Read 2016: 119, 120) Emotions, therefore, are just indices of this pre-individual intensity that surpasses individual actors and pushes them to become, that is affect.

Three cases of contemporary social movements as forces of affective becomings

According to the above, I will attempt to reread the political struggles examined at the beginning of this paper. My attempt will be guided by the following question: What if we stopped assessing political struggles according to the intentionality of the participants engaged in them and the success of the latter according to these intentions? What if, on the opposite, we tried to assess the affects produced in these struggles? The result of the Women's March – although it was not necessarily to forge permanent links and to proliferate the organizations fighting against patriarchy in the USA – was indeed felt in an amplifying and hopeful sensation, which travelled through space, that the time has come for feminism to become an issue that can be addressed in broad publics, however momentary and fleeting this addressing may be. In the case of London's riots, the appearance of a common sentiment of defiance against property and structural racism would stay in the minds and the bodies of those who participated in it, as a momentary

transformation of reality, as intense as the shot of a gun, to use Deleuze and Guattari image describing affect (Deleuze, Guattari 2014: 400). Finally, in the case of the Greek struggles, the experience of collective confrontation of the imposed depreciation of life would lead to a renewed sense of an open community and to the hope that social bonds could help people go through their suffering. People following the struggles could continue to attribute meaning to their lives, despite the dominant economic devaluation of it. The significance of the above struggles is to be found exactly in the force they manifested, going far beyond the simple response to the incentive that was supposed to have incited them, in new affective bonds they created momentarily and in the possibility of the populations involved in them to enter movements of minor becomings. Becoming woman in the case of Washington march, becoming black and becoming chaos of the British society in the case of London's riots, becoming an open political community of the impoverished individuals in the case of Greek demonstrations. The force of each of them was, in each case, singular, hence affirming the necessity of the moment that induced it, affirming the non-rational, unpredictable, passionate way in which people affect each other, that surpasses the linearity of actual existence. Like all movements of social defiance, those movements are moments of the emergence of the virtual in the unchanging actuality of life.

Conclusion

What is important in order for us to make analyses relevant to contemporary times is not to consider political organization or engagement as rational deliberative activity and as prior to struggles and as their cause, a view which would an-

alyze engagement as transcendent to struggles for change. On the opposite, we can speak of engagement only insofar as it is immanent in itself, and insofar as it is an affective engagement in an assemblage or a struggle in the course of happening, rather than projected to a fantasized future, or distinguished from already existing change in the making. Going beyond the paradigm of engagement as a subjective, intentional act, the affective aspect of engagement constitutes an event of a force joining with other forces, an almost physical event, or, in Spinozian terms, as a good encounter. This is an encounter that takes over the individual in forging more complex individuated entities, or else lets the individual enter a pre-individual level of connection with others and its environment. It is also an affective conjugation of the people participating and the bodily tendencies of their composing parts, which cannot be reduced to the supposed intentional acts that we perceive. As the result of an encounter, social change is always unpredictable, since the conditions of being affected, or else of becoming, are never known in advance (Deleuze, Guattari 2014: 250). Yet we can recognize change by the eruption of moments of difference in the ways of interaction produced between the participants and those outside a struggle. The criterion of change could be whether movements that reverse social hierarchal patterns of interaction, namely minoritarian becomings, have occurred. Change does not arise through the action of a rational individual that wishfully projects an idea of change into the future. When it occurs, it is a result of a passionate encounter and it coincides with itself as a process of becoming in the present. This unpredictability and openness of processes of political struggle are exactly those that give them their liberating potential.

The fact that the social movements are conjugations of forces is not to say that these conjugations are irrational, but

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on the contrary that the unpredictable affective dynamics composing them contain themselves a rationality that we have to embrace. To consider the rationality of affective forces leading to change would be a radical displacement of focus, away from the centrality we attribute to the capacity of human intellect to affect the results of its actions. Moreover, this model permits us to go beyond a dualist understanding of social struggles forging divides like those of the politically engaged civilian versus the indifferent one and the intentional and active versus the impassive, since every identity is rather understood as a dynamic and transforming coagulation of affective patterns of interaction (Slaby, Bens 2019: 6). In this understanding, social movements are open, contingent, ever-changing, multiple, transformative potentialities.

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The act of social engagement and change is about intensifying collective affectivity towards the becoming active of passion and the becoming-minoritarian of the social body. Following from that, an affective understanding of social change would consist in the awareness of those moments when, through collective engagement, the conditions of positive affective interaction are fulfilled for the multitude of those involved in it, independent of the chronological duration of this interaction. Understanding social movements as collective flourishing would mean ceasing to measure each participant by a universalizing common idea of free will and strong intentionality, but rather promote mutual affections between participants, so as to be able to appreciate the differential dynamic of each one, by virtue of the common action in which it is expressed. Such an understanding would mean that movements for social change would be an actual practice of what they seek to bring about, namely change, and an engagement in collective action and flourishing.

In conclusion, since chance and indeterminacy surpass intentions, the task of each radical social movement and political struggle would be to be open and attentive to the new, which is always already in the making. New ways to conceive the objectives and desired modes of change, new ways to pursue struggles and new ways to horizontally relate with and affect each other are always arising. The task is to embrace these in the present time of a struggle, and not in a utopian future to come, since change is immanent to the struggles and does not come after them, as the criterion of their success. In this sense, the proposition to give emphasis to the affectivity and not the intentionality of engagement makes sense as an attempt to prioritize relations in the present and allow the irruption of the virtual and horizontality into the common-sense, actual, existing ways to affect each other vertically.

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Double-Edged Vulnerability and the #MeToo Movement

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This paper intends at the same time to explore and prob-
lematize the idea of creating new forms of feminist engage-
ment based on the understanding of our constitutive and
shared vulnerability, both in its ontological and political di-
mensions (Butler 2009b). Vulnerability is connected to risk,
to the possibilities of being harmed or otherwise affected
(not only negatively) by others. Being vulnerable subjects
means thus being affectable subjects, and this affectabili-
ty puts the stability of our identities at risk. Nonetheless, it
is also the very possibility of our collective action and po-
tential liberation (Butler 2006). Vulnerability is connected
to the performativity of our identities: it is linked to both
recognition and to resistance; to affectability and to agency.
Butler's performativity explains how the mechanisms that,
in a way, help conform our identities contain the very seed
of our resistance to identity norms and constraints. This
speaks about the dual dimension of performativity: it allows
us to think about the processes of being acted on and, at
the same time, refers to the conditions and possibilities for
acting. Being acted upon means that we are vulnerable to

others, affectable by others. Vulnerability, as proposed by this paper, is linked to the idea of performativity in Judith Butler's work. To understand the double-edged dimension of vulnerability, to understand how vulnerability is, at the same time, acting and being acted upon, Butler's theory of performativity and her dual consideration of it must be taken into account.

Taking this perspective on vulnerability into account, this paper is an exploration of the potentialities and dangers for feminist activism that is somehow based in the use of vulnerability. These pages strive to reflect on how we can articulate a politics of transformation from the analytical exploration and the practical application of the concept of vulnerability, suggesting that we create a powerful ethical and political bond in the recognition of our common and shared vulnerability and affectability (Butler 2015). Nonetheless, this common and shared vulnerability should be framed in contextual and intersectional power relations that have an impact in how vulnerability is politically distributed in different ways for different subjects in different contexts[18]. In this sense, intersectionality is proposed here as a lens through which read the grounded vulnerability of subjects, in order to understand how the different traits of our identities intersect in diverse socio-political contexts.

This paper will argue that the digital feminist #MeToo movement is using vulnerability, and will analyse in which sense the concept is being used. From this performative point of view, this paper analyzes the recent #MeToo movement, with which many survivors dared to share their common precarity to sexual violence of many kinds. The riskiness of precarity will be considered, as it has been high-

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18   Intersectionality is understood in this paper as conceptualized by Crenshaw 1989; 1991, Spelman 1988, and Yuval-Davis 2006.

lighted that not everybody has the privilege of being able to show their vulnerability, and also that the constant reminder of it was considered harmful to many other survivors.

Vulnerability is not only linked to injurability, but also to the possibilities of collective resistance. By publicly exposing one's vulnerability to sexual violence, some responsiveness was made possible by the #MeToo movement. Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that critical dispossession can be risky: it requires to recognise that one is vulnerable and to expose the situations of vulnerability that one is enduring. It is worth asking, then: who can afford exposing their vulnerability publicly? How can we collectively take care of those who are risking their lives by exposing their vulnerability? Thus, it is important to reflect upon the difficult and risky –although necessary and extremely valuable– movements that highlight our vulnerability in feminist activism.

Double-Edged Vulnerability

In "Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics," Judith Butler explains how she moved from a focus on performativity to a more general concern with precarity, linking her preoccupations about agency and the external conditions that threaten life. Butler's theory of performativity is the cornerstone of her political and ethical thought. Performativity is, for Butler, the mechanism that operates in the acquisition of a gendered identity (Butler 1988; 1990). This mechanism organises different normative aspects of our lives –linguistic, social, cultural, psychic, etc.– that are key to attain recognition through daily acts of stylised repetition and interpretation. According to this, gender is embodied through a series of acts that are renewed and consolidated

through time. Adopting the concept of iterability from Derrida's thoughts on speech as citational, Butler argues that the repetition of gender norms is never stagnant –there is always a difference in citationality that is embedded in the very performative process– and that there is ultimately not an original that is being copied; thus, embodying gender is copying copies of copies (Butler 1990; 1993).

The performative mechanism does not only rely on the stylised repetition of gender norms; it also needs the exclusion of other traits that are considered unacceptable for one's gender:

> What is called gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo. In its very character as performative resides the possibility of contesting its reified status. (Butler 1988: 520)

And this is so because what is excluded does not simply disappear and lose all kind of connection with identities, but instead it conforms what Butler, following Jacques Derrida, calls a "constitutive 'outside'" (Butler 1993: 8): what is discarded is not completely alien, but somehow a part of what we are; it is something that threatens the very limits of our supposedly stable identities. Nonetheless, identities that do not fit the norm are considered as abject, as non-desirable and worthless; lives that do not matter. Abjection, for Butler, is not a place to live but has the potentiality of being a place that can allow and nurture resistance to instersectional power relations, understanding resistance as the ability to inhabit a place at the limits of understanding. The very act of inhabiting the constitutive outside can transform the established norms (Butler 1993: 3) just as the

very act of appearing in public when you were supposed to be silent is also an act of protest. In this sense, breaking from the normative is terrifying but also

> opens potentialities of being otherwise. These potentialities are not easy, happy and optimistic in themselves or for the sake of being alternatives, but they are enactments of different directionalities. (Górska 2016: 299)

Which different directionalities, if any, might the #MeToo movement be opening up for feminist activism against sexual violence? What could the movement be doing differently to enhance these potential directionalities?

Butler's performativity explains our identities contain the very seed of our resistance to identity norms and constraints. If performativity does not set into motion the perfect repetition of norms, but rather it is based on iterability, then difference is a part of us; the resistance to norms is a part of us. This speaks about the dual dimension of performativity: it allows us to think about the processes of being acted upon and, at the same time, refers to the conditions and possibilities for acting. This is one of the double edges of performativity: it is based on repetition that leads to recognition and exclusion; exclusion, at the same time, can lead towards resistance. Recognition can also cause exclusions. If, for instance, as Butler points out in "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?", same-sex marriage is recognised, a significant amount of other kinships and affects are being excluded from that privilege. But, at the same time, the excluded, the abject can exert resistance from the margins, from the constitutive outside. With her gender performativity theory, we understand that:

> Gender is prompted by obligatory norms to be one gender or the other (usually within a strictly binary frame), and the reproduction of gender is thus always a negotiation with power; (...) there is no gender without this reproduction of norms that risks undoing and redoing the norm in unexpected ways, thus opening up the possibility of a remaking of gendered reality along new lines. (2009a:i).

Gender performativity is linked to the differential ways in which subjects can access recognition:

> To be a subject at all requires first complying with certain norms that govern recognition –that make us recognisable. And so, non compliance calls into question the viability of one's life, the ontological conditions of one's persistence. (...). So it is, I would suggest, on the basis of this question, who counts as a subject and who does not, that performativity becomes linked with precarity (Butler 2009a:iv)

When Butler talks about precarity we need to understand it in the context of her analytical distinction between precariousness and precarity; although both notions are entwined in the vulnerable lives of subjects. Precariousness is an ontological shared state of humanity, a condition of susceptibility to being harmed. And this is a consequence of her stance on the relationality of subjects: we are all interdependent, thus, we are affected by others, and we affect others; thus, affectability is a crucial part of vulnerability. We are vulnerable to others, we are open to others. Precarity, on the other hand, is the politically induced condition that would deny equal exposure through the radically unequal distribution of wealth and

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the differential ways of exposing certain populations (…) to greater violence. (2009b:28)

The connection between performativity and precarity is clear for Butler:

> Precarity is, of course, directly linked with gender norms, since we know that those who do not live their genders in intelligible ways are at heightened risk for harassment and violence. (Butler 2009a: ii)

Taking these two levels into account, the ontological and the geopolitically induced, Butler states that

> the more or less existential conception of "precariousness" is thus linked with a more specifically political notion of "precarity." And it is the differential allocation of precarity that (…) forms the point of departure for both a rethinking of bodily ontology and for progressive or left politics in ways that continue to exceed and traverse the categories of identity. (Butler 2009b: 3)

The challenge here is taking both the ontological and politically distributed vulnerability as a starting point to rethink politics. How can politics shift if we depart from a consideration of the subject that relies on its constitutive and geopolitically distributed vulnerability? How can we think feminist politics that are based on the intersectional recognition of our ontological and politically distributed vulnerability?

Butler follows Spinoza to build her consideration of the subject and considers the human body as radically relational

and interdependent. This interdependence conforms the grounds to affirm vulnerability: both the capacity to affect and be affected. As Butler states: "The body is a social phenomenon: it is exposed to others, vulnerable by definition" (Butler 2009b: 33). This vulnerability is not reducible to injurability; rather, it is a response to exteriority, an affectability that precisely animates responsiveness to the world. Our own survivability depends on our relationality. In this sense, it is crucial to develop an ethics of relationality that focuses on recognising how we are bound up with others. In the case of feminist (digital) activism, this will be of the most importance: we cannot lose sight of how we are entangled to one another, and how our positions of privilege and oppression might be entwined with other people's experiences.

Within this framework and departing from this performative and relational consideration of the subject, Butler proposes working towards forms of political alliances that do not collapse into the simplistic idea of unity of monolithic forms of activism that erase contextual differences. Butler's aim is to develop a critical consciousness of dispossession that can lead towards collective agency and intersectional analyses.

The #MeToo Case

In all her reflections on performativity, vulnerability, and agency, Butler's preoccupation remains the same: How can we act together? "What makes political responsiveness possible?" (Butler and Athanasiou 2013:xi). It can be argued that some political responsiveness about sexual violence was made possible by the #MeToo movement. In 2006 Tarana Burke proposed the phrase "me too" to sup-

port women who had survived sexual violence. Burke ini-
tiated the movement to create a space in which survivors
could talk to other survivors, thus using the power of em-
pathy to eradicate the survivors' shame (Burke 2017). The
movement was thus initiated in the USA more than a decade
ago by black activist women who had experienced sexual
violence and who wanted to "let other survivors know they
are not alone" (Ohlheiser 2017). This has be framed also in
the broader context of feminist activist, since sexual ha-
rassment, rape, and sexual violence have been top priorities
in the feminist agenda since the second wave. One of the
most important strategies for combating these issues was
"the personal testimony of what we at the time referred to
as the 'survivors'" (Davis in Zarkov and Davis, 2018: 3).

The #MeToo movement's first aim, as it was conceived by
Burke, was to create solidarity networks among victims and
foster solidarity with the victims. Nonetheless, this paper
wonders, as Dubravka Zarkov and Kathy Davis do (2018), if
the #MeToo movement as it is being developed currently
through social media is accomplishing this objective.
In 2017, the phrase "me too" was revived in the form of a
hashtag by actress Alyssa Milano with a tweet that read: "If
you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as
a reply to this tweet". This tweet was replied around 40,000
times. The hashtag #MeToo flooded Tweeter and Facebook,
and became a tool to raise awareness on the magnitude of
sexual violence. As Butler states (2018): "The important
contribution of "#MeToo" is that the larger public is able
to grasp the systemic and pervasive existence of coercive
sexual conduct against women." The #MeToo movement
helped framing sexual violence as a social problem,
rather than an individual one, although this paper will
argue that the scope of its understanding of geopolitically
distributed vulnerability remained too narrow. By framing it

systemically, society can reflect on the broad range of actions we can take to systematically prevent sexual violence. This movement created open conversations about inequity and posited sexual violence within the framework of rape culture. In rape culture, it is assumed that sexual violence is a fact of life (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 1993). As Rita Laura Segato conceptualises it (2003), this assumed sexual violence is a part of a domination culture in which relations of inequity are sustained and maintained by pedagogy of cruelty. This pedagogy of cruelty intends to spread violence as a means to morally murder subaltern subjects. Through sexual violence, we are dispossessed of our own bodies, and our bodies are rendered disposable. Sexual violence is not a problem of women only: it comprehends the whole society. It is not thus a minoritarian problem based on the particular relationship between victim and perpetrator: it is an issue whose resolution should involve the society as a whole. Nowadays, in the current late phase of capitalism, what is encouraged is to feel less empathy and to eliminate any kind of social bondage. We are trained to have less and less consideration for the others' suffering, and feelings of solidarity are actively suppressed. In this manner, the #MeToo movement had the virtue of raising awareness on the suffering of thousands of survivors of sexual violence.

These sexual violence survivors exposed their vulnerability publicly through social media in the following days after Milano's tweet, creating a very visible collective bond between them. By doing so, they were using their position as dispossessed subjects to raise awareness on situation of vulnerability to sexual violence. This public display showed the different agents of sexual violence: the perpetrators, that were finally exposed; the silent enablers, such as agents, lawyers, journalists, or staffers; and the survivors,

"the silence breakers", as they were called when appointed Person of the Year in 2017 by Time Magazine. The silence breakers found a virtual platform in which to share their invisible stories. These stories became visible and sparkled conversations on sexual behaviour, consent, and care.

> The #MeToo movement is showing just how widespread sexual harassment is and how it affects countless of women (and men) across the globe. This is a welcome development in feminist struggles for more gender justice and a more equitable social world. (Davis, in Zarkov and Davis 2018: 8)

Through shared testimonies, awareness was raised about the lived experiences of many people who had been silent for a long time. Some survivors never even had the language to frame what had happened to them, and thus the unspeakable populations (Butler 2009a: xiii) found their voices in and through shared testimonies. This relates to what Miranda Fricker frames as hermeneutical injustice.[19] Hermeneutical injustice is the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding (Fricker 2007: 154-155). The #MeToo movement can be understood as a tool for enunciation that creates what Fricker calls a collective hermeneutical resource, which contains tools that facilitate an understanding of our social experience. By creating open, honest conversations about sexual violence, some survivors found out that their experiences were valid, and shared by many others (Gash and Harding 2018:10). And it also had

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19   Thank you to my colleague Romina F. Reckers for her insights on this issue, that were fundamental to the development of this paper.

> immediate consequences of some of the perpetratos admitting their guilt, providing public apologies, and – in some cases – being forced to resign their jobs or step down from public office. (Davis, in Zarkov and Davis 2018: 4)

The appearance of the voices of the unspeakable populations has disruptive consequences (Butler 2015). Speaking about sexual violence is a political act of confrontation to the socially accepted norms regarding sexuality. It is potentially transformative because it prompts a questioning of the normative framework and shows how it contributes to make certain lives more precarious. It openly shows injustices, and by doing so it can trigger outrage and a response from people who are worried about social justice. The enunciation of injustice enables the visibility of said injustice in the public discourse. If some injustice is not hidden anymore and we are provided with hermeneutical resources to better understand it, then it can also be targeted – potentially, it can be transformed. Injustices cannot be corrected if they remain buried in silence. Granted, rendering injustices visible does not mean that they will be consequently corrected, but at least the enunciation of them is a condition of possibility for its potential transformation.

Also, it creates a powerful bond between the survivors. The #MeToo movement mirrored in a virtual milieu the role of the consciousness raising groups that appeared in the feminist activism of the late 1960s in the United States. In these groups, lived experiences were shared and those who participated in this sharing realised that what they lived was not only individual, personal; it was also political (Randolph and Ross-Valliere 1979).

Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that critical dispossession can be risky: it requires (re)exposing the body, recognising that one is vulnerable, non-sovereign, affectable, fragile. It is worth asking, then: who can afford exposing their vulnerability publicly? As Zarkov states:

> Standing in the public eye and speaking about an experience of assault not only takes courage, it also takes incredible strength of mind and sense of self-possession in order to remain a *person*, and not be reduced to, or by, the acts of violence. (Zarkov, in Zarkov and Davis 2018: 4)

Many survivors do not have the luxury of exposing their vulnerability and, thus, a movement that is based on publicly showing dispossession can be exclusionary. As a matter of fact, this exclusion is well displayed by the cover of Time Magazine when it chose the Silence Breakers Person of the Year in. In the cover we can see the image of several women who have been outspoken against sexual abuse, "the voices that launched a movement", as it is written on the cover: Isabel Pascual (pseudonym chosen by a strawberry picker from Mexico), Ashley Judd (American actress), Taylor Swift (American songwriter), Susan Fowler (American writer, software engineer, and activist against sexual harassment), Adama Iwu (American visa lobbyist and activist against sexual harassment), and a cropped arm. This cropped arm is of the most importance. It is said to represent a young hospital worker who wanted to remain anonymous but wanted to be there "as an act of solidarity to represent all those who could not speak out" (Zacharek, Dockterman, and Sweetland Edwards 2017). She is a person out of view but not out of sight. She represents every

person that has ever feared speaking out and decided not to, or to do it anonymously. This cropped arm speaks of the fact that the #MeToo movement is indeed "a platform for individual women who were confident enough to stand up and powerful enough to speak out" (Zarkov, in Zarkov and Davis 2018: 5).

As previously stated, the #MeToo movement has had a significant impact on raising awareness on sexual violence. However, it seems to have assumed most of the times a monolithic ideal of the subject of feminism as a cisgender woman with a successful career: "The most visible #MeToo women are powerful: rich and famous celebrities, well-known TV personalities, journalists, and members of political elites" (Zarkov, in Zarkov and Davis 2018: 5). These women raised their voices to name their vulnerability to sexual violence, but at the same time they can do so because they profit already from a position of privilege. This monolithic ideal of the subject of feminism fosters a narrow consideration of oppression that lacks an intersectional lens and does not allow thus to understand power relations and other situations of oppression:

> Many people who do not conform to gender norms—masculine or feminine—suffer from discrimination and violence, and that form of gender discrimination cannot be explained by the framework of masculine domination. And discrimination on the basis of race, immigrant status, religion, and sexuality, all have to be understood as part of the present climate of reactionary politics. (Butler 2018).

The #MeToo movement has not been able to foster collective resistance and create subversive directionalities

as it has fostered a narrow understanding of geopolitically distributed vulnerability. This raises the question: who is able to publicly speak our about sexual violence? Have gender non-conforming people and other subjects that do not fit in the ideal subject of feminism found their place in the #MeToo movement?

This paper argues that the #MeToo movement has failed to represent a great amount of people who do not fall into this definition of the feminist subject. Because of this, the #MeToo case can be seen as an example of how feminist politics of recognition can lead towards other exercises of exclusion within the feminist discourse. Butler is very clear on this: queer politics must be wary of not repeating the same exclusionary patterns of hegemonic discourses (Butler 1990: 7-13). We should be asking ourselves: who can be left out of certain frames of recognition? How can we build less exclusionary, broader frames of recognition? In this sense, Butler's political thought lead towards an understanding of the intersectionality of our identity traits, and suggests us to give an account on our positions of exclusion but also of privilege within given power relations: we have to be able to take into account differential allocations of recognisability, question which discourses and identities are legible within hegemonic discourse, and be careful not to continue disregarding some subjects that might not be recognisable within Western feminist discourses and that may be further precarised and cropped out from ethical and political considerations.

As any other activist movement that has the Internet of Things as its battlefield, many ethical issues should be addressed (Ebo 1998; van Dijk 2017). Many people do not have easy access to the Internet and, as a consequence, they might not even have the opportunity to be affected

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by the movement; it may very well not exist for them, as it does not appear in their lives. Some people may not even know what a hashtag is. Let us think, for instance, of homeless women, who are in heightened risk of facing sexual violence (Goodman, Fels, Glenn 2006; Mycek 2018). Is this movement addressed to them or does it represent them when their access to the Internet might be limited or even completely impossible?

Although the movement was founded by Tarana Burke, a black woman, many women of colour have said that the #MeToo movement does not represent their experiences with sexual violence. What they experience differs from what white women do, and involve fetishization or objectification based on race or ethnicity, or different cultural expectations to be compliant and silent, sexy and wild, or bitter and angry (Springer 2007). They are also confronted with larger structural issues related to speaking up as a person of colour, that are increased when speaking publicly about sexual violence, as they are less likely to be believed (Donovan 2007). Also, queer, trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people are more vulnerable to experiencing sexual violence than other groups because they already live in the margins (Balsam, Rothblum and Beauchaine 2005). Reporting sexual abuse puts always a survivor in danger, but this risk is elevated when survivors are detained alongside their perpetrators, or when these are the ones that control the infrastructures in which survivors are confined (Brown, 2018). Survivors of prison sexual violence or LBGTQI+ people may have, then, a problematic relationship with a movement that is based on public display of vulnerability. Muslim survivors might also be entangled in this problematic relationship with the movement, as sexual violence remains taboo in Islamic

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circles (Baig 2017). The rising anti-muslim sentiments lead towards unhealthy protectionism of the community that silences voices that might highlight problems within the community. This contextual precarity of muslim survivors should be taken into account by the #MeToo movement or any other movement that intends to address sexual violence from an intersectional point of view.

These are only a few examples of invisible peoples who have been further precarised and marginalised by a movement that should be as inclusive as possible, broadening its perspective to be aware of issues regarding class, race, ethnicity, age, ability, sexuality, sex, or gender, among other identity traits. Because, as Butler claims (2009a:xii-xiii), "precarity is a rubric that brings together women, queers, transgender people, the poor, and the stateless", and our ethical and political stances should nurture this perspective in order to be more respectful with differences.

Also, it has been reported that the #MeToo movement has been careless towards, precisely, survivors of sexual violence[20]. This is so because of the absence of trigger warnings in people's posts. Trigger warnings are meant to be a advanced warnings that prepare us to face something that could trigger a negative reaction. This is crucial when discussing sexual violence (Carter 2008; Rentschler 2014). During the hectic first days of the #MeToo movement, sexual violence reports spread like wildfire on social media, and this had a negative impact on some survivors who were reminded again and again of their own experience. A simple

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20   These remarks have been collected from the virtual milieu where the movement was developed and also from conversations with the attendees to the feminist self-defense workshop that I have been coordinating in collaboration with the Center for Advanced Studies – South East Europe and the Center for Women's Studies (Department for Cultural Studies at the Faculty for Humanities and Social Sciences) at the University of Rijeka during the Winter Semester 2017-2018.

trigger warning helps survivors avoid that content and not being forced to face it without any cautionary reminder. In order to develop an ethics of digital care, trigger warnings should be taken into consideration when talking about sexual violence.

Furthermore, one could problematize the very notion of sexual violence that has been generally used by the #MeToo movement, fostering a narrow understanding of vulnerability as only injurability and exposure to violence, linked to a narrow consideration of the subject of feminism: every woman is a potential victim, thus being a woman is being vulnerable. The feminist ethical position would be, then, to create a subject that is invulnerable. This feeds the ideal of a self-sufficient and sovereign individual subject and it can foster paternalistic attitudes towards victimised identities, which is exactly the opposite of what Butler suggests with her affirmative and complex conception of vulnerability. It is of course true that women and other subaltern subjects are occupying a vulnerable position in this patriarchal society. Sexual violence, or even the fantasmatic presence of it, shapes our subjectivities within this system through a feeling of vulnerability to harm. As Susan Griffin states (Herman 1984:26): "I have never been free of the fear of rape". Nonetheless, focusing in this kind of vulnerability as injurability is limiting and does not allow thinking about the potentially emancipating possibilities of this concept. Vulnerability, understood in the broader and more intersectional sense that this paper proposes, is not only connected to exposure and weakness; its double-edged characteristics also link it with the possibilities of critical agency. Exposing vulnerability is not only risky for those who expose themselves, but also for the normative framework, as it is potentially subversive and disruptive.

Listening to the invisible, unspeakable populations would and will have a powerful transformative effect that can lead towards an intersectional feminist activism that does not disregard contextual differences, that is not based in an hegemonic subject, that is focused on not creating other realms of unspeakable people, that is wary of the intersection of identity traits that conform us and the differential precarities that they entail. As Butler states:

> In the end, the question of how performativity links with precarity might be summed up in these more important questions: How does the unspeakable population speak and makes its claims? What kind of disruption is this within the field of power? And how can such populations lay claim to what they require? (Butler 2009a: xiii)

Conclusions

Following Judith Butler's dual conception of performativity, vulnerability is at the same acting and being acted upon; it is at the same time a site of affectability and the very locus of resistance. Resisting in vulnerability can be risky: it entails exposing ourselves further and not everybody can afford exposing themselves when talking about sexual violence. On the other hand, the #MeToo movement has been fundamental to raise awareness on the insidious sexual violence that many people live, as it has provided with hermeneutic resources that help understand it. In this sense, vulnerability is not reducible to injurability but it is also linked to the possibilities of agency and to the creation of collective bonds. Being aware of our constitutive

vulnerability prompts responses to our exteriority and this precisely animates responsiveness to the others and to the world. Our own survivability depends on our relationality. In this sense, it is crucial to recognise how we are entwined with others.

It has been also highlighted how a movement that is based on publicly exposing vulnerability can be exclusionary if it is not careful with the analysis of intersectional positions of privilege and oppression, and if it does not create care networks to protect people who can be affected by public exposure of dispossession. A movement that intends to be as inclusive as possible cannot lose sight of how we are entangled to one another, and how our positions of privilege and oppression might be intertwined with other people's experiences.

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What guarantees the recognition of others' precariousness and situations of precarity? How can feminist movements avoid failing the most vulnerable? As it has been stated before, those who do not live within intelligible frameworks of recognition are at heightened risk for harassment and violence. Hence, feminist movements need to place specific emphasis on understanding how power relations work, and on avoiding narrow frameworks of intelligibility that place certain identities in more precarious situations that others.

It is important then to adopt an intersectional perspective when discussing sexual violence, and also to work together in creating these care networks in order to protect each other. This was the aim of Tarana Burke when she created the movement, as she stated that the movement is about survivors talking to other survivors and using the power of empathy to put an end to shame.

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Urban Movements in the Digital Era – the Case of the "Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own" Initiative

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At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is hard to imagine a social movement operating solely in the "offline" world. Over the past few decades, the expansion of computers, smart phones, high-speed internet and the social media has made it much easier for social movements to mobilize and protest (Earl and Kimport 2008; Carthy 2010). Although social movements have developed in parallel with technological transformations (e.g. the invention of press, telephone, television etc.), new computing technologies provide social movements with unprecedented tools for action. Costs reduction and the role of social media in bypassing the mainstream media filters are recognized as the most important gains from the digital revolution in the social movements field (Carthy 2010; Castells 2015).

However, despite various new opportunities offered by information-communication technologies (ICTs), certain negative aspects such as deepening of the digital divide, increased surveillance and privacy concerns, many forms of quasi-activism, digital noise and "fake news" - cannot be neglected (Earl 2010; Petrović 2016).

Having in mind both the opportunities and the threats posed to the civic activism in the digital era and by observing the case of the grassroots initiative "Don't let Belgrade d(r)own" (hereafter: the Initiative) through the lenses of the *connective action theory,* developed by Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg (2012; 2013), we explore digital strategies employed by this urban movement in organizational, networking and mass mobilization. We hypothesize that the organizational structure of the Initiative resembles the *organizationally-enabled network* (as defined by Bennett and Segerberg 2013: 48) that is characterised by the presence of advocacy organization(s) embedded in digitally mediated networks that enable personalized engagement. Another assumption is that the all-inclusive "right to the city" agenda, exploited in different forms within this movement, facilitates mobilization by allowing personalized interpretations of this concept. Our expectations are tested against the two datasets – semi-structured interviews with the key informants from the Initiative and textual and visual content of their official websites and Twitter account.

Theory of connective action and personalization of politics

Theory of connective action is developed by Lance Bennett, a political scientist from the University of Washington and Alexandra Segerberg from the Stockholm University. The

authors (Bennett and Segerberg 2012; 2013) make distinction between the traditional collective action as described by Mancur Olson (1971) and the new "connective" logic that is gaining prominence in the digital era. Olson claimed that collective action is marked with a difficulty to motivate individuals to engage (the well-known "free riding" problem and "dilemma" of collective action). Bennett and Segerberg, however, believe that digital media are capable of changing the dynamics of social action. They suggest that digitally networked connective action is based on a different logic and therefore does not require strong organizational control or collective identity (otherwise necessary for the conventional collective action) to succeed. Connective action relies upon personalized networks of individuals, groups and organizations that communicate and collaborate through the digital media. Connective action has the ability to overcome the free-riding problem, since people are genuinely motivated to contribute and participate in this kind of action.

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In place of the initial collective action problem of getting the individual to contribute, the starting point of connective action assumes contribution: the self-motivated sharing of already internalized or personalized ideas, plans, images, actions, and resources with networks of others (Bennett and Segerberg 2013:35-36).

Although virtually all contemporary social movements use digital media, according to Bennett and Segerberg (2012; 2013), the ways they are used make a significant difference. Based on the alternative organizational logics and the use of digital media, the authors differentiate between the three ideal-types of contentious action: organizationally-brokered collective action, organizationally-enabled connective action and crowd-enabled connective action.

Bennet and Segerberg emphasize, however, that those three ideal-types are composites of different characteristics that only approximate actually existing entities (Bennett and Segerberg 2013:13).

Organizationally-brokered networks represent a conventional form of collective action that highly depends on the work of brokering organization(s) as facilitators of cooperation among individual actors. Such organizations usually have formalized structure with leaders, strict hierarchy and formal membership. They require high levels of loyalty and commitment from their members. For this type of action, digital media do not play an organizing role and do not invite personalized contributions from the participants, but are used only as a tool to assist communication and coordination and reduce costs (Bennett and Segerberg 2013:13). However, for the next two types of connective action, digital media play an organizational role, altering the fundamental logic of collective action.

Organizationally-enabled connective action is based on loose networks of organizations and individuals supporting many different causes, where followers are invited to participate in a personalized manner. Interactive digital media and personalized discourses offer a variety of choices over how people can engage and contribute in the collective endeavours (Bennett and Segerberg 2013:13). This type of networks is characterized by the existence of: a) advocacy organization(s) that facilitates personalized protests and operates as networking backbone; b) digital media networks that personalize the engagement of public without attempting to impose any collective framing or to control the interpretations made by the individual participants (Bennett and Segerberg 2013:51).

The third distinct type, the *crowd-enabled connective action,* is characterised by "dense, fine-grained networks of individuals in which digital media platforms are the most visible and integrative organizational mechanisms" (Bennett and Segerberg 2013:13). This type of action is horizontal, marked by the absence of lead / central organizations, with digital media acting as a main coordinating and organizing mechanism (Bennett and Segerberg 2013:46). The authors use the term "crowd-enabled" to emphasise the "networked structures that emerge from the local interactions of numerous individual actors but that become connected across time and space via various, often densely layered technology networks" (Bennett and Segerberg 2013:48).

One of the central characteristics of the connective action is *personalization* of politics. Scholars exploring the patterns of political activism in the late modern democracies have detected a development of new forms of protest politics as a response to the crisis of representative democracy (Della Porta 2015) and a general shift towards more *personalized* ways of relating to political issues and engaging in the political field (Bennett 1998; 2008; Bennett and Segerberg 2013:52). From the social movement's perspective, personalization of politics means the encouragement of personalized framing by allowing individuals to interpret loosely defined movement agenda (e.g. "We Are the 99%" – the famous motto of the Occupy movement) in accordance with their personal norms, beliefs and interests (Bennett and Segerberg 2013). Movement agenda and ideational frames tend to be wide enough to enable people to identify with some aspects of the movement agenda though not necessarily with the whole package. Instead of broad collective identification, comprehensive ideologies and deep loyalties, new civic activism is characterised by an *ad hoc*, selec-

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tive and temporary involvement in chosen activities that fits personal preferences, general interests and biographies of the activists. New ICTs offer an operational infrastructure for the new forms of activism, since they assist the atomised population to connect, unite and act together in the political sphere. This participation style is usually characterised by the resistance to any kind of formalised membership and hierarchy (Bennett and Segerberg 2012; 2013).

Transformation of the patterns of political involvement demands for a change in social movement organizations' (SMOs) strategies and tactics. Adapting to the new reality, political organizations and social movements tend to employ personalized (digital) communication strategies, allowing for loose affiliation arrangements and flexible interpretation of the collective agenda (Bennett and Segerberg 2012; 2013). Bennet and Segerberg (2013:37) suggest that personalized communication created by these organizations poses two particularly important features: *symbolic inclusiveness* – they provide political content in the form that could easily be personalized and associated with various individual reasons for participation; and *technological openness,* that enables personalization through dissemination of customized content via social media. Since personalized communication provides an opportunity for individuals to participate and contribute, SMOs have a lesser organizational burden and therefore can act more as facilitators than leaders (Bennett and Segerberg 2013:37).

"Don't let Belgrade d(r)own" initiative and the Belgrade Waterfront urban megaproject

The "Don't let Belgrade d(r)own" initiative emerged in 2014 as a grassroots reaction to the Belgrade Waterfront urban

renewal project (BWP). This megaproject has been largely supported by the Serbian government with a proclaimed aim of improving the visual appearance of the city and fostering its economy by revitalizing the Sava amphitheatre, an allegedly neglected[22] area near the city centre located on the right bank of the Sava river, between the Belgrade Fair and the Branko's bridge.

In January 2014, the master plan for the BWP was publicly revealed and the construction commenced in 2015. The main investor is the Abu Dhabi-based construction company Eagle Hills. This company promised that they would build a unique, world-class, modern city area, well integrated in the local surroundings. Covering an area of 177 hectares, this new down-town district will feature a million square meters of luxury apartments, office and commercial space, along with high class hotels, cultural and art centres, skyscrapers and shopping malls. The total value of the project was estimated at $3 billion[23].

However, despite the big promises made both by the government officials and the investor, the project has been heavily criticized. There are several reasons for the negative reception of the project among stakeholders – citizens, civil society organizations and experts. Preliminary impact assessments of the BW project indicate a number of issues such as the following: inadequate location and the

architectural design of the buildings that is incompatible with the existing urban landscape; unclear financial effects

22   The government officials endorse the narrative that this area is underexploited and therefore should be put in a better use, despite the fact that it is inhabited by various social actors (residents, artists, small entrepreneurs etc.) already engaged in different forms of alternative development (gentrification) of this neighborhood (e.g, Savamala district).

23   https://www.eaglehills.com/sr/our-developments/serbia/belgrade-waterfront/master-plan (viewed 27 March 2018).

accompanied with a potential overuse of public funds; low level of transparency; *pro forma* public participation in decision-making process; increased levels of social inequalities and marginalization; unclear environmental impact; *ad hoc* modification of the national legislation for the sole purposes of the project etc. (Zekovic et al. 2016; Lalovic et al. 2015:35; Maruna 2015).

The Initiative gained momentum in April 2016 after the illegal demolition of the old buildings in Hercegovacka street[24] that was arranged for the purposes of the project. This incident provoked a significant amount of dissatisfaction among citizens and was followed by a series of mass protests organized by the Initiative (May-July 2016). The protests were peaceful, organized in a carnival and do-it-yourself fashion. The last large-scale protest was organized on the anniversary of the demolition. Afterwards, the organizers decided to conduct their future action in two parallel streams – direct local initiatives, on the one side, and conventional politics, on the other (e.g. participation in Belgrade elections).

Method

The methodological approach employed in this research combines the (1) mixed method content analysis of the Initiative's official websites and Twitter account[25] and (2) semi-structured interviews with the key informants from the Initiative (N=7).

24   Despite the fact that a group of masked people started the demolition in the middle of the night, the police did not react to the calls made by citizens.

25   https://nedavimobeograd.wordpress.com (older website)
https://www.promenadolazi.rs (newer website)
Twitter: https://www.twitter.com/nedavimobgd

Following Bennett's and Segerberg's (2012; 2013) distinction between the three ideal-types of collective / connective action, we aim at exploring digital strategies employed by the Initiative as well as the features of the digitally mediated network created around and by the Initiative. The second objective of this analysis is to explore whether the Initiative uses mechanisms that enable *personalized communication and participation*. Therefore, we scrutinize the *symbolical inclusiveness* of the Initiative's agenda (the existence of flexible and easy-to-personalize action frames) and *technological openness* of the Initiative's digital infrastructure (availability of interactive affordances at the official websites such as: donate money, buy products, participate, subscribe to newsletter etc.) for personalized participation.

Research findings

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Digital strategies of the Initiative

To what extent are the ICTs important for the Initiative can easily be concluded based on a number of different social media accounts (5), microblogging sites and websites (4) they curate[26]. The interviewees explained that organizations like the Initiative could never develop without the support of ICTs and that they were heavily relied upon all available digital tools. They emphasized the importance of the following functions of digital media: information dissemination; internal communication, coordination and planning; collaborative decision-making; external commu-

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26   Websites: https://nedavimobeograd.wordpress.com (previous official website); https://www.promenadolazi.rs (actual official website); https://ucestvuj.nedavimobeograd.rs
https://kakoseborimo.wordpress.com ; Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/nedavimobeograd ;Twitter accounts: https://www.twitter.com/nedavimobgd ; https://twitter.com/GlobalNdb ; https://twitter.com/Patkomobil ; Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/nedavimobgd/?hl=sr ; Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/nedavimobeograd (all viewed 6 August 2018).

nication with different stakeholders (individual supporters, allies, general public) and fundraising.

> We use almost all available communication technology. At one point of time, it was a huge advantage. I mean, it still is, because it is fast, cheap, but there are problems too (...) At the beginning it was easy – we had one Facebook chat, then the Facebook group where people could discuss what should be posted next, then the mailing list for more serious stuff and, of course, in parallel, the offline meetings of the inner core of the Initiative. However, today there is way too many channels of communication and the inevitable noise... Today, we have a mailing list of about 40 people that serves as a virtual space where people can discuss things that will be posted on the social media, then there are two Facebook chats – one for the larger audience and other for the inner circle (around 30 people) ... Then, there is a Viber group which serves more as a channel for communication with the broader audience (besides the newsletter) – which is created for the purposes of instant mobilization. The Newsletter group is the widest - several thousands of people. This is a one-way communication. Then, there is an external mailing list (of about 100 people), again for unidirectional sharing of relevant information. (Interview 4)

Facebook is considered to be a single most important mechanism for information dissemination and mobilization, as well as for internal communication, decision-making and coordination (mainly done though the closed Facebook groups). A previous research showed that most of the pro-

testers received information about the protest organized by the Initiative through Facebook (Nikolić 2017:46). Twitter is, on the other hand, an important tool for instant mobilization, while Instagram serves as a channel for dissemination of visually attractive content.

Members of the Initiative are well aware of the limitations of the ICTs.

> There is always a struggle to be up to date, to create content that is suitable for a particular channel of communication, always the game with ever changing social media and Google algorithms. Social media algorithms make it very hard to exit the "bubble" and reach the audience. So, beside public tastes, there is a significant technological barrier to visibility. You have to pay to be visible on the social media. So, to summarize, although social media and ICTs offer certain opportunities for action, such as quick reactions and relatively fast dissemination of information (especially in the context of mass media censorship) there are certain technological limitations such as "filter bubbles" and "noise" accompanied with a requirement to invest a certain sum of money in digital marketing. There is a fierce competition for the attention and it is very hard to become and stay visible to the relevant public and to maintain influence. (Interview 2)

The architecture of social media platforms shapes, to a certain extent, the Initiative's internal organization and external communication. This was mostly visible during the

Facebook's "explore feed" experiment[27], which largely affected the tactics the Initiative employed on this platform and had a massive impact on their reach and influence.

Digital scams were also mentioned as one of the ICTs related problems. For instance, a false web portal "Žuta patka[28]" (www.zutapatka.rs) was created by an anonymous group, with a sole purpose of confusing and misleading the followers and supporters of the Initiative by broadcasting fake news and targeted negative campaigns. Moreover, privacy and surveillance concerns have led members of the Initiative to use more secure channels of communication. As a solution to some problems of digitally mediated communication, the Initiative created a participative digital platform (discussed later in the text).

The Initiative collects money from individual contributions and sales of promotional material. Social media (e.g. Facebook campaigns) and websites play a significant role in fundraising. The older website of the Initiative has a webpage[29] ("Support us") designed exclusively for donations and purchases of Initiative's products. On the new website, the "donate" button is placed in the visual centre of the landing page, next to the "participate" button thus suggesting the importance of participation (either with donations or voluntary work) for the Initiative.

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27   Facebook started this experiment in October 2017 and run it till March 2018 in 6 selected countries, Serbia being one of them. The experiment involved separating users' feed into two – one for posts from friends and family, and the other for news and other content. Since users generally prefer updates from their personal connections, this experiment significantly changed the terrain for advertising and publishing.

28   "Žuta patka" in Serbian means "yellow duck" which is the most recognizable symbol of the Initiative.

29   https://nedavimobeograd.wordpress.com/podrzi-nas/ (viewed 7 April 2018)

Digitally mediated networks

Linking patterns on organizational website and social media can be treated as a decision that signals public affiliation preferences of organization (Bennett and Segerberg 2013:61). However, there is a difference between interlinking on official websites and "following" on social media. Partnerships presented at the official website could be considered as a stronger indication of a close relationship between organizations. On the other hand, one should be careful when interpreting the implications of "following" on social media as it could be created without any intention of showing "real" support or partnership. Moreover, it is often the case that organizations follow their opponents on social media to keep an eye on their activities. In order to distinguish between virtual "friends" and "foes", and to be sure that the following is reciprocal, we complemented the Twitter co-link analysis with a close inspection of the characteristics of the organizations that are considered to form a part of a larger issue advocacy network the Initiative belongs to. We also asked our informants to evaluate the degree of "online" and "offline" collaboration with the listed organizations, as well as the degree of closeness of their ideas and goals to the Initiative's vision and mission.

The overview of the official[30] Twitter account (@nedavimobgd)[31] shows that the Initiative has been present on this

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30   Beside the main one, the Initiative has two additional Twitter accounts dedicated to different purposes: @patkomobil and @GlobalNdb. The first one was created during the Belgrade election campaign with promotional purposes, while the other - @GlobalNdb is a part of the international networking, information dissemination and promotion of the Initiative.

31   For these purposes we have used the foller.me tool, combined with the thorough manual analysis of the Initiative's account, followers and accounts they follow. It should be noted that, since we did not have admin access to the analyzed account, our insights into the its characteristics and impacts are rather limited.

platform for three years and during that time[32] published 5,005 tweets, gained 7,199 likes, and 16,995 followers while following 333 people. The ratio[33] of 51.04 followers per following means that more people follow @nedavimobgd out of interest than as a follow-back. Based on these indicators, the Initiative can be considered a social media influencer.

The most frequently linked[34] domains with the Initiative's Twitter account are the following[35]: "Insajder" web portal (www.insajder.net), "Danas" daily newspaper (www.danas.rs), "Vice" media platform (www.vice.com); humoristic web portal "Tarzanija" (www.tarzanija.com), "Krik" independent media platform (www.raskrikavanje.rs); "Blic" daily newspaper portal (www.blic.rs), "B92" news platform (www.b92.net) and "N1" news platform (http://rs.n1info.com). With the exception of "Tarzanija", these accounts belong to the mass media companies, most of them being part of to the alternative (oppositional) media scene in Serbia[36]. These findings suggest that one feature of the digital networking strategy of the Initiative is to exchange information with the representatives of oppositional mass media and to disseminate their content, thus acting as a part of a wider alternative public scene.

The analysis of the *Twitter network* of the Initiative shows that it consists of 32 civic organizations - 16 local, grassroots initiatives mostly focused on the issues of urban living (noise, pollution, communal problems, illegal dislodgement etc.), 14 NGOs (of different kinds), and two grassroots po-

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32   Analysis conducted on the 20th March 2018.

33   Follower's ratio is one of the indicators of the influence on Twitter.

34   Used research tools: Twitter analytics – foller.me

35   Platforms like twitter.com, bit.ly, www.pscp.tv, www.facebook.com, youtu.be, were excluded from the analysis because they are not specific enough.

36   With an exception of "Blic" News portal and "b92" web platform.

litical parties / movements. The average score of the online collaboration between the organizations as assessed by the interviewees is 5.15 (out of 10) and of the offline collaboration is slightly higher – 5.8 (out of 10). The estimation of the similarities of the ideas and goals between the Initiative and the other organizations is rather high - 8.4 (out of 10), which indicates that this is a network of closely related organizations able to work together on different urban issues in Serbia[37]. This means that a considerable amount of collaboration, both offline and online, takes place within the network with some organizations more frequently partnering with the Initiative. Certain groups and organizations in the Initiative's Twitter network belong to the radical left, but the majority are part of the so called "civic" left orientation, characterized by general acceptance of the capitalism and opposition to all kinds of socio-cultural discrimination. As mentioned by the interviewees, they tend to collaborate with different organizations mainly regarding urban issues. Sometimes, however, partnering organizations have some other focuses (for instance not related to the urban context) or have more radical approach, which the Initiative does not support as they try to keep a moderate and inclusive agenda. The results of a previous research show that the Initiative's main discourse consists of a combination of the "good governance" discourse (democratization, transparency, citizen participation and the rule of law) and leftist ideas (social justice and equality, protection of common good against the predator investor urbanization etc.) (Morača 2016:7-9).

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37   Similar initiatives from other countries the Initiative follows on Twitter and sometimes interacts or collaborates with are: "Zagreb je naš" (Zagreb is OURS) (@Zagrebjenas) from Croatia, "Barcelona en Comu" from Spain, Massa Critica (Critical Mass) (@massa_critica) from Italy and DiEM25 (international movement).

The co-link analysis of the Initiative's official websites (both the old and the new one) did not yield any results, since there are no direct links to the partnering organizations. Previous research based on the Facebook network analysis showed that the Initiative was closely related to the "Ministry of Space", but also to some other civil society organizations – the "Academy of Architecture" being one of them. They exchange resources and support each other in the digital world (Petrović 2016), but also in the offline activities (Interview 2).

Personalization of participation

1. Technological openness

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In terms of personalized participation, *technological openness* means availability of various interactive affordances on organizational websites and/or social media profiles. Digital access points like: donate button, virtual shop, comments option, subscribe to newsletter section, social media buttons, downloadable protest material etc. – can be offered to people to participate on their own terms. The number of interactive affordances, their characteristics and relative position at the webpage (visual centre, sidebar, header or footer, etc.) also inform about the intentions of organization to engage their supporters (Bennett and Segerberg 2011; 2013).

The Initiative has two websites; the newer one was created as a part of the campaign for Belgrade elections. Both sites are strategically designed to present information about the Initiative, its causes and planned actions. The *older website* has tree access points for participation: "participate", "support us" and "comment"; while the *new website* contains

five: "participate" (page where visitors can leave their contact information), "donate", "forum" (linked to the digital platform), "materials" (downloadable stickers, posters and flyers) and "newsletter" (image 1). In technological sense, both websites can be considered as "open".
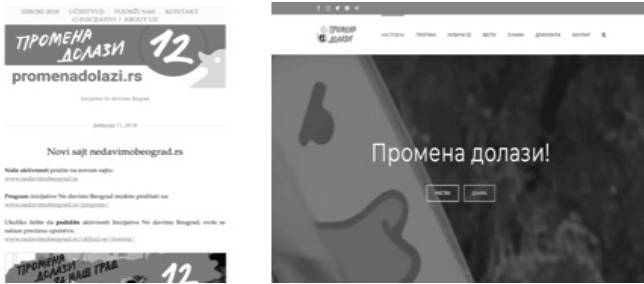

Image 1: The landing pages of the (a) older and (b) new websites of the Initiative

The *participative digital platform[38]* serves as a digital public space where members and visitors have the opportunity to discuss various topics and contribute in a personalized manner. It was designed to enable different streams of communication around particular subjects of interest, thus limiting cross-posting, interruption, digressions etc. As explained by the representative of the Initiative:

> The new digital platform is one way of communicating with people and making decisions. Involvement can be thematic, operatial and territorial. This is "work in progress", so we will see how it develops (…) The platform should develop as a system of delegating responsibilities and roles (...) We came up with the idea about the platform as a result of the cooperation with

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38   https://ucestvuj.nedavimobeograd.rs/ (viewed 1 April 2018)

the people from Barcelona ("Barcelona en Comu") and friends from Zagreb ("Zagreb is OURS") who have a similar approach. (Interview 2)

The platform consists of six different participation categories – general (for discussions on general themes), urban policies (with 17 subsections: urbanism, housing, public transport, culture, sports etc.), hotspots (places where civ

ic action is most urgently needed), other (themes which do not fall into any of categories), international corner (for people not fluent in Serbian) and the archive (image 2). Visitors can register and participate, but discussions are also visible to unregistered users. Several filtering tools enable personalization of the list of available topics.
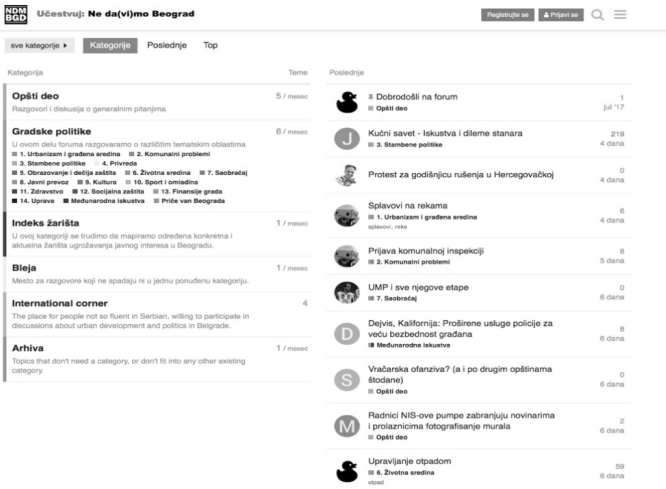
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Image 2: Participative digital platform – "Participate: Don't let Belgrade d(r)own"

Social media also provide an open channel for communication and information exchange with the supporters of the Initiative. For instance, a significant effort is invested in the creation of Facebook posts that will "provoke a "healthy" interaction and dialogue with people" (Interview 6). Occasionally, the Initiative shares or reposts the user-generated content (e.g. photos and videos from protests, inspiring statuses etc.).

Another channel of communication, as explained by our interviewee, is the mailing list. "People send us various information and express their willingness to participate. On our part, we try to stay in touch with them as much as possible at least by sending them newsletters on a regular basis." (Interview 1). The weekly newsletter consists of the social media press clippings complemented with the editorial introduction.

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The analysis of the Initiative's websites and social media accounts indicates that numerous easy-to-access points of entry into the Initiatives' digital action space are available and tailored for different types of users (volunteers, donors, supporters, bystanders etc.), which all together implies a significant level of technological openness for personalized participation.

2. Symbolical openness

Contemporary urban movements tend to mobilize around various issues – from declining air quality to the increasing social injustice in the city. The Initiative covers a wide

range of urban topics, as declared in the "About us" section of the Initiatives website:

> Initiative "Ne da(vi)mo Beograd" (Don't let Belgrade d(r)own) brings together organizations and individuals interested in urban and cultural policies, sustainable city development, fair use of common resources and the involvement of citizens in the urban development of their environment.[39]

The main principles (values) of the Initiative are the following: *citizens' sovereignty* (right to public participation, legal and social security; and collective sovereignty of associated citizens); *public policy tailored to meet the needs of citizens* (protection of public good and citizens' rights to better quality life, culture, education, public transport, clean environment etc.; institutional adjustment according to the needs of citizens; responsible government); and a *just society* (egalitarian society and fulfilment of basic needs for everyone; solidarity).[40]

The main principles applied in the urban context as well as the most prominent slogan of the Initiative*: "Whose city? Our city!",* make a clear reference to the Lefebvrian (1996) "right to the city" - one of the recurrent themes of urban movements, both in western democracies and in post-socialist countries (Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer 2012; Jacobsson 2015). The "right to the city" motto became popular mostly due to the fact that it is able to encompass a variety of issues that emerged as a result of aggressive neoliberal urbanization and the economic crisis that has deteriorated

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39   https://nedavimobeograd.wordpress.com/o-inicijativi/ (viewed 10 April 2018)

40   https://nedavimobeograd.rs/o-nama/ (viewed 10 April 2018)

the quality of life even of the more privileged urban dwellers. The "right to the city" is a multidimensional concept with at least two different interpretations – one, radical and close to the original Lefebvre's idea (1968), and other - reformist, usually present in the work of NGOs and in urban policies. In the "revolutionary", interpretation, the "right to the city" means democratization of the city and the right of its citizens to (re)create the city through the revolutionary forms of appropriation of the city. The advocates of the "right to the city" in a moderate meaning accept the capitalist system as given and focus their demands on the inclusion and protection of different civic rights in order to secure public participation in the decision-making process (Mayer 2009). Urban movements operating under the "right to the city" banner are usually coalitions of leftists and alternative movements (of artists and creative professionals), community-based organizations, and citizens mobilized against the restructuring of their neighbourhoods (Mayer 2009). The Initiative balances between different approaches and interests of various groups, by insisting on the common set of values such as the protection of urban public good and basic human rights, reduction of inequalities, rule of law, protection of deprived social groups etc. The inclusive agenda resonates with a broad audience, thus making the mobilization pool larger. The interviewees explained that the Initiative's action framework was bounded to the urban level, thus encompassing all aspects of urban living. They cooperate with diverse civic groups and organizations on a common ground, putting differences aside. For instance, although they frequently collaborate with the leftist organizations, they avoid certain parts of their agenda (e.g. class struggle). However, they endeavour to bring the left-wing ideas closer to the wider public who may, due to the specific historical context, have a negative attitude towards the left,

while being unaware that they actually share many ideas from the left-wing spectrum.

Similarly to the famous "We are the 99%" motto of the Occupy movement, broad enough to attract a wide public support (Bennett and Segerberg 2012; 2013), the Initiative's "Whose City? Our City!" slogan, as well as a comprehensive agenda, offer a possibility for personalized participation. For some of the participants, it has a revolutionary connotation – the right of people to create their city by the means of radical political change. For others, it means protection of various rights (human, social, environmental etc.) in the urban space.

Organizational transformation of the Initiative

Up until recently, the Initiative has been a loosely organized network of individuals, mostly young civic activists (many of them also engaged in some other CSOs) and professionals - architects, journalists, designers, social scientists etc. However, in the autumn of 2017, the Initiative commenced a process of transformation, partly due to the preparations for the Belgrade elections that were held in March 2018. We have conducted the interviews in a particular moment in time when a transition from a grassroots horizontal network towards a more robust and hierarchical organizational form was about to happen. As explained by one of the leaders of the Initiative, this change seemed necessary since the lack of a clear division of tasks accompanied with the unclear decision-making procedures had created, on the one hand, a disarray in the organization of daily activities and, on the other, an atmosphere of suspicion where most of the participants felt excluded. The logic behind the new organizational scheme is that everyone should have a clear idea about their position, role and related tasks.

> The problem is when you have a non-hierarchized collective without an official structure, but rather with an (implicit) structure, invisible, unspoken but existing nevertheless... Newer members do not have the same information as those who are here longer, do not have the same access to knowledge...Because of the decision-making process that lacks clear rules, some people feel excluded. In addition, there is a considerable lack of responsibility. Changes in the structure should lead to a clearer distribution of roles and responsibilities. (Interview 1)

The prospective organizational structure consists of the Coordinating body that acts as the central organ and three types of working groups – thematic, territorial and operational. Two representatives from each of the three groups are delegated to the Coordinating body. The Coordinating body is the main decision-making organ which, at the proposal of the working groups, adopts strategically important decisions and coordinates the action. The role of the operational groups is to maintain daily activities (e.g. finance, media relations, internal communication, etc.) while thematic groups are the main forum where policies in areas such as transport, culture, urbanism, housing, environment etc. are proposed, discussed and defined. Territorial groups are focused on the problems related to specific parts of the city (Brochure: 18). New organizational structure is tighter, mechanisms of representation are put in place, and hierarchical relations are now evident. Nevertheless, participative decision-making process is preserved and encouraged within the working groups.

The leaders of the Initiative assume that the new organizational structure will resonate better with the local political

culture and mentality than the previous one, thus yielding better results.

> People here do not understand flexible approach where there is no clear leadership or instructions on what to do... Here in Serbia, it is uncommon to work in the way we do, as a rule everything is hierarchized ... People don't get this "let's discuss it together" approach. They reject it, they want us to give them clear directions. Otherwise, we are perceived as disorganized... When they see how we operate, people think: "What is this, some hippies?!" (Interview 1)

Conclusion

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The main goal of the research was to explore digital strategies employed by the Initiative, as well as to examine the role that ICTs play in structuration of the Initiative's network. The analysis has shown that the Initiative operates as the organizational backbone of a larger, digitally enabled issue network of organizations, initiatives, groups and individuals who share a similar set of values and goals. The ICTs facilitate collaboration with partnering organizations (CSOs and the independent media) and make mobilization of the individual supporters much easier. Information-communication technologies have a significant impact on the process of organizational structuration and on the dynamics of network development. An inclusive approach and a broad agenda demonstrate a symbolic openness of the Initiative, thus enabling personalized participation. On the other hand, various technological access points make citizen participation easy enough. The research findings suggest that the Initiatives' network approximates the ideal

type of organizationally-enabled connective action as defined by Bennett and Segerberg, based on the loose issue networks of organizations and individuals supporting many different causes in which the followers and supporters are invited to participate in a personalized manner.

However, due to the Initiative's ongoing transformation from a loose issue network towards a more hierarchical professionalized organization it is to be expected that the role of ICTs will decrease from an "organizing mechanism" to one of the supporting tools. Considering citizen participation, it will probably change from the personalized and flexible model to a steadier form of membership, accompanied with a decrease in number of inconstant supporters, but an increase in committed members. Having in mind the typology of the collective action presented at the beginning of the paper, this organizational shift potentially means a transformation from an organizationally-enabled connective action network towards the organizationally-brokered collective action. However, this early in the process the Initiative's transformation should not be taken as fixed and permanent since this could easily be a reversible process with strategical shifting between professionalized and grassroots forms, that enables both the organizational preservation and the goal of inducing social change. Exactly this was the case with the Initiative's slightly older counterpart - the Right to the City movement from Zagreb – which managed to avoid the Michels's iron law of oligarchy and deradicalization by constant shapeshifting, networking and reinvention of its manner of operating (Dolenec et al. 2017:1423). Therefore, the effects of the current transformation of the Initiative are yet to be observed and assessed. It will be interesting to see whether this is an enduring change, or the Initiative will maintain the practice

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of strategical shapeshifting. How this transformation will affect their ability to produce social change and influence urban policies? And, possibly even more important, what would be the consequences on development of the activist citizenship in Serbia? This shift possesses an inherent risk of routinization and bureaucratization and, if it turns out to be a long-term change, it might have adverse effects on the expansion of the participatory civil society and bottom-up democratization processes in Serbia.

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Knowledge-Based Activist Engagements

Tamar Katriel[41]

Knowledge-based activist practices, i.e., efforts to collect and disseminate information, and points-of-view that are not easily available in the public sphere, form part of the work of many grassroots groups in their struggle for social and political change. Such practices seek to expose the public to factual information and analyses activists can provide on the one hand, and to encourage citizens to act in response to the new knowledge they have gained. Over the years, different variants of knowledge-based activism have come under a range of headings - 'alternative journalism', 'media activism', 'memory activism', or 'data activism' (e.g., Downing 2011, Pickard and Yang 2017, Gutman 2017, Milan 2013, 2017).

These activist ventures are anchored in an acknowledgment of the public's right to know (Schudson 2015), and form part of what John Keane (2009) terms "monitory democracy", which he describes as characterizing today's post-representative democracy - a version of democracy constituted by ongoing citizen involvement in governance via civil society organizations that goes beyond participation by voting for representatives. As Keane puts it: "In the era of monitory democracy, the constant public scrutiny of

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power by hosts of differently sized monitory bodies with fo-otprints large and small makes it the most energetic, most dynamic form of democracy ever" (Keane 2009, 743). Mo-nitory democracy is associated with the rise of multimedia societies as well as the rise of contemporary 'audit culture' (Strathern 2000). It delineates a techno-social landscape characterized by a demand for accountability, by institutio-nal arrangements designed to monitor social practices, and by citizens' participatory engagement in the monitoring of governmental action.

Much of this civic engagement consists of grassroots in-terventions that form NGO networks of various sorts. The two cases I focus on in this chapter demonstrate two com-plementary trajectories for activist enterprises initiated by members of the young generation of activists in contempo-rary Israel, both of which seek to effect social and political change by providing new information and inserting new voices into the public sphere. The first grassroots organi-zation I address, an organization made up of former Isra-eli soldiers who spent part of their military service in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, is a 'witnessing organiza-tion' (Frosh 2006) called *Breaking the Silence*[42]. Its members focus on circulating experiential knowledge of the military occupation that is either not available to the Israeli popula-ce or rejected by it on the rare occasions in which it is cove-red by the press (Dor 2003, 2005).

As discussed by Michal Givoni (2016) in her analysis of the activist work of the globalized organization *Doctors Without Borders*, witnessing has become a central practi-ce of human-rights activism in the past century, often re-sponding to governmental attempts to keep information about human rights abuses out of public view. In Israel as

42   Hence, BTS, see http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/

elsewhere, human rights organizations have consistently undertaken to collect, preserve and circulate witnessing accounts about human rights abuses. Some accounts, such as the one discussed by Givoni, involve eye-witnessing by outsiders. Others, such as the ones collected and circulated by the Israeli Alternative Information Center *B'Tselem*[43] involve victims' own personal testimonies. BTS provides a third alternative by circulating witnessing former soldiers' accounts that acknowledge their role as perpetrators yet see themselves as secondary victims of the occupation regime (Katriel 2009).

The knowledge these veterans share is based on their first-hand experience of the everyday life of the occupation in which they were both participants and observers. As observers of the scene of occupation they provide detailed, factual accounts of incidents of abuse they witnessed; as participants in it, their witnessing takes on the quality of "flesh witnessing", a category of war witnessing proposed by military historian Yuval Harari, who describes it as follows

> [...] "eschewing the rationalist authority of logical thinking and the scientific authority of objective eye-witnessing, veterans lay claim to the visceral authority of "flesh-witnessing". They are neither thinkers nor mere eye-witnesses. Rather, they are men (and occasionally women) who have learned their wisdom with their flesh. In order to establish their authority as flesh-witnesses, modern veterans first have to create the idea of flesh-witnessing in the minds of their audience. This is done by repeating two basic formulas when describing extreme war experiences: 'It is impossible to describe it' and 'Those who were

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43   See https://www.btselem.org/

not there cannot understand it'. These formulas create a fundamental difference between flesh-witnessing and eye-witnessing or scientific observation" (Harari 2008: 7).

As in the case of flesh-witnessing by soldiers in other modern battlefields, BTS witnessing is grounded in former combatants' need and entitlement to tell their personal stories, and carries an aura of authenticity.

The second organization addressed in this chapter is an Israeli organization whose focus is on data activism (Milan 2013, 2017; Milan and van der Velden 2016), and whose members are mostly young professionals with an expertise in new technologies, particularly software development. Defining data activism as a mode of activism that explicitly engages with new forms of information and knowledge in the digital age, including their processes of production and circulation, scholars have argued that this form of activism involves new ways of relating to information and factual knowledge-seeking, and thus marks "the emergence of novel epistemic cultures within the realm of civil society" (Milan and van der Velden 2016, 73). This organization is called *The Public Knowledge Workshop[44]* and its goal is to promote the transparency and accountability of the government, public institutions and powerful economic players. Thus, data activism seeks to facilitate citizens' access to information concerning governmental affairs and public services and provide analyses of this information presented in accessible language through the use of advanced means of visualization. TPKW, accordingly, mobilizes its activists' expert knowledge under the slogan "we are coding for a better Israel" that appears on its organizational website.

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44   Hence, TPKW, see http://www.hasadna.org.il/en/

While presenting very different concerns, modes of operation, and activist trajectories, both organizations share the goal of re-shaping the public agenda by providing new knowledge that they consider to be missing from the Israeli public sphere. Both were founded and are run by well-educated, largely middle-class, young adults in their 20s and 30s, and both seek to promote well-informed discussion as a path towards attaining a more robust democracy. Both have gained a good deal of visibility within the current Israeli activist landscape, while each taps into different kinds of knowledge in building its activist repertoire in its bid for participation in Israeli public culture.

BTS is an oppositional organization, part of the loosely networked anti-occupation movement that has emerged in Israel in the early 2000s (Fridman 2008). The challenge it poses to widespread beliefs about the legitimacy and necessity of the occupation has earned it official attacks and widespread animosity (Katriel 2018). TPKW is an organization oriented towards reforming, not transforming public institutions, policies and practices. Its interventions are in the civic domain and at times involve collaboration with legislators and government bodies. Although its activities may carry a critical edge, TPKW interventions are not branded as radical and are generally valued for their contribution to the public sphere.

By considering these two Israeli activist projects in tandem, and by playing them against each other as variants of knowledge-based activist engagements, my goal is to bring out different ways in which differently positioned activist organizations within the same cultural field may choose to generate and circulate new kinds of information and forms of knowledge in the service of the societal and political changes each envisions. With this comparative angle

in mind, the more detailed analysis I offer below draws on an ongoing project dealing with the discourse of conscientious objectors and anti-occupation activists I have been engaged in the past decade. This project includes participant observation in a wide range of activities organized by anti-occupation groups, interviews with anti-occupation activists, members of Breaking the Silence among them, and textual analysis of printed and online materials they have circulated (Katriel 2009, Katriel and Shavit 2011, 2013). While working on that project, and thus familiarizing myself with the field of young adult activism in Israel, the other organization addressed in this chapter caught my attention. I was particularly struck by the different paths BTS and TPKW took in their bid for political participation while each defined its role as providing socially and politically consequential information and knowledge. I have been following the activities of TPKW online for several years as well as the coverage they received in the press and online. I also had occasion to discuss some of the organization's activities with people who had some first-hand knowledge of its work (e.g., Cohen 2016). The sketches provided below are based on my reading of these sources and are designed to support the comparative account I propose between these two activist organizations; they by no means purport to be full-fledged ethnographies.

Breaking the Silence

Building on soldiers' first-hand experiential knowledge of the scene of occupation in the Palestinian territories, BTS seeks to alert Israelis who have no first-hand knowledge of the occupation regime of the human rights abuses it entails. As former combat soldiers whose military rounds brought them to the occupied Palestinian territories, BTS activists

build on the prestige attached to the role of combatant in Israeli society. This prestige is linguistically reflected in the very use of the term "combatant" (*lochem*) rather than "soldier" (*chajal*) in referencing these soldiers in combat units, and combatants' service is routinely referred to in Israeli military parlance as "meaningful service" (*sherut mashma'uti*). Indeed, even though military service is mandatory, serving as combatant often involves volunteering for what are called "choice units" (*jechidot muvcharot*), and epitomizes patriotic commitment. Thus, BTS's testimonial project mobilizes the symbolic capital associated with Israel's military ethos to challenge Israel's policy of occupation.

BTS's testimonial project was launched in 2004 by a small group of former Israeli soldiers who had been stationed in Hebron, a major West Bank Palestinian city, where they took part in the military control of the local population. This group of veterans mounted a photography exhibition in a marginal venue in the outskirts of Tel Aviv in which they displayed photographs taken by soldiers during their rounds of duty, along with some videotaped testimonies by former soldiers. The exhibition drew a great deal of public attention, and eventually traveled to other venues around the country and abroad (Katriel 2011).

Encouraged by the interest this exhibition sparked, the group decided to form an organization under the name of *Breaking the Silence*, which is currently considered one of the leading oppositional groups on the Israeli left. BTS activists began to collect former soldiers' testimonies of what they did, felt and saw during their service, and to disseminate them in a wide range of forms and venues (for Katriel 2009; Katriel and Shavit 2011, 2013). Their organized effort to put across their oppositional message concerning the ills of the occupation on the public agenda is still ongoing.

BTS's archive contains over 1100 testimonies that recount soldiers' first-hand experiences as foot soldiers, retrospectively identifying themselves and their peers as perpetrators of human rights violations. Their project is fueled by the realization that people around them do not know what the occupation looks like in human terms, either for its Palestinian victims or for the Israeli soldiers assigned to enforce it. Thus, the cover page of the first booklet of testimonies published by BTS says:

> *Breaking the Silence* is an organization of veteran combatants who have served in the Israeli military since the start of the Second Intifada and have taken it upon themselves to expose the Israeli public to the reality of everyday life in the Occupied Territories. We endeavor to stimulate public debate about the price paid for a reality in which young soldiers face a civilian population on a daily basis, and are engaged in the control of that population's everyday life...Discharged soldiers returning to civilian life discover the gap between the reality they encountered in the Territories, and the silence about this reality they encounter at home...We strive to make heard the voices of these soldiers, pushing Israeli society to face the reality whose creation it has enabled (*Hebron booklet*, March 2004).

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The BTS testimonial project interweaves two forms of oppositional knowledge identified by Patrick Coy, Lynne Woehrle, and Gregory Maney as relating to the present, to 'what is' – *counter-informative* knowledge and *critical-interpretive* knowledge that builds on factual knowledge to propose new insights and challenge prevailing points of view. The first "aims to present the 'untold story' and what is

missing from the picture – what is not told. Information not otherwise available is offered to widen the discussion and possibly change the political assessment people make or the outcomes they desire" (Coy et al. 2008, no pagination). Thus, BTS testimonies carry the credibility and authority of soldiers as both cherished representatives of the Israeli nation and as first-hand witnesses of the occupation. As BTS activists often say in presenting their case, their status as combatants lends authority to their testimonies of the violation of human rights in the Palestinian territories. Similar stories told by Palestinian victims themselves – such as those collected by *B'Tselem*, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories – are more easily ignored or dismissed by the Israeli authorities and media.

The second form of oppositional knowledge identified by Patrick Coy et al., critical-interpretive knowledge, does not take issue with the accuracy or fullness of the information provided, but "questions the moral or social basis for how that information is presented, interpreted, and used... It presents an alternative interpretation of what the picture painted by the power-holders means... Instead of simply providing alternative facts, a different perspective is articulated on the meaning of the information and on what is important" (Coy et al. 2008, no pagination). BTS insists on using the term "occupation", thereby rejecting the right-wing's religiously anchored narrative according to which the Palestinian territories are Israel's ancient biblical patrimony that was liberated in 1967 rather than occupied land. This version of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and the discourse associated with it, have become increasingly dominant in the Israeli public sphere, gaining the sponsorship of large parts of its current leadership (Friedman and Gavriely-Nuri 2017). Furthermore, by pointing to the inhumanity of the occupation as experienced by some of the

foot-soldiers assigned to uphold it, BTS rejects the official narrative whereby the control of the Palestinian population is motivated by security concerns. Many of the incidents re-counted in the testimonies address the brutality as well as the futility of the many restrictions on Palestinian civilian life, often suggesting that the tight military control gene-rates rather than curbs the Palestinians' violence. The ove-rall, cumulative picture painted by the testimonial edifice constructed by BTS questions the morality of Israel's deca-des-long occupation of the Palestinian territories and spea-ks to its un-tenability, radically questioning the interpretive frame that dominates mainstream Israeli public discourse.

The interweaving of counter-informative and critical-in-terpretive forms of oppositional knowledge can be gleaned from BTS's various mission statements. These statements bring out BTS's activist motives and delineate its goals as a "witnessing organization" (Frosh 2006). The following is an example:

> *Breaking the Silence* is a group of discharged sol-diers who are veterans of the 2nd Intifada, which broke out in September 2000. The group has taken upon itself to reveal to the Israeli public the daily routine of life in the in the territories, a routine whi-ch gets no coverage in the media. By doing so, an alternative source of information about the events in Israel's back yard has been made available to the general public. *Breaking the Silence* was established in March 2004, and since then the group has acqui-red a unique position in the public eye and in the media, as the voice of soldiers who had previously been silent. The main goal of *Breaking the Silence* is to expose the true reality in the territories and as a consequence to promote a public debate on the

moral price paid by Israeli society as a whole due to the reality in which young soldiers are facing a civilian population everyday and controlling it (*Breaking the Silence* 2005, inner cover).

This mission statement, like many others found in BTS materials, identifies an informational lacuna associated with the media's coverage of Israel's military rule over the OPTs. Explicitly appropriating the agenda of alternative journalism projects, BTS testimonials focus on the non-news that make up the routine brutalities of the occupation. In addressing the Israeli public, BTS members exercise what they consider to be their right to have their say as citizens and former soldiers. BTS's testimonial project, however, cannot be fully understood as a claim for the right to speak out. For BTS members, the relentless efforts they make to circulate their oppositional knowledge is not only about their right to speak out but also about their moral duty to do so and about their audiences' duty to know. In the section on Frequently Asked Questions included in its organizational website, BTS states: "We believe that, as a society, we must take responsibility for actions carried out on our behalf in the occupied territories. Taking responsibility includes, first and foremost, the right and duty to be informed of the reality of the occupation and to understand the true meaning of the mission that Israeli soldiers have been sent by Israeli society to carry out over the past five decades"[45]. Knowledge in this scheme of things is a necessary step towards political change, as reflected in the refrain BTS repeat members repeat again and again, and that is currently stated on their website, "Our work aims to bring an end to the occupation"[46].

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45   https://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/about/qa
46   https://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/about/organization

BTS is not an anti-militaristic organization. It does not reject military service as such. Its opposition relates specifically to the role of the military in upholding the occupation regime. Consequently, the army's and the public's response to this initiative has been mixed. The military's response to the photography exhibition involved, on the one hand, an attempt to criminalize its organizers by summoning three of them for interrogation by the military police. The grounds for this summons was that the exhibition materials exposed violations of military regulations. On the other hand, the military spokesperson acknowledged the value of this exhibition, declaring that "the army sees in this exhibition the need to continue to deal with values and morality as a component in [soldiers'] daily coping"[47]. This cautious endorsement that cast the soldiers' self-incriminating move as a potential partner to the army's own institutional correctives, did not hold for long. BTS insist all along that their critique is directed at policy-makers in whose power it is to end the occupation, and not to the military authorities. Mixed responses by the wider society included sharp condemnations from the political right and warm embracement by the more radical left.

Oppositional knowledge about the on-the-ground reality of the occupation, Like *B'Tselem*, BTS has been increasingly subject to official vilification campaigns involving public figures, up to cabinet ministers and the Prime Minister himself (Katriel 2018). In the summer of 2018, the Israeli parliament passed a law that, although it does not mention BTS, is popularly known as the "Breaking the Silence Law." This law, promoted by the Minister of Education, Naftali

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47   *Walla News*, based on Haaretz report by Jonathan Lis, 23.6.04, see https://news.walla.co.il/item/560907

Bennett, is designed to bar the entry of BTS and other left-wing organizations into educational institutions, who invite them to speak to high-school and college students, claiming that these organizations defame Israeli soldiers and work towards their prosecution in international courts[48]. BTS denies these charges, and has declared the law, whose wording broadly refers to any organization that acts to promote "political proceedings against the State of Israel" to be "among the most severe violations of freedom of expression on political grounds that exist among Israeli legislation." It has furthermore argued that "in its current form, [it] will stifle human rights organizations' educational activities within educational institutions in Israel, and it imposes sanctions on anyone who does not present the official position of the Israeli government in foreign frameworks."[49]

124 This and other attempts to criminalize BTS activities have put this organization at the heart of the public controversy over the future of the occupied territories as well as over the future of Israeli democracy. At the same time, other venues of knowledge-based activism have opened up for young adults in Israel, offering a different type of far less controversial knowledge quest. It is knowledge anchored in professional expertise associated with the digital era rather than in flesh witnessing, as will be elaborated below.

The Public Knowledge Workshop

The Public Knowledge Workshop was established in 2011 as a data activism project. Since then it has grown into a

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48   Jonathan Lis, *Haaretz Online*, 17 July 2018, at https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israel-passes-law-targeting-groups-that-support-soldiers-indictment-1.6284735

49   BTS, 2018, https://mailchi.mp/shovrimshtika/israeli-law-attempts-to-ban-bts-from-schools?e=[UNIQID]

well-organized and highly regarded NGO that attracts dozens of volunteers, harnessing their coding skills to the development of digital tools for the enhancement of data transparency on public issues. Most of these volunteers are highly educated in technological fields, and many of them hold day-jobs in software-related organizations. Indeed, the TPKW website invites volunteers with experience with Python, Java Script, SQL, DevOps, as well as graphic designers and economists to join its ranks. Like other hi-tech workers in Israel's advanced industries, a considerable number of the tech-savvy volunteers, who contribute their free time and knowledge to TPKW projects, have gained part of their professional experience in technologically-oriented military units during their mandatory military service. In recent years, such tech-centered military service, especially when associated with the aura of secrecy surrounding the Intelligence Corps, has been lionized in the media as representing the fulfillment of young people's highest aspirations. Technological units attract young recruits with a good scientific background, who usually come from middle-class families and top schools (as was emphasized in one of the chapters of the Channel 10 TV program discussed below). Soldiers recruited for such jobs have come to be called "cyber combatants." Their service carries the extra reward of preparing them for a future hi-tech career in Israel's flourishing hi-tech and start up scene, which is a source of national pride (Senor and Singer 2009). For many youngsters and their families, therefore, it has come to compete with the aura of combat duty in terms of prestige and desirability in the neo-liberal Israeli economy. The most highly publicized of the units that technologically-prone military recruits aspire to join is the large-scale Intelligence unit known as "Unit 8200". This unit has most stringent screening procedures for potential candidates, so that one's acceptance to its ranks is considered a personal success.

In June 2018, the evening news of Channel 10 on Israeli TV carried a four-part series by journalist Or Heller that focused on Unit 8200 as the trend-setter for youngsters' military aspirations.[50] The program declared this unit as the most desirable target for military service among today's youth, underscoring the contribution of such a military career to young soldiers' future prospects in the high-tech sector. It also raised the issue of the unit's elitist and selective orientation that restricts entry to young recruits from privileged, middle-class backgrounds who enjoy better schooling and home-bred cultural capital, highlighting the unresolved tension between the value of social inclusivity and the pursuit of professional excellence that attends discussions of Israeli schooling and young people's career options more generally. Notably, the last segment of the TV series on Unit 8200 was devoted to a 2014 refusal letter publicized by 43 veterans of this unit, some of whom were still serving in it as part of the reserve corps (*milu'im*). The letter was addressed to the Prime Minister and Chief of Staff and was widely circulated and commented on in mainstream as well as social media. In this public statement, the letter's signatories expressed their profound unease at the ways the surveillance tasks they had been performing as part of the Israeli Intelligence corps indirectly implicated them in the illegitimate interventions into Palestinians' lives and in the ongoing oppression of Palestinian society.[51] This letter took the critique voiced by BTS activists even a step further by acknowledging the complicity of non-combatant, apparently removed, digital-warfare units in the ills of the occupation. Despite the media coverage and public controversy this letter triggered, however, the group's radicalizing message was largely dismissed by the military authorities and rejected by many of the signatories' peers. The

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50   http://www.10.tv/8200

51   e.g., Elior Levy, *Ynet,* 12 September 2014, see at https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4570166,00.html

aura surrounding the 8200 technological unit as a source of digital knowledge has not significantly dimmed.

It is in this broader socio-technological context that TPKW emerged as an activist initiative led by civic-minded young adults, who mobilize their digital skills for the common good, volunteering considerable time and effort on projects that address the local concerns and information requirements of Israeli citizens. They do so in the name of public values of transparency and civic participation that have become part of democracies around the world. In so doing, at least some of these activist-coders draw on their experience of military service as an arena in which personal accomplishment, teamwork skills, and collective goals go hand in hand. As a socially-oriented organization, TPKW acknowledges its position as part of a wider activist network concerned with transparency issues. Thus, its website contains links to several other similarly oriented Israeli organizations, as well as to similar ventures abroad, including Open Knowledge International[52] and Code for America[53].

Apart from an ongoing and extensive online presence, TPKW operates in two central hubs – one in Tel Aviv, hosted on the premises of Google, and another in Jerusalem, hosted on the premises of the Israel National Library in Jerusalem. Each hub holds a weekly evening session of on-site coding in which activists meet face-to-face in order to consult with each other, socialize informally, and thereby advance their various data-based projects. Information provided on the organization's website for future volunteers indicates that apart from the one evening a week of shared coding, they would be required to spend another eve-

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52   https://okfn.org
53   https://www.codeforamerica.org

ning a week for at least one year to make progress on their projects. It is also stressed that it is advisable for volunteers to have prior coding experience so they can be effective in their work, but also so that they can "really enjoy their activities"[54]. The stress on the pleasure people derive from participating in TPKW projects runs through the organization's self-presentations. TPKW also organizes several weekend-long *hackatons* every year, to which all data activists are invited. These encounters provide communal settings for more sustained face-to-face collaborative exchanges and intensive consultations, and are designed to further energize activists and stimulate collaboration. In addition to volunteers, TPKW also includes several paid coordinators with digital and organizational skills. Young women are also making their way into TPKW ranks, and some even hold organizational positions within it. The overall mission of TPKW is clearly framed in the organization's website as a form of data activism: "The Public Knowledge Workshop is a non-profit organization whose mission is to release public information and make it easy for the public to meaningfully engage with data. We enable analysis and discussion of information that should be open and accessible to the public. This transforms government data into public knowledge and empowers participation" (TPKW website, "about" section).

Thus, TPKW's knowledge-based activism is grounded in the value of transparency that since the 1970s has generated a climate of disclosure that has circulated from the USA to other parts of the world (Schudson 2015). It is in this climate that dozens of TPKW tech-savvy activists volunteer their time and energy to make governmental and other institutional information accessible to the public through

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54   See https://www.hasadna.org.il/%D7%94%D7%AA%D7%A0%D7%93%D7%91%D7%95%D7%AA/

the technological appropriation of software tools. The basic assumption of TPKW, as expressed in the mission statements posted on its website and elsewhere, is that there are information lacunae relating to issues pertinent to the public at large. Specifically addressing their call to volunteers with technical expertise expresses TPKW's faith that as data activists, they can identify and correct these lacunae. TPKW's goals are described on its website as follows: to facilitate citizens' engagement with governmental institutions; to promote informed public discussion that can lead to enhanced public knowledge; to provide feedback to the authorities from the standpoint of civil society players who have a good grasp of public issues and policies; and to help civil society to organize towards social action.[55]

In delimiting its work to the civil sphere, TPKW is able to promote change while skirting the highly charged and politically divisive issues that confront the Israeli public. Its projects are concerned with a variety of domains in civilian life. Thus, web-based applications currently mentioned on its website relate to the following issues, among others: the Open Parliament project monitors its Parliament members' voting on different issues, and their presence or absence from Parliamentary committee meetings; the Public Square project follows MPs activities in social media according to parties, topics of conversation and so on; the Key to the Budget project follows changes in the allocation of state budgets as they change from year to year, covering unplanned changes during the budgetary year as well; the Open Urban Planning project provides access to urban planning in various cities; the Open Public Transportation project collects and analyzes performance data of public bus companies.[56]

55   See https://www.hasadna.org.il/%D7%94%D7%97%D7%96%D7%95%D7%9F/
56   see https://www.hasadna.org.il/projects-2/

Each such project stems from an individual's initiative. When an activist-coder believes a particular issue can be better understood and possibly resolved through a coding project, and is able to persuade others to join him or her in addressing it, a project comes into being. Together they use their expert knowledge to collect information, organize data, interpret it and develop visualization tools for its display. Then the project is disseminated to the public-at-large and to selected governmental bodies, turning raw data into public knowledge.

Concluding remarks

The two Israeli activist groups addressed in this chapter promote better informed public discussions that are hoped to lead to social action. Comprised of largely middle-class young adults, both groups anchor their activism in knowledge-based practices. BTS activists' "flesh witnessing" builds on the experiential knowledge of former combatant who served as foot soldiers in the occupied Palestinian territories. TPKW activists draw on their technological expertise. Both organizations mobilize their particular epistemic resources in order to shape public knowledge – providing new factual information, new data analyses, new points of view, and new interpretive frameworks that expand and challenge hegemonic positions and practices. In both cases, too, the organizations' activist intervention is incremental and persistent, and both create knowledge repositories that document activist interventions and provide inspiration for future action. BTS's oppositional stance is kept alive through the possibilities charted by the organization's archive, which serves not just as a repository of past events but also as an eloquent and dynamic resource for

activists' ongoing engagement with the scene of occupation as it unfolds. For example, when the Palestinians' marches of return undertaken by Gaza residents in March 2018 towards the fence surrounding Gaza were met by the use of live fire on the part of Israeli soldiers, which resulted in massive casualties on the Palestinian side, BTS circulated statements opposing Israel's use of live ammunition, BTS spokesperson publicized the organization's response,[57] as well as testimonies of soldiers' experiences as snipers during earlier rounds of duty in the Gaza strip.[58] Invoking past practices and relating them to the current scene served to highlight the repetitiveness and futility of the rounds of violence in which Israelis and Palestinians find themselves entangled. Likewise, TPKW's careful documentation of both completed and ongoing projects in their digitized data base keeps alive the relevancy of these projects, both informing and inspiring future data activists to either join in a code-based project or initiate a new one.

The two knowledge-based projects I have discussed open up activist possibilities for young adults, who are invited to mobilize personal knowledge and skills as resources in pursuing collective goals. Their ways of doing so reflect two different possibilities within the current Israeli social landscape. BTS activists invoke a humanistic Israeli ethos that resonates with a universalistic idiom centered on human rights values. TPKW activists promote global values of transparency and accountability through an idiom of professional expertise. Trans-local activist idioms become glocalized whether they pertain to the moral fabric of Israeli society (BTS) or to the quality of its governance in neoli-

57   Dean Issacharoff, Haaretz Online, 7 June 2018 at https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-the-big-lie-how-apologists-for-israel-s-occupation-justify-killing-un-1.6155656

58   e.g., Nadav Weiman on Youtube, 17 April 2018, at https://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/media/84493

beral times (TPKW). Playing these two cases against each other, I attempted to show different ways in which knowledge-based activism - whether grounded in the resonance of experiential knowledge (BTS) or in the functional utility of technological expertise (TPKW) – can chart paths to grassroots political participation in today's world.

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Acknowledgment

Negotiating Identity: Micro Politics of Mixing Apples and Pears in the High School of Jajce

Igor Stipić[59]

The very name itself – Bosnia and Herzegovina – seems to contain its own peculiar unity in disparity: it is, and at the same time is not, a unified country. (Benac: 1986)

Introduction, Organization and Methods

In the early summer of 2016, news unlikely to appear in some "ordinary and untroubled country" took the headlines of all major and minor media outlets in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). At this instance, the decision of Jajce high school students to oppose the decision of cantonal government to convert their high-school into yet another case of "two schools under one roof" (TSUOR) embodied a stance against politics of successive ethno-national structural reorganization of BiH. Placed in this specific socio-political environment, student opposition became filled with political symbolism that for the standing regime seemed too

59   Igor Stipic works as a researcher at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Köszeg, an institution that financed this study.

reminiscent of Yugoslav times. Throughout more than one year, Jajce teenagers developed a vibrant student move-ment which, while offering a non-textbook example of BiH, attempted to redraw the lines of the imaginable BiH com-munity, proposing a paradigm inside of which inter-ethnic relations would not be overdetermined by antagonism.

This article, combining insights from political anthropology, identity studies and sociology, attempts to reinterpret sym-bolism of the student struggle by contextualizing its devel-opment inside of Jajce and BiH itself. By investigating views of the state and identity from below, the study applies meth-ods of participant observation, informal talks, semi-struc-tured interviews, analysis of publicly available protest ma-terial and ethnographic interpretation, all conducted on site in Jajce and its schools during January and February of 2018[60]. The *problematique* of the article is primarily seen through the eyes of a former student of *Stara Gimnazija*[61] TSUOR located in the still divided city of Mostar.

This research aims to contribute to still under-represent-ed scholarly work of case studies where official national hegemony fails to work. In this sense, by advancing a rep-resentation of BiH that has been silenced by the dominant nationalist project, the study demonstrates how even the most powerful state does not fully monopolize forms of popular identifications. Additionally, while entering into the realm of 'spontaneous folk sociology' and analyzing micro-politics of categorization emerging from below, this article contributes empirical material to the study of one of the thorniest problems of social theory: the relationship between structure and agency. Consequently, by accepting

60   All personal names of my interlocutors mentioned in this article are pseudonyms.

61   For a path-breaking ethnographic study of *Stara Gimnazija* High School see Hromadžić 2017.

how change usually comes from the periphery (Jajce in BiH context) we recognize the importance of liminal and marginal groups that, standing on the boundaries of identity and politics, turn central for exploring "the ways in which the categorized appropriate, internalize, subvert, evade or transform categories that are imposed on them" (Dominguez in Brubaker 2004: 13).

First part of the article offers a view into the theoretical perspective. The ensuing part discusses the macro-institutional organizing principle of BiH state and society propagated by the ethno-national elites that rose to power during political transition of the 1990s. Third and fourth parts explore particularities of Jajce context and genesis of the student movement in this town, trying to transpose organizing principles of community as envisioned by the movement itself, thus specifically dealing with micro politics of (re)naming from below.

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Theoretical Framework

This article, in a very general sense, follows the method that Bourdieu (1989) terms constructivist structuralism or structuralist constructivism. While structuralist component implies the existence of historically established structures influencing general mode of perception and behavior of involved agents[62], the constructivist part asserts that structural historical results are directed by human agency. Placed into interaction, this perspective establishes that agency itself is perpetrated under historically established constraints – structures, but it is nevertheless perpetrated.

Moreover, historical process of nation creation - performed from the position of the state and connected to its control

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62   These representing results of *long durée* processes.

– intertwines re-ordering of the state and its structures with the exercise of power resting within this institution. With the arrival of modernity, the state, that central object of modern politics, and an "institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order" (Gellner 1983: 4), emerges as central depository of ideas, cultures, identities, nationality and "common sense". Thus, the state acts as "encompassing frame for producing visibility within which symbolic conventions are established and fought over, legitimacies striven for, group relations and the distributions associated with them fixed" (Williams in Verdery 2012: 231). Having monopoly over both legitimate physical (Weber 1965) and symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1989), political programs controlling the state dispose with machinery for imposing "legitimate principles of vision and division of the social world" (Weber 1965: 21), that is, instituting, sanctioning and sanctifying a particular state of things, an established order. Consequently, as control over bureaucratic machinery of the state gives central advantage over the institutionalization of imaginary meanings to those who control it, capturing the state and its "powerful institutional mechanisms" is of central importance for any program if it is to succeed. In this sense, political actors, representing the most organized social agent in the modern world, have played and continue playing crucial historical role in constructing the most pervasive modern entity - "imagined community" (Anderson 1991) known as the nation-state. In this sense, it can be claimed that "study of ethnicity and nationality is in large part study of politically induced cultural change" (Brass 1979: 41).

Still, considering the real existence of diverging and conflicting political projects helps us understand that

> Social world may be uttered and constructed in different ways according to different principles

of vision and division (Bourdieu 1989: 19). [Thus] there are always, in any society, conflicts between symbolic powers that aim at imposing the vision of legitimate division, that is, at constructing groups (Bourdieu 1989: 22), [as] even the most powerful state does not monopolize production and diffusion of identifications and categories. (Brubaker 2004: 43)

Indeed, official historiographies, even if unquestionable at certain times never fully escape the contestation by alternative projects of the social. Thus, besides understanding official historiographies, it is important that academics consider the role of political groups that appear as "insurgent communities" or submerge into the realm of "spontaneous folk sociology" (Bourdieu 1989: 18). Both of these, while holding potential of contesting and rejecting official historiographies, represent an important reservoir of meaning (Laclau 2005) around the issues related to national construction.

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In this sense, nation or an ethnie, representing "basic operator in a widespread system of social classification" (Verdery 2012: 226), that is, an "empty signifier" (Laclau 2005), as both a practice and a discourse is oriented towards putative and not real collectivity (Brubaker 1996). Being its defining character "competed over by different groups maneuvering to capture its definition and its legitimate effects" (Verdery 2012: 228), nation and its related imagination becomes a plurality "whose meaning is never stable but shifts with the changing balance of social forces" (Verdery 2012: 230). Thus, defining 'the national' and its related principles of the social is "fundamentally about a struggle for control over defining communities – and particularly a struggle for control over the imagination about community" (Beissinger 1998: 175).

While "the very degree of semantic elasticity" and existing "plurality of possible structuring" is usually obscured, presenting the social system as a highly structured reality (Bourdieu 1989: 20), focusing on putative nature of constituencies, and understanding "groupness as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable" (Brubaker 2004: 11), allows us to study, besides official politics and views from above, also the 'micro-politics' of categories from below. While accepting existence of objective structures influencing the perception of reality, by considering "the ways in which the categorized appropriate, internalize, subvert, evade, or transform the categories that are imposed on them" (Dominguez in Brubaker 2004: 13), research returns agency to those involved in (re)structuring, recognizing contingency of historical outcomes and treating constructions in a deconstructed manner. Thus, increased sensitivity to cases where official national hegemony fails to work invites us to investigate "representations that have been silenced or repressed by the dominant nationalist project" (Ozkırımlı 2010: 213). Finally, as negotiating contours and specificities of what is supposed to make a 'national' society is never complete process, we need to consider culture, identity, and ethnicity as contested and negotiated conceptualizing categories that are constantly in the state of flux.
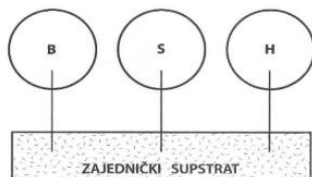

Image 1: Division between common poplar-public and diverse religious-civilizational cultures in BiH. | Illustration by Ivan Lovrenović (source: ivan-lovrenovic.com) | Translation: B=Bosniak, S=Serb, H=Croat; Zajednički Supstrat= Common Substrate

Macro Level Analysis – Institutionalizing Dayton State

In order to understand historical structuring of *long durée*[63] of BiH we turn to Lovrenović (2014). According to this author, long-term coexistence of several different civilizational-religious and one common popular culture has had a profound impact on this country. "Making of BiH an interesting cultural landscape and an unusual societal structure – composite and integral at the same time", this simultaneity of one common public (low-culture) and three separate and specific civilizational traditions (high-culture) would determine the faith of any program attempting to construct out of such historical constellation a modern politico-identitarian category (Lovrenović 2014). Depending on the approach and type of imagination exercised by different political options, specific contours, both integrational and inter-relational, of BiH imagined community, would take on different shapes and directions, ranging from harmony and cooperation to conflict and dissidence (Lovrenović 2014). In a way, the uni-multi-intercultural[64] nature of BiH, besides implying complicated ambivalences, represents historical *long durée* constant of this socio-cultural environment. Thus, even if reshuffled, rearranged and reimagined by various political options that engaged with challenging task of dealing with it, this *identitarian problematique* would never

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63   Implies an approach to the study of history, advanced by French Annales School, which asserts importance of long-term historical structures over what François Simian has called an "evental history".

64   Type of long durée identarian paradigm of BiH historicity and identity which implies constant process of negotiation between different forms of identification put forward by and ascribed to this country and its people. As such, being a part of discursive continuum, BiH is imaginatively constructed via competing visions as: 1) conflictual or harmonious sum of parts implied in the notion of multi-cultural ambivalence (democracy of constitutive peoples); 2) uniform national project (unicultural Bosnian citizenship), and 3) existing potential of multiple cultural interactions, where common identity is not simply articulated as sum of its parts but as distinct and dynamic cultural artifact constantly shaped and elaborated by all of its historically contributing factors.

be either completely "resolved" or absolved – transposing itself up to the very days of the third millennia.

In this sense, current Daytonian[65] organizational principle of vision and division is certainly not the first to offer its solution for the BiH problematique. That is, even if the divisions in BiH certainly do not lack historical roots, it has to be affirmed how the new organizing principle is defined by a particularly novel historical character. Considering importance of agency driven by political actors, we can underline how radicalization of ethnic narratives, far from representing a spontaneous action of imagined collectives, was essentially perpetrated by small, well-organized and financially sound political groups (Malešević 2006) that, while engaging in the struggle over the control of the state and its simultaneous constructivist destruction, have abused BiH historical ambiguity for political goals. Rising from the ashes of the civil war, the new nationalist project structurally metamorphosed BiH from significantly heterogeneous society into a country of three almost completely segregated and homogenous nations (Bieber 2005; Hayden 1996).

The very success of such organized intervention was the expansion of the hegemonic narrative of "eternal hatreds" which, besides implying impossibility of shared life in a common state, reinterpreted the war in collective memory as just another episode in a thousand years long battle between three religious groups (by now turned into ethno-nationalities). While annihilating official connection of these ethnicities with wider notion of common BiH state,

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65   Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), signed by the warring sides at the end of the BiH war in 1995, represents the constitution of the newly established state. Dividing BiH into two entities: Republika Srpska (RS) and Federation of BiH (FBiH), and the latter entity into ten cantons, the DPA itself represented the transitional point of the new regime and its particular genesis. Representing a product agreed upon by representatives of military factions, DPA symbolizes the most official act of legitimization of a certain social and political order, constitutionally sanctifying radical ethno-national principle of (di)vision.

the DPA has, as basic institutional principle, isolated them from each other, denied them right to common BiH political nation and made political affiliation with BiH state both obsolete and irrelevant. Put in other words, specificity of ethno-politics and the hegemony of the ethnic, as encoded in the DPA itself, was to superimpose the notion of particularism of cultural-religious community bound together by origin and fate over the notion of BiH historic commonality, thus effectively impeding emergence of supra, inter, or non-ethnic sphere.

Image 2: A view of Jajce and its waterfal, a place where river Pliva meets river Vrbas.

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Context of Jajce

The so called "divided towns"[66], existing in certain cantons of FBiH, even if under particular supervision of administrative apparatuses that promote ethno-national fear of other, still produce "unique sites for interethnic intimacy" (Kurtović 2012: 54). Jajce, being non-homogenous territory with high potential for cross-ethnic *miješanje* (meaning mixing or intermingling), becomes an interesting place for investigating cases when ethno-national hegemony is neither complete nor unchallenged. It seems that here, the ambig-

66   It is important to note how the adjective *divided* is a direct (arbitrary) product of predominant form through which *the problematique* itself is considered. It could as well be heterogenous, shared, multi-cultural, *Jajački* etc.

uous *long-durée* structuring principles of BiH reality, that interplay of one with three, still looms over the notion of fluidity of inter-relational BiH identity.

By all means Jajce occupies a special place in BiH history. This small Bosnian town is believed to have been established in the 14th century by the count Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić (Lovrenović et al. 2008). Already by the 15th century Jajce became the seat of medieval Bosnian Kingdom and its church of St. Luke the place of coronation of the last king of Bosnia – Stjepan Tomašević. While Jajce would be changing hands in struggle between Ottomans and Hungarians over the control of its territory during 15th and 16th century, it would finally fall under the Ottoman control in 1527. The Ottoman period would finish in 1878 when Jajce, together with the whole territory of BiH, would be annexed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Even if the town would change its political owner once again by the coming of First Yugoslavia in 1918, its fame and long lost "royal like" status would only be renewed during the turmoil of the WWII. That is, in 1943 Jajce hosted the II AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia) Congress which proclaimed the creation of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In this sense, Jajce would not only become the official birthplace of Socialist Yugoslavia, but would also become the place where BiH would acquire its modern form of political sovereignty. Today, Jajce is situated in the Central-Bosnian Canton (SBK), which belongs to FBiH. Despite being embedded in the wider political project that has as its main ideal creation of ethnically pure and homogenous territories, SBK remains among two cantons of FBiH that remain ethnically mixed, the other being the Canton of Herzegovina-Neretva (HNK).[67] Jajce is also quite specific as it is situated right on the bor-

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67   Both of these cantons have mixed Bosniak (BiH Muslim) and Croat (BiH Catholic) majorities with presence of Serb (BiH Orthodox) minority.

der with entity of *Republika Srpska* (RS), being only an hour away from its *de facto* capital Banja Luka.

Moreover, Jajce itself is a particular "divided town". That is, strict ethno-national "territorial management" (Merry 2001) that destroyed common inter-ethnic geography in many other multi-ethnic towns did not take place here[68]. In other words, the infamous line of ethno-national geographic separation (notorious in towns like Mostar[69] and Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje), producing both real and imagined effects among the population, does not exist in Jajce. In this sense, by offering different modes of interactional paradigm in post-war BiH, Jajce truly emerges as the big crack or "no man's land" inside of a country where ethno-national lines of belonging and codes of sociability are strictly enforced. Thus, Jajce represents an interesting laboratory of an unusual experiment of post-war reintegration inside of a divided BiH.

Still, despite its particularities, Jajce also shares many characteristics of socio-political organization with other parts of Dayton BiH. In this sense, most Jajce residents emulate dominant political behavior and vote for main nationalist parties that developed from warring factions, namely the Croat HDZ (Croat Democratic Community) and Bosniak SDA (Party of Democratic Action).[70] Likewise, being insep-

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68   Jajce particularity is also that, unlike it was the case in many other towns located in current FBiH, HVO (Croat Army) and ARBiH (Bosniak Army) never clashed directly here, as this town was occupied by the army of RS throughout the war.

69   For example, the city of Mostar, located on the turquoise river Neretva, turned during and after the civil war into the most infamous example of, "divided towns" in BiH. Thus, by remaining divided by the Boulevard of Peoples Revolution, Mostar is de facto separated into the East (Bosniak) and West (Croat) Mostar, where avenues once connecting peoples of two sides remain impassible for many of its citizens.

70   As of 2016 elections, municipal government is formed by the large coalition between Croat parties grouped around HDZ and Bosniak parties grouped around SDA.

Image 3 and 4: Main town square – "Croat" and "Bosniak" parts. (3) Christian cross - monument to fallen soldiers of HVO - with flags of BiH, EU, and the internationally unrecognized Herceg-Bosna. (4) The mosque and a monument to shehids of ARBiH, with flags of ARBiH and BiH.

arable from the general political project, Jajce is affected by the destruction and construction of memory and its toponyms in the post-war structuring process. Revealing the changing norms of statehood and community in Dayton BiH, the main square of Jajce is dominated by monuments emanating ethno-national memories of the recent war.[71] Both of these monuments, besides marking ethno-national territory with flags of imagined para-states, also embody symbiosis of religious and national identity in post-Dayton BiH (see images 3 and 4).

Moreover, the case in point of destroying and forgetting the common is best exemplified with the destiny of Museum of II. AVNOJ Congress. During the war ravaged and robbed of its heritage, this museum dedicated to modern statehood of BiH and antifascist struggle in many regards shares destiny of a country whose creation it once symbolized. Inability of

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71   While on one side of the main square one finds monument built to soldiers who died fighting for the HVO (Croatian Defence Council), on the other side of the square there is a monument dedicated to shehids (religious martyrs) who died fighting for ARBiH (Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Image 5: Inside of the AVNOJ Museum.

this monument to finds its place inside of conceptualizing paradigm of Dayton BiH is epitomizing position that ideas of Yugoslavia occupy in imaginary constellation of new state, which is essentially of antagonistically constructive character. In this regard, words directed to me by the museum employee, stating how "in this country we do not belong to anyone. They (the political elites) would be happiest if the museum didn't even exist" are self-explanatory. Similarly, considering reordering of the street names as important geographic markers of identity, one can note that even the famous Mariscal Tito, who obtained his title precisely in Jajce, is symbolically exiled from the city. Thus, the street that once carried his name is today replaced by '*Trg Branitelja*' - the symbolic moral pillar of the new regime (eng. 'Square of Croat Defenders'). Likewise, embodying classical regime turnover, the local elementary school, during the Yugoslav period named "Brotherhood and Unity", was turned into a "Croat" elementary school and renamed as "13. Rujan".[72]

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72   Eng. 13th of September (1995) - the day that according to official Croat narrative marks the arrival of victorious Croat forces into the city.

Image 6: Grave of a person who passed away in 2014, containing a socialist red star as its marker (one among many located at what used to be Partisan Memorial Cemetery).

Notwithstanding, the hegemonic constructing mechanism of the new state, identity and territory is not unchallenged. In this sense, ethno-nationalism is still disputed with counter-discourses reminiscent of Yugoslav era and its spirit of "brotherhood and unity". Thus, for example, the ousted Mariscal Tito still looms over Jajce and, besides filling the social space with tales of , "better times when no one asked for nationality", remains an illusory citizen for those people who have refused to remove , "his" plaque from the buildings they inhabit. Likewise, similar type of resistance is found at funeral services. Thus, the site that served as Partisan Memorial during Yugoslavia was converted into an atheist graveyard where people (mostly but not exclusively coming from mixed marriages) find resting place that remains out of reach of ethnic-hegemony.

Similarly, overwhelming saturation of public space with symbolic violence of ethno-nationalism and its associated discourses seems too aggressive for many. This type of feeling is well exemplified in a comment made by Adnan who, while being a devout Muslim himself, says how placing wartime monuments in the city center is probably not the best idea because "we are not Srebrenica and thus should not try to make the whole town into a memorial center." Rather, Adnan believes how it would be a good idea to make one common monument to all fallen soldiers, regardless of the side for which they fought.

Moreover, acts of corruption and criminality, emanating despise towards ethno-national leaders, challenge their monopoly on questions of morality. In this regard, the words of Adem, a local small-entrepreneur, who says how "every state has its mafia, and only our mafia has its state", are very indicative. Resembling post-war criminal privatization process that hardly missed any BiH town, the biggest transitional privatization story in Jajce is that of Electrobosna.[73] This ferrosilicon alloy producing heavy industry complex, employing 3,000 during Yugoslavia, was sold to UK based New East (CIR 2006). At such instance, Ivo Šimunović, then serving as a president of the board and today local HDZ leader, played a major role. While Šimunović and his associates decided quickly on the New East due its "impressive record and credibility", recent research demonstrated how the company was actually established only six days prior to the purchase (CIR 2006). Currently, only around 200 workers remain employed in this company (renamed Metalleghe). In this wain, the story of Hrvoje, one of my informants in Jajce, becomes very telling. This local NGO worker, while directly questioning HDZ narrative

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73   Electrobosna is said to have been so important that some believe it served as an inspiration for BiH's coat of arms during Yugoslavia.

that accuses "Bosniak majoritarianism" as the main reason for high Croat emigration, declares that it was actually the politics of HDZ that, through another privatization of electricity producing company HZHB (Croatian Community Herceg Bosna)[74] has caused the biggest exodus of Croats in Jajce.

Similarly, *Jajčani/Jajčanke* have a particularly imaginative way of naming those who are staunch regime supporters, have accepted fenced ethno-national identities, refuse to mingle with others, or are in some way closely connected to political parties in power. This specific group of people is termed respectively as either Hrvatine (Great Croats) or Bošnjakuše (Great Bosniaks)[75]. In this way, by categorizing various types of ethno-belonging, people of Jajce distinguish between different types of Croats and Bosniaks, while at the same time identify acceptable and unacceptable types of ethnic others.

Also, conversation I had with Mehmed, a local owner of a small grocery store, represents sociological folk contestation of ethno-national ordering principle that attempts to

control contours of accepted sociability. At this instance Mehmed, while introducing me to his friend Ivica with whom he was sharing a cup of coffee right outside of his store, with a certain dose of anger and dissatisfaction pointed out to me: "You see Igor, they [the politicians] say that Ivica and I cannot have coffee together!" Using this "central ritual of sociability in this part of Europe" (Jansen 2002: 87), Mehmed, besides rejecting the type of fenced identities dominating BiH macro establishment, defiantly steps

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74   The company name, HZHB (Croatian Community Herceg-Bosna), is the same as that of BiH Croat political wartime organization.

75   Means great not in terms of glory but in terms of nationalistic fervor.

over the macro ideological walls and demonstrates desire for different kind of inter-ethnic sociability in BiH.

Likewise, inside of this ethno-national scale of belonging, there are even those who do not feel any primordial attachments to their supposed proto-national communities. For example, Luka, a local high school student and a nominal Croat, during our discussion made sure to clarify to me that when he says 'naši'[76] he does not think of Croats but of Bosnians and Herzegovinians. By demonstrating strategy of a system subversives or reimagining BiH meaning through acts of spontaneous folk sociology various *Jajčani* escape spaces of ethno-national hegemony. These people, by searching for universal human values, make rigid ethno-national perspective more flexible, submerging into the inter-ethnic and non-ethnic spaces of common morality where character of a person is not prescribed by his or her ethnic belonging.

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Immagined Community and BiH Education

Being the most potent mechanism of cultural standardization (Gellner 1964) or legal codification, education, as the central mechanism of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) (Althusser 1984) represents an act of "sustained and fairly prolonged initiation" into the national culture (Gellner 1983: 101). As "exceptionally powerful mechanism of collective influence" (Malešević 2006: 120), official education, through its institutional control over symbolic violence, ensures easier implementation of official master narrative and appropriate ethno-national socialization of future citizens. Thus, in BiH education is probably the most powerful tool

76   In current BiH 'naši', meaning 'our people', usually refers to one's ethnic group.

used for negation of common state, history, citizenship or identity. Being highly decentralized on entity and cantonal levels, BiH education rests in the hands of ethno-national elites and is separated into Croat, Bosniak and Serb version. Special care is taken around the so-called "national group of subjects" (religion, geography, history and language) which, as key markers of both individual and group identity, ensure maintenance of cultural divisions through promotion of three parallel and conflicting meanings of BiH and its associated historical identity.

Image 7: Map of TSUOR in FBiH (source diskriminacija.ba)

The "issue" of common classrooms in FBiH, that allow *miješanje* of primarily young Bosniaks and Croats (but also Serbs), is essentially "resolved" through the particular BiH invention named "Two Schools under One Roof". This educational policy of disciplining identity is implemented in places that have, even despite terrible results of the war, remained multi-ethnic in character. In such areas, more than 30 previously unified educational institutions were turned into segregated schools. Here, pupils attending the same facility are divided according to their ethnic belonging. In most cases students are segregated in different classrooms, attend different shifts, and sometimes use different floors

of and entrances to the school. In worst examples, different parts of the school are fenced off from one another. Regardless of any small particularities existing between different cases, all embody practices of ethno-national (di)vision, territorial management, and institutionalization of ethnicity form above, thus exemplifying in micro setting the idea of irreconcilable identities lying at the heart of the Dayton state.

TSUOR idea came from two strongest ethno-national parties in FBiH, namely, Bosniak SDA and Croat HDZ, who in this aspect showed complete congruence of interests. While practice of pupil segregation is a historic novelty in BiH education, continuously unified ever since its establishment during the Austro-Hunagarian rule in the 19th century, its particular purpose in the current regime was clarified by the minister of education of SBK – Katica Čerkez (HDZ) – who, upon defending the system of TSUOR during the student uprisings declared:

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> When Austro-Hungarians arrived to Bosnia they established Bosnian language as a method of easier control of local people. Yugoslavia did the same: it implemented Serbo-Croatian to construct new society and govern it. Now, since 1995 we have Dayton that affirms the idea of three different peoples and three different languages. Therefore, politics establishes model of society and creates system over which to preside. The purpose of school is to educate citizens according to design of the system (Ruiz 2017).

Micro Politics of Mixing Apples and Pears in Srednja Strukovna Škola

High schools in Jajce remain in the company of few where children of different ethnic groups attend program together, follow the same curricula and sit in the same classrooms. While at the level of elementary education pupils in this town are segregated inside of the same building where they do not even share bathrooms, both high schools in Jajce follow unified (Croat) curriculum. However, since 2007 there have been plans to resolve the "Jajce issue" by either creating another TSUOR or by forming a completely new Bosniak High School. The sanctifying principle of the established ethno-national (di)vision was openly exemplified in remark made in 2007 by Greta Kuna (then minister of education in SBK) who, while commenting on the decision made by cantonal government (formed through HDZ and SDA coalition) to continue policy of segregated education, stated: "System of 'two schools under one roof' is good because it prevents pears and apples from mixing" (Blagovčanin 2015).

Image 8: Graffiti "We Construct Together" in front of the Srednja Strukovna Škola.

Recent push for the new school came from the local SDA party and was accepted by the cantonal government during summer of 2016. In this sense, my informants made sure to explain to me how the new school would not be Bosniak but rather an SDA school, as, besides envisioning the SDA conceptualization of BiH, all positions in this institution, ranging from that of professor to janitor, would be directly appointed by the party in power.

Still, coming as surprise to everyone knowing BiH society and its dynamics, where political contestation is almost in-existent, Jajce students quickly rose in protest, representing an anomaly of this polis in more than one aspect. The contestation, starting few days after governmental deci-sion has been made, developed into unified movement that involved students from both Jajce high schools – *Srednja Strukovna Škola* (SSS) and *Nikola Šop* (NS). Thus, appear-ing as insurgent community, Jajce students challenged mo-nopoly of symbolic violence pertaining to the realm of the state. While questioning the logic of established structures, students demonstrated how even in seemingly well-estab-lished ethno-national order alternative ways to utter the social world still exist, thus reminding us of an alternative notion of belonging implied in the meta-physical notion of BiH still unoccupied by ethno-national project of the social and unspoiled by its semiotics.

One of the letters sent to a wider public during the peak of the student struggle clearly demonstrates principles of (di) vision this group of students stands for:

> As Bosnians and Herzegovinians, citizens of Jajce and representatives of Student Council of Jajce Technical High School (SSS)... we use this oppor-tunity to declare how our struggle continues and

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> thus we ask for your help! Timeless Jajce politicians ... never really quit their idea of deepening segregation among us, the youth of Jajce, the very future of this town and country. With this letter we declare ourselves strictly against such plans...With this protest we are fighting for both our future and the future of our society!
>
> Ethnically segregated high school will only deepen social divisions, and will rise nationalism in Jajce, a fact that will only benefit nationalistic parties, especially HDZ and SDA... We, the students of Jajce, demand complete cancellation of system known as "two schools under one roof"...We advocate implementation of unified curriculum... Finally, we require support from all citizens of Jajce and BiH to join our struggle against those that live in the past and do not let us build the future that we desire. (Tačno 2017)

Moreover, even if at first none of the professors openly supported the students, mostly out of the fear to lose workplace controlled by the parties in power, as the time went by some professors from the *SSS* decided to join the protest. Forming an informal citizen group called "Bolja Škola" (Better School) professors delivered draft proposal for implementation of experimental curriculum to both municipal and cantonal governments. Plans of a unified curriculum was supported by a survey conducted at school as most of the students, professors and parents declared it more desirable than either creation of the new Bosniak school or maintenance of the status-quo. Proposal intended to advance an experimental project stopping the process of segregation in Jajce and posteriorly, in case that it proved successful, in entire BiH. By following the idea which contends how "in culturally complex societies, it is only the principle of

inter-culturality that leads to affirmation of everyone's difference and of identity of non-dominant social groups" (Spajić-Vrkaš in Inicijativa Bolja Škola 2017) "Bolja Škola" offered a unified curriculum based on the idea of multicultural and multi-identitarian education. In a notch, project envisioned: replacement of current Croat with a common BiH curriculum made on the basis of BHS language[77]; implementation of multinational board in high-school; substitution of current diploma coat of arms of *Herceg-Bosna* with that of the city of Jajce; permitting students to either not declare nationally or to declare as minority; initiation of a process that would lead towards formation of common BiH textbooks (Inicijativa Bolja Škola 2017).

Demonstrating how the ruling regime considers any type of *miješanje* as subversive and potentially dangerous, implementation of TSUOR represents nothing but an attempt of regulating possibilities of interaction. According to Anita, a language professor at a local high-school:

Image 9: Cover of the pro-Bosniak political magazine and a spokesperson of SDA party stating how B/H/S (common Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian) language is, just like smoking cigarettes, seriously damaging to you and those around you. Issue of language is central in debates over unified/segregated education in BiH (source: stav.ba).

77   B/H/S language (B/H/S= Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian) represents an idea, supported by various linguists and intellectuals in Balkans and outside, that affirms how Bosnian, Serbian, Montenegrian and Croatian are different versions of the same polycentric language.

> Jajce high schools are important factor for integration of local community as it is here where youth can meet those ethnically and religiously different. That is, the youth does not simply meet each other in schools, but, as they see that there is no danger coming from the "Other", they also become friends. Thus, implementation of divisions would bring this opportunity for knowing the "Other" to a minimum and it could signify beginning of segregated lives in Jajce as people would, following examples of other divided towns in BiH, begin to lead parallel lives.

Similarly, Emina, professor and member of "Bolja Škola", explained how segregated and homogenizing education anywhere, but especially in BiH, is a very unfruitful idea. By bringing up the story of some of her colleagues that felt brainwashed while studying in ethnically homogenous University of Mostar, Emina asserted how:

> For any kind of education it is bad if none of the participants can represent another perspective (in this case another ethnic group). That is why in Jajce it is so important that students continue sitting together in the same classroom, regardless of what kind of curricula they follow. Because, you are still in a classroom where someone will react or will question one-sided narrative...potentially changing the dominant or purist perspective.

Likewise, Emina noted how:

> School is utterly important not only because it is a place of education, but primarily because it is a place of socialization. In schools young people make identity by establishing contact with others

and defining themselves through others. If you
somehow homogenize possibilities of interaction,
you will inevitably create homogenous societies.
On the contrary, by creating an integrative and
multi-perspective environment, as we try with
"Bolja Škola", you create more opportunity for con-
tact between differences, and this is so important
for students living in a country that is anything but
homogenous...

While explaining Daytonian organizing principles, Emina
notes how at the same time as BiH youth is moving mas-
sively to Germany, where it learns the language of the na-
tion and tries to acculturate quickly, current BiH politics
makes us not accept the people with whom we share not
only territory but also history and culture. This notion of
shared history and culture clearly points to the base level
of common popular experience and its associated forms of
identification and sociability permeating alternative narra-
tives of BiH social world.

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Furthermore, when it comes to the burning issue of lan-
guage, students note how an example given by professors
of Croatian and Bosnian is one to follow[78]. In this sense,
Dženita affirms how "these two professors are indeed great
friends, wherever you see one the other must be some-
where next to her." While explaining her view about lan-
guage problematique, Emina explains:

I am not čistunica (puritan) when it comes to lan-
guage. This should not be seen as something un-

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78   Two female professors, one teaching Croatian language and other
Bosnian, became some kind of heroes after promoting a different approach to
the language issue. There has been an idea, perpetrated by some Mostar activ-
ists, to make them a mural in this Herzegovinian town.

acceptable. We live together and we exchange our language richness. I sometimes feel like saying *tisuća* and sometimes *hiljada* (different words for thousand in Croatian and Bosnian). The real problem is that you try to prohibit the exchange, when you try to purify the language and culture. Sometimes it feels as if we were horses who need to be kept racially (breed) pure.

Nevertheless, the movement, situated in Dayton BiH, naturally encountered various difficulties on its path. In this

aspect, the bureaucratic-patrimonial whip, controlling the lives and incomes of many citizens, makes any kind of political activism almost impossible. Thus, barely a few citizens of Jajce got actively involved and openly stood on the side of students throughout the duration of the protests. By being mere bystanders of political process, many followed the simple rule of ethno-patrimonial regime that dislikes any appearance of dissent. Irena, a professor at local high school, while commenting on the fact that professors generally stayed away from the uprisings, explains how in Jajce "every rebellion represents an existential risk, especially in education sector where jobs are rather scarce". In this sense, policy of bureaucratic whip was really utilized during Jajce protests as mother of one of the main organizers and vociferous opponents of educational divisions was, once her daughter appeared in the media, promptly fired from a public company. Similarly, situation turned particularly acute in NS as its pupils, initially very much involved in the demonstrations against the plans of segregation, were prohibited from protesting. Such order came from the high-school director Hrvoje Jurina who, embodying more some autocrat than a person of educational interest, even prohibited

students from SSS from entering premises of "his" high-school. As a result, professors of NS never spoke publicly in support of the student movement and all NS students had to quit the protests as director (described by some as typical '*hrvatina*') even started attending meetings of the student council in order to maintain absolute control.

Moreover, and besides the bureaucratic-patrimonial machinery, students also had to confront hegemonic ethno-national worldviews that questions legitimacy and historical relevance of BiH common popular substrate and its organizing principles. In this sense, Luka told me how many people in his (purely Croat) village, declared him as "traitor of his people" and a communist. Likewise, Amar recounted the story of his visit to a Friday Muslim prayer where the local imam (a person believed to be close to the SDA) gave a sermon in which, while directing a look towards him, stated how "among those present at the prayer there are certain traitors of the Bosniak people". Amar emphasized how much discomfort he was in, especially considering the authority imam holds in the local community.

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Movement Results and Conclusions

Finalization of what became a very prolonged period of mobilization came to its peak on the 12th of June 2017. On this day, organized under the country-wide high school association called "Naša Škola" (Our School), students from Jajce and other parts of country demonstrated in front of the cantonal government in Travnik requesting to meet with the minister of education rejecting such invitation throughout the duration of the movement. While demanding an end to segregation in BiH education and cancellation of a phe-

nomenon known as "Two Schools under One Roof", pupils marched through Travnik wearing the masks of Nikola Šop, the BiH poet whose name NS high-school carries. In this way, the students present in Travnik symbolically declared that NS students are with them in spirit. Also, banners covering the spaces in front of the government building, trying to capture identarian definitions and its legitimate affects stated how "apples and pears can go together", rejected "embargo for common life" and "segregation as bad investment", and declared "to be here to construct the future and not to repeat the past" (Mreža Mira 2017). The minister herself, even if accusing students of representing a mechanism of foreign intervention in BiH, finally gave in and cantonal government of SBK renounced previously made decision. However, the victory was still only partial as proposal of "Bolja Škola" was never even properly considered by the ruling parties. Rather, students were partially segregated in the existing schools as Bosniak children were introduced a national group of subjects.

Finally, the article demonstrates how the process of (violent) politically induced cultural change, embodied in the project of Dayton BiH, still didn't completely annihilate alternative conceptualizations of belonging among the ordinary citizens of this country. In this sense, the nationalist project, perpetrating one vision of common sense, specific form of belonging and accepted sociability, attempts to reorder and redraw the borders of imaginable community, restricting plurality found in both historical and actual BiH mosaic into a singularity of ethno-nationality. Still, projects of cultural fundamentalism (Povinelli 2004: 4), upon encountering Bosnian "spontaneous folk sociology" of everyday life and the "insurgent community" of Jajce students, face difficulties to handle these "counter-discourses" (Ko-

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lind 2007: 127). That is, the dominant narrative is forced to stand alongside alternative imaginations of reality that, even if less prevalent, make the process of its consolidation incomplete.

Consequently, placed inside of ethno-national structures of BiH, Jajce emerges as both unwanted and unusual experiment of post-war reintegration, a big crack or a "no man's land" that, inside of the "map of space" and overall Dayton infrastructure, offers a vision of BiH flexibilized of voices of ethnopolitics. In other words, Jajce in general and the movement centered around Srednja Strukovna Škola in particular, emerge as a metaphor and a vision of non-institutionalized mode of belonging associated with BiH that in official narratives ceased to exist. While redrawing the lines of community and rearticulating the type of inter-relational and integrational modus operandi in BiH, students offer a silent but persisting vision of BiH that, even if mainly left forgotten in the reservoir of meaning, still offers alternative modes of imagining, exposing the very *long durée* ambiguity and structural complexity of BiH identity(es). However, being not-inscribable in the officially reimagined Bosnian mosaic that produces its invisibility, Jajce and its youth also represent those

> Fluid moments of commonality...*that*...stay invisible because these voices, sentiments, and experiences have no place, no boundary, no language/name, no institutional space to claim or that would claim them. They cannot materialize into meaningful acts under the current system when the meaning itself has been hijacked by ethnopolitics. (Hromadzic 2017: 269)

In conclusion, it seems appropriate to suggest that BiH could, in order to resolve questions that have been troubling it in various forms during times of political modernity, intend to reaffirm and reassert it very reality which, based on its specific plurality, should construct unity by welcoming difference, accepting this as inevitable and enriching part of ones most personal surrounding. In this sense, and even if not resulting in the most desirable outcome, the movement of Jajce students and the message it embodies carries important lessons for anyone thinking about paradoxes in the macro-institutional processes of state and identity creation.

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