Introduction

The "Pathological" Relationality of Clientelism

Zoran, a man in his thirties, had to call emergency services for an ambulance because his father suddenly became very ill.[1] The man who answered the phone said that the ambulance was on its way. Twenty minutes later it had not arrived. Zoran's flat was only a four- or five-minute ride away from the hospital so he called them again. The same man answered the phone. Zoran started yelling at him: "Where is the ambulance? Do you know who I am? Do you have any idea what I can do to you? I can get you fired!"

This time, the call was successful; the ambulance arrived fifteen minutes later. Zoran told me in a confessional tone that he had lied during the second phone call, because he had no real influence over anyone's job at the hospital. Why did Zoran make false threats? He claimed that his father would not have had to wait more than half an hour if he had had powerful *veze* (literally: "relations, connections"; singular: *veza*) and *štele* (literally: "relations or connections that had to be fixed"; singular: *štela*). Zoran's story illuminates the importance of *veze* and *štele* for the organization of life in one border town in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

Perhaps the ambulance was late that night because it had been swamped with calls. Perhaps it had arrived at Zoran's place as quickly as possible. Then again, perhaps the paramedics had decided to first respond to a call from someone they knew personally or someone they considered more important than Zoran and his family. Maybe they did a favor for a friend or for someone who, unlike Zoran and his family, could help them in the future. There was no way of knowing why the ambulance was late and, considering how often things got done through *veze* and *štele* in the Town, Zoran's false threats sounded to me like a reasonable reaction.

Veze and *štele* constitute an important dimension of politics and everyday life in BiH. Almost anybody who has lived and worked in BiH knows that *veze* and *štele* exist and affect sociopolitical and economic life, although how and why exactly they are pursued in everyday life remains somewhat unclear. After the 1992–95 war in BiH, many different international and local actors attempted to transform and "modernize" the state.

Perhaps it is more accurate to say they invested efforts into remodernizing it. From 1945 to 1992, BiH was one of the six federal republics of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), which developed its own version of socialist modernity. Since the end of the war in 1995, postwar reconstruction of the country has gone hand in hand with postsocialist transformation, whereby various agencies and actors have invested a lot of effort into peace building, fighting clientelism and corruption, and transforming the postwar remnants of socialist statehood into a (neo)liberal democracy. Despite such efforts, *veze* and *štele* have not gone away. According to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report (Nixon 2009), 95 percent of more than 1,600 Bosnians who were asked thought that a *štela* was required to access welfare, especially healthcare and employment.

In numerous popular accounts, *veze* and *štele* are presented as a form of clientelism and BiH is described as "captured" by this presumably predemocratic practice. The prevailing assumption is that it would dissolve once there is a fully functioning neoliberal democratic state. Clientelism in Eastern Europe is often discussed in a benevolent manner, as an understandable and expected, even inevitable, response to large-scale societal transformations:

> As other forms of social organization did not exist when communism collapsed, it was both obvious and inevitable that clientelist networks would survive and become the core for future relations, notwithstanding the inefficiencies of the resulting give-and-take that corrupts the morale of democracy and the logic of the market. (Sajo 2002: 9)

Such a, largely benevolent, interpretation has less benevolent consequences, since it prevents "an understanding of clientelism as a field of relationships of political struggle" (Stubbs and Zrinščak 2011: 4).

The benevolent interpretation has a strong paternalistic overtone, because it does two things that relieve political actors in Eastern Europe of responsibility for their own actions. First, it identifies the causes of clientelist relations in the tumultuous past and places the

"solution" in a neoliberal democratic future. Displacing, or rather "distiming" (Jansen 2009b: 55), clientelism as a predemocratic phenomenon means approaching it as something similar to a childhood disease: it should go away as the country grows up and becomes more mature. Second, this understanding of clientelism impoverishes the political imagination by reproducing an image of Western Europe as a discrete entity that is in the position of a nurturing parent helping Eastern European states to overcome challenges on their road to becoming fully democratic, marketized, and modern countries.

Sajo (2002: 2) assumes that the rule of law in postsocialism is not implemented properly because it is "alien to most of the local political cultures, acquainted as they are with only the primacy of surviving by mutual social favors." This suggests that once members of these local political cultures are taught how democracy and the market work in Western Europe, they will be able to ensure a convergence of their countries with Western European states. When Bosnians are seen as people who "interpret life in terms of corruption" (Hrelja 2002: 27), it makes sense to teach them new ways of reasoning about life. Bosnians are not expected to develop political imagination in order to envision contextually sensitive forms of struggle and alternative foundational principles for their polities and economies, since all they have to do is implement a series of recommended techniques for becoming "properly" European.

This book suggests that clientelism and contemporary globalized forms of flexible governance are not contradictory to one another but often mutually constitutive. Indeed, Shore (2000) demonstrates that clientelism and patronage have a well-established place in the very heart of Europe: the European Commission (EC). Lack of procedures that would make the EC accountable to the elected representatives of national governments and the absence of democratic control led to the development of an ambiguous system "based on patronage, cronyism and fraud," which was tolerated because it functioned: "from the point of view of the Brussels elite, it [the system based on patronage and clientelism] was the oil that made the machinery of bureaucracy work in practice" (Shore 2000: 215).

In the Town, somewhat similar things took place: neoliberal restructuring of social protection did not introduce procedures and legal obligations for any particular actor. Instead, they reinforced ambiguities over responsibilities and thus encouraged the patterns of clientelist relationality. During my fieldwork, it was profoundly ambiguous which private or public actor had what role and responsibility in social protection, if any. *Veze* and *štele* offered people a way

to navigate this ambiguity—and sometimes to manage it. Clientelism in social protection was not backwardly unruly but fit right into the growing expectation of flexibly and proactively managing social relations within a community.

In BiH, a benevolent-cum-paternalistic understanding of clientelism was reinforced through two powerful discourses: one, the hegemonic view of the Balkans as perpetually ambiguous and, two, a therapeutic approach to the postwar reconstruction of the country. The Balkans is hegemonically perceived as a region of ambiguity and permanent transformation (Todorova 2009) and as a place where everything appears to be fractally and monstrously related to everything else: "The Balkans always seem to generate ambiguous and tense connections that ought, in modernist terms, to be clearly resolved separations" (Green 2005: 129).[2] Since clientelism is largely understood as the creation of personal relationships where there should be none, it fit all too well into the Balkanist discourse.

The therapeutic approach to the postwar reconstruction of BiH also strengthened the benevolent interpretation of clientelism, by framing war-affected populations as in need of mass therapeutic interventions due to the experiences of a mass trauma (Hughes and Pupavac 2005). The therapeutic approach legitimizes the role of the international presence in the country, denying Bosnians the ability to govern themselves. As the political philosopher Husanović writes, "Therapeutic politics … transforms us [Bosnians] all into victims, passive and politically irrelevant subjects who do not have a right to a voice" (2011: 269). Indeed, almost two decades after the 1992–95 war in BiH, the internationally introduced Office of the High Representative (OHR) still plays an indispensable role in the maintenance of the current political setup of the country.[3]

The result of such discursive merging of Balkanist and therapeutic perspectives may have been an attempt to use UNDP resources for "diagnosing the national pathology … which requires radical surgery if the patient [BiH] is to be restored to health" (Kolstrup 2002: 3–4). The call to *surgically* remove problems such as clientelism and corruption fully follows the hegemonic idea that the solution for "too much" relationality in the Balkans is simply to "put a stop to it" (see Green 2005: 140). From this perspective, clientelism introduces unpredictable and, therefore, ungovernable relationality in places where people should be linked through bureaucratic indifference. As we will see throughout the book, Bosnians seem to place the sociality of kinship, friendships, and patronage in contexts that are imagined in discourses of development as properly governed only by reason.

That various kinds of social relations "sneak" into bureaucratic practices becomes interpreted as pathological because it is perceived as hard to anticipate and control. However, on the one hand, the rule of reason is not opposed to sociality, but is socially produced following "the same logic and symbolism as that of (for example) the supposedly backward peasant of non-industrialized Mediterranean lands" (Herzfeld 1993: 9). On the other hand, the Balkans is not isolated from transnational processes, which means that ethnographic and historical research of this region "should reconstruct the relevant spatial dimensions of the relevant matters, and not start by a given spatial—be it national or regional—'container'" (Brunnbauer 2011: 78). Clientelism could be approached as a part of transnational, globalized processes rather than as an "ill" firmly located within a particular country.

Theoretical Perspectives on Favors

The anthropological responses to clientelist relationality have included attempts to understand everyday forms of economic and moral reasoning that entice people to engage in such semiformal and informal relations. From an ethnographic point of view, there has to be a meaningful, contemporary reason for people to persistently pursue favors and engage in shady bureaucratic and economic practices, which has nothing to do with "primitivism," "backwardness," "mentality," or the inability to shake off the chains of a socialist past. In studies of Eastern European politics, one such reason has been found in a perspective I will call "systemic."

The intrusion of informal sociality into state arenas has been interpreted as a response to the problems of postsocialist transformation (Ledeneva 2006). The systemic perspective suggests that "it's not the people," but rather the new state apparatus, the market economy, and a young democracy still in transformation that perpetuates the need to pursue favors and clientelist relations. In this view, clientelism and favors persisted after the fall of socialism in Eastern Europe because the socialist economy was and the postsocialist economy is flawed, although in different ways. The problematic underlying assumption of systemic perspective is that once Eastern European countries are "properly" transformed—modernized, democratized, and neoliberalized—clientelism and favors will disappear.

Another such reason for engaging in shady crossovers between the formal and the informal has been found in morality and emer-

gent studies of the good. This "moral perspective" is largely based on Laidlaw's (2002) suggestion that morality should be distinguished from sociality, because it depends on freedom to choose what kind of a sociohistorically grounded self one wants to pursue. Moral perspective demonstrates that practices that developmental actors may label "clientelism" or "corruption" actually provide the material from which people constitute themselves as moral persons. Thus, Humphrey (2012) asserts that when striving toward moral personhood, people in Russia and Mongolia willingly choose to engage in "veering" practices. They prefer veering to the official way of getting things done, because this gives them a sense of pride and self-worth and confirms their goodness. Whatever developmental experts may claim, a "good deed is not a crime" (Henig 2017; see also Pine 2015: 25). This book takes something from both of these approaches and leaves something aside.

This book argues that *veze* and *štele* became strikingly relevant for welfare for three related reasons. First, similarly to Humphrey's interlocutors in Russia and Mongolia, *veze* and *štele* offered Bosnians a way to reproduce personhoods. However, my interlocutors did not quite choose or prefer to pursue them. People do not need to like the social strings that shape them in order to be shaped by them. For most of my interlocutors, obtaining a resource through a *veza/štela* was something to be confessed and justified in a low voice, rather than something to boast about as a moral act of a "normal hero" (see Humphrey 2012). *Veze* and *štele* reproduced social personhoods, rather than moral ones.

Second, the persistence of *veze* and *štele* was not conditioned by the flaws in the postsocialist and postwar transformations of the country but by the global structural changes that inserted individual ethics and compassion into the heart of the organization of welfare. In other words, *veze* and *štele* were not results of a transition and a flawed statehood, but of global tendencies to blur boundaries between state and society. For instance, the introduction of ethical citizenship (Rose 2000) into BiH positioned "local community" as the key framework for social protection. The main duty of the government was to create legislature, while everything else—planning, organizing, and delivering social protection—was defined as the responsibility of a local community. This created an ambiguous understanding of social protection as both a citizenship right and a gift of compassionate persons within a local community. My interlocutors used *veze* and *štele* to navigate this ambiguity; they pursued *veze* and *štele* to incite others within a local community to help.

The third reason for the persistence of *veze* and *štele* in BiH can be found in their role in the reproduction of power relations. While most users tried to navigate ambiguous position of welfare as both a right and a gift, there were some people who could manage this ambiguity: decision makers and providers of social protection could decide if a certain welfare support was more of a professional duty or more of a personal favor. They actively shaped the ambiguity of social protection in a certain direction—increased it, decreased it, or transformed it into a clear professional duty/compassionate gift. Furthermore, those who held multiple positions in public and private institutions could serve as a *veza/štela* to many people for various things. By managing the ambiguity of social protection across public and private arenas, they provided favors that could not be reciprocally repaid. Through keeping while giving (Weiner 1992), such persons increased their influence and power. Let us go through these three arguments in more detail.

Personhood

Veze and *štele* stemmed from a local form of sociality that could be called *svijet* (literally: "a world," here: "social world"). *Svijet* was mostly created and reproduced by gossiping and retelling stories about other people. What their *svijet* thought of them was extremely important for many of my interlocutors; it was a strong regulator of behavior, especially for women (Brković 2010). In the sociality of *svijet,* personhood was shaped by connections and relations to other people, similar to what Alexander (2002) found in Turkey. For instance, when my interlocutors wanted to find out who someone was, they often asked questions about who this person knew. They determined what kind of a person a new acquaintance was or what could be expected from her or him by determining who this person knew and in what capacity. My interlocutors also developed a form of knowledge called "knowing by sight" (*znati iz viđenja*), in which "knowing someone" meant being familiar with their personal stories and having a connection to them through someone else.

Veze and *štele* emerged out of such local forms of knowing and being. In Leach's (1993) terms, these were metaphoric relations that helped people to translate expectations across social orders. In enabling people to translate across languages of citizenship and of society, *veze* and *štele* presented a certain kind of sociality "with a purpose," in which it was impossible to clearly distinguish a prag-

matic attempt to obtain something from skillful navigation of social relations. My interlocutors used *veze* and *štele* in their encounters with public institutions to translate across the bureaucratic language of citizenship and the language of personalized relations and vice versa. Through them, people made claims to welfare as persons embedded in the social fabric of the Town and as citizens listed in the administrative databases.

When Zoran angrily asked, "Do you know who I am? Do you have any idea what I can do to you? I can get you fired!" he suggested that he was entitled to the ambulance not just due to his father's urgent medical need or by virtue of his citizenship but also because of who he was as a social person. In another example, Sanja (pronounced Sanya) wanted to access better psychiatric treatment for her daughter. As a member of the Sun—an organization I volunteered with in 2009 and 2010 that works with children with disabilities and their parents—she turned to the other parents from the organization for help. As we will see in more detail in chapter one, a famous psychiatrist in the Town had already examined Sanja's daughter and prescribed her medications. However, he was tactless and rude during the examination, and he did not order any tests, so Sanja did not believe this doctor did his best. She wanted her daughter to be examined again, by someone else—someone to whom Sanja would have a personal connection.

The parents from the Sun readily shared their personal knowledge of and connections to the doctors with Sanja. Sanja thought that the first doctor was rude and unprofessional because, to him, she was a "nobody" (*niko*). She was living with continuous financial struggles, because the basic social provision was ridiculously low,[4] and she could not look for a job, because there was no one else who would take care of her daughter. By asking other parents from the Sun for help, Sanja demonstrated that, despite such problems, she was a "somebody" (*neko*): she had her social connections, her *svijet,* to turn to. The parents provided Sanja with *veze* and *štele* to doctors, helping her to make claims to better healthcare treatment as someone's friend, a mother, and a citizen—all at the same time.

The contours of this "sociality with a purpose," enacted through *veze* and *štele,* are also reflected in an emic conceptual conflation of connections and relations. Unlike in English, there is no conceptual difference between "connections" and "relations" in BiH. For instance, *veza* refers to a romantic relationship (*ljubavna veza*) as well to an Internet connection (*internet veza*). Similarly, *štela* refers to obtaining a service through a close friend or through a chain of previously known and unknown persons. Separating out the instru-

mental dimension of favors from their longer, more profound social and emotional investments is not just impossible but also analytically unnecessary. In order to understand the social logic and political effects of *veze/štele,* their instrumentality should not be distinguished from their social and affective dimensions.

Veze and *štele* were, thus, locally meaningful ways of relating that merged the social with the instrumental. They reproduced a sense of self as a social being as well as a certain material benefit (for instance, a healthcare treatment). They were also targeted by various international actors in the country as a form of corruption. A classic anthropological move would be to critically evaluate and counteract the powerful discourses of development or Europeanization by illuminating the internal logic, everyday routines, and meanings of this contextually specific form of practice.

Ethnographically outlining the effects of *veze* and *štele* on personhoods and society, I could try to challenge dominant Western developmental notions of what counts as corruption by contrasting them with emic ideas about friendship, personhood, or goodness. Postsocialist contexts may have been “an important rubric for critiquing fundamental concepts in western social science,” such as the state, market, or corruption (Rogers 2010: 13). However, my intention in this book is not to explore how BiH practices of *veze/štele* challenge Western developmental categories. Part of the reason for this is that Bosnians did not cherish *veze/štele* as a locally meaningful, morally imbued practice that was endangered by development and Europeanization. Instead, they often criticized the structural inequalities *veze/štele* reproduced and the limitations they reinstated.

Just as Zoran did, my interlocutors perceived the redistribution of resources through *veze/štele* as unfair, and often infuriating, while trying at the same time to inscribe themselves in it. For this reason, I follow the reasoning and the arguments of my interlocutors who often, openly and loudly, condemned *veze/štele,* while simultaneously being engaged in them. Similar to business *guanxi* in China (Ong 1999) or patron-client relations in the Mediterranean (Li Causi 1975), *veze* and *štele* re-created particular forms of social inequality—and people in BiH were critical of this. For instance, during the two rounds of public protests in 2013 and 2014, BiH citizens articulated very strong criticisms of the fact that ethnonationalist politics, personal relationships such as *veze* and *štele,* and bribery affected the work of public administrations.[5]

Some of this was mirrored in the words of my interlocutors in the Town, who, in 2009 and 2010, claimed that in a “normal state”

there is no need to depend on *veze* and *štele*—and thus on someone's personal good will or compassion—in order to live comfortably, earn a wage, or get healthcare treatment. Similar yearnings for a "normal life" and a "normal state" are expressed by people throughout Bosnia (Jansen 2015). I take their criticisms seriously. Since compassion, personal morality, and goodwill increasingly perform regulatory functions in the West as well as in BiH—although admittedly in very different ways—I think the main target of the criticisms my interlocutors articulated was less BiH and more the global transformations of the welfare state.

Instead of presenting local ways of being and knowing (*svijet,* or *veze* and *štele*) as a form of resistance to the globally powerful discourses about the state and the market, this ethnography follows how they were implicated in one another, jointly creating particular forms of power and inequality. I argue that neoliberalization converged and merged with clientelism in a postwar, postsocialist context; that is, neoliberal restructuring of the state responsibilities for survival and well-being and the related insistence on local community, flexibility, and self-responsibility were translated into clientelist modes of relating and back, and this has produced particular ways of gathering power through ambiguity.

In doing so, I rely on the term "favors," rather than "clientelism." Clientelism is a term under which many different practices are placed together. Part of the historical accounts of ancient Rome (Saller 1982), the term is nowadays used to mark many different types of social exchange that do not fit into the Weberian model of modern rational redistribution of resources. In other words, clientelism is a term that makes a negative definition; with respect to BiH, it explains what things *are not* rather than what they *are*. There are many important differences between *veze/štele* in BiH, *blat* in Russia (Ledeneva 2006), *znajomości* in Poland (Dunn 2004; Wedel 1986), *guanxi* in China (Yan 2003), and so forth. Whether all of these should be lumped together in the box labeled "clientelism" and, if so, under what conditions, is a matter of analytical choice. Furthermore, the terms *veze* and *štele* refer to a wide variety of relations and connections. This means that it is fairly difficult, if not downright impossible, to make the same interpretative claims about all *veze/štele* in contemporary BiH.

The ways my interlocutors personalized the educational system, high-level politics, and business, or access to rare goods, might not have been the same as the ways they negotiated healthcare and social protection.[6] Therefore, this book is not concerned with all forms of

veze, but only those that were important for the organization of the politics of survival and well-being in the postwar, postsocialist BiH.

The word *klijentelizam*—a direct translation of "*clientelism*" from English—is not widely used in everyday talk among speakers of the Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian (BCMS) language standards.[7] Instead, what my interlocutors discussed at length were *veze* and *štele.* Since there is no fully corresponding translation of *veze* and *štele* into English, the book more often relies upon the term "favors," which is integral to the anthropological vocabulary of semiformal relations in postsocialist countries. The terms "clientelism," "favors," *and* "informality" are tied up with particular conversations in social sciences. In order to clarify when a certain conversation is relevant for understanding *veze/štele,* I will occasionally refer to different terms in different places. For instance, I will use the term "clientelism" only when discussing how the everyday practice of *veze/štele* relates to the dominant, developmental, benevolent understanding of clientelism.

When ethnographically discussing how "things got done" regarding social protection in BiH and situating this in anthropological discussions, I will refer only to the terms *veze/štele* or favors. The term *usluge* (favors) does not quite overlap with what is denoted by *veze/štele*. *Usluge* are oriented toward the result of a particular relationship, while *veze/štele* emphasize the relationality that precedes the practical outcome. Furthermore, *usluge* refers to a whole set of *uslužne djelatnosti* that could not be subsumed under the meaning of *veze/štele.* (*Uslužne djelatnosti* literally means "service occupations," and they include any kind of work done for others, from cleaning computers and working in a restaurant to detective work.) Despite these differences, there is an important similarity: *usluge,* like *veze/štele,* conflate instrumental, temporary, and fleeting connections with enduring, socially, and morally imbued relations.

Ethical Citizenship

In pursuits related to social protection, *veze/štele* present a locally meaningful way to make claims to support as both a citizen and a socially located person—as someone's friend, mother, or teacher, for example. However, that access to welfare is ambiguously defined as a right of citizens *and* a compassionate gift of socially located persons is not a BiH specificity. Neoliberal restructuring has repositioned elements of welfare arrangements as a matter of personal compassion, ethics, and morality in various places throughout the world, includ-

ing the West. By "neoliberalization" I mean a global dissipation of stable frameworks for organizing lives.

The exact contours of this dissipation differ: such stable frameworks may have been provided by the state or by working places, such as factories and universities, or in some other way. Also, their dissipation seems to regularly entangle the market and flexibility, albeit in various ways. The important thing for me here is that, during neoliberalization, relations between the state, society, and citizens have been moving away from welfare state models and toward something else. As Fink, Lewis, and Clarke suggest:

> The thread suturing the relation between state—people—welfare … came under sustained and systematic attack through the convergence of a fiscal crisis related to the sharpened contradictions of global Fordism and the coming to power of New Right political parties in many countries of Europe and the USA. The result was a shift in the filaments suturing the people to state and welfare away from rights and towards the idea of duty and responsibility. (2001: 3)

This increased relevance of duty, responsibility, and morality was both productive and oppressive for various groups of people in various ways (see Kalb 2009; Montoya 2014). The term "neoliberalism" has acquired so many meanings that it has become effectively an empty signifier (Clarke 2008). Yet, I keep it in this book because it serves as a strong counterpoint to the visions of postsocialist Eastern Europe as a place that has yet to catch up with the West. Postsocialist transformation presents a form of neoliberalization and "the 'transition' from communism to capitalism in ECE [East Central Europe] represents perhaps one of the boldest experiments with neoliberal ideas in the world today" (Stenning et al. 2010: 2; see also Makovicky 2014). Furthermore, multiple and heterogeneous meanings of contemporary neoliberalism in critical social theory are perhaps not just a reflection of an analytical blind spot. They may stem from profound ambiguities and uncertainties created by the dissipation of stable structures supporting life.

Analyzing debates about the Third Way in politics in Britain and the United States, Rose notices "the emergence of a new politics of conduct that seeks to reconstruct citizens as moral subjects of responsible communities" (2000: 1395). The idea of the "social state that underpinned welfare regimes in the 20th century" is increasingly being challenged by "another image of the state [that] is coming to the fore: that of the facilitating state, the enabling state, or the state as

animator" (ibid.: 1400). In this view, the state is supposed to encourage a community—consisting of ethically inclined individuals, firms, organizations, schools, parents, hospitals, and so forth—to take a portion of responsibility for welfare: "Ethical citizenship and responsible community [are] fostered, but not administered by the state" (ibid.: 1398).

Similarly, Muehlebach (2012: 6) argues that the Italian state "has in the last three decades sought to mobilize parts of the population into a new voluntary labor regime—a regime that has allowed for the state to conflate voluntary labor with good citizenship, and unwaged work with gifting." Simultaneously with cutting down and privatizing social services for the elderly and the unemployed in northern Italy, the state encouraged volunteers to care for the "dependent citizens." In this way, it aimed not just to alleviate the effects of its own withdrawal but to insert "the fantasy of gifting into the heart of neoliberal reform" (ibid.: 6–7). Ethical citizenship is not inherently opposed to but is, in a certain form, indispensable to the neoliberal logic of the market order. By permitting personal compassion (and prejudice) to affect what used to be state bureaucratic responsibilities, these new forms of governmentality in Western countries appear to have substantial similarities to the BiH administrations imbued with different forms of sociality.

Part Two, "*Citizenship,*" demonstrates that neoliberal transformations of social protection rely on a concept of a "community" and produce particular forms of sociality. Neoliberally informed restructuring is not a "politics of failed sociality" (Giroux 2011), because it has reorganized forms of relating to others in a way that makes favors practically indispensable for survival and well-being. The translation of policies (Lendvai and Stubbs 2009) of social protection from the so-called developed countries into BiH redefined citizenship as an ethical category. Large-scale transformations meant that welfare services and provisions shrank and that many former Yugoslav boarding institutions for social protection were shut down, and the change in legislation left more than 20 percent of BiH citizens without health-care insurance (Salihbašić 2008).

While the state's institutions are responsible for charting the social protection legislation, everything else is defined as the shared responsibility of a "local community": the financing, organizing, and delivering of social protection is imagined as a joint duty of municipalities, civil associations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), private donors, international organizations, and self-responsible users. New policies affecting the Town prescribe that a local community present

the framework for meeting the majority of citizens' welfare needs, especially in social protection. The members of a local community are supposed to be ethical citizens who would step in and help develop new welfare arrangements, in line with their personal inclinations and abilities. Social workers in the Town called this a "social model of social protection."

While it may have sounded good to many people in BiH, this shift in policy discourse made it profoundly ambiguous who exactly had responsibility for social protection and in what way. The parents from the Sun had no way of knowing what sort of support their families were entitled to and who in a community would help them to make it happen. For instance, the very basic forms of support, such as a daycare center for children with disabilities, had yet to be constructed in the Town. The parents felt entitled to it, but they had no way of knowing when or where it would be constructed, what services it would provide, and with whose money. Instead of knowing their citizenship entitlements and how to realize them, the parents were expected to "manage social relations"—to proactively look for opportunities, forge alliances, and negotiate prospects as they presented themselves. They sometimes did exactly this, by pursuing *veze* and *štele.*

The parents from the Sun recounted to me how, several years prior to my fieldwork, a privately owned bus company introduced free rides for children with disabilities and their parents, but only on one line, from a nearby village to the Town and back. This initiative was something like a small-scale case of corporate social responsibility and an example of collaboration between the municipality and the third sector, but in a specific manner. How did the initiative take place? One parent from the Sun knew the bus driver personally.

For some reason, the bus driver felt the need to ask the company owner to allow free rides for this woman from her village to the Town so that she could take her kid to the Sun regularly. The owner agreed and introduced free rides for all children with disabilities and their parents, but solely for this line. Most of the parents from the Sun, who lived in other villages or distant parts of the Town, had no use for this, and they criticized the arbitrariness of this initiative. It contributed to the well-being of children with disabilities and their parents, but only those who happened to live close to this line.

Such unpredictable and random forms of support seem to proliferate in neoliberal welfare arrangements that place responsibility for social protection on a local community. In the Town, they usually took place because someone knew someone else who was compassionate enough. There are numerous similar examples demonstrating

how personal moral sentiments and chance affected the organization of survival and well-being in the Town. Since there was no legal obligation or procedural script for any particular civic or private actor to engage in social protection, they were supposed to participate on moral/ethical grounds—because they were personally motivated to do so, for whatever reason. By placing primary responsibility for social protection on the local community of ethical citizens, the developmental reforms created ambiguity about who should be responsible for providing what, to whom, and on what grounds.

Favors often provided a way to motivate actors within a local community to step in and provide a portion of support. I argue that *veze* and *štele* helped people to navigate social relations within their local community (or *svijet*), which was expected from them by the developmental reforms. The intrusion of sociality with a purpose into the distribution of welfare does not hinder neoliberal developmental visions of BiH. On the contrary, sociality with a purpose fit right into the neoliberal developmental demands for weakened boundaries and new partnerships between the state and society. My interlocutors used favors to ambiguously present themselves as both citizens and socially located persons under the strains of developmental politics and economic globalization, and they reproduced wider social inequalities in doing so.

Power and Ambiguity

Some common pursuits of *veze/štele* are examples of reciprocal exchange: the parents from the Sun helped Sanja to take her daughter to another doctor, expecting her, or someone from her social world, to conduct a similar favor for them in the future. However, *veze/štele* were sometimes entangled with other, less egalitarian, forms of managing social relations. Their reciprocity was one element within the wider reproduction of power and hierarchy.

The ways in which favors are implicated in the reproduction of power pose certain challenges to the prevailing ideas about ambiguity in anthropology. The quality of being open to more than one interpretation, or of being inexact, is most often understood as a threat to the modernist categories of ordering the world and "seeing like a state" (Scott 1998). This is because, as Augé argues, ambiguity carries a potential to imagine the world otherwise (1998: 31). Augé differentiates ambiguity from ambivalence, whereby ambivalence is an expression of plurality of the existing possibilities: "Ambivalence implies

perceiving the coexistence of two qualities, even if, in the domain of truth judgments, ambivalence is due only to a change in point of view or scale" (ibid.: 30).

Ambiguity, on the other hand, means affirming that something is neither one nor the other, from whatever point it is looked at. Ambiguity means "to put in negative form—the form considered at a given moment to be the only one possible—something positive that cannot yet be qualified. It is to postulate the necessity of the third term" (Augé 1998: 31). In other words, ambiguity indicates that the world needs to be altered in order to make something new intelligible. Furthermore, ambiguity is understood as a quality of everyday practice that simultaneously challenges and reproduces categories that appear to be firm and stable. Herzfeld (2005) approaches ambiguity in Greece as a part of a productive tension between official national rhetoric and everyday knowledge about fissures within national identity. The result of this tension is resolved differently in different situations, and while sometimes it reinstates a sense of Greek national belonging, "it is ambiguity that most threatens the ideal order of the state" (Herzfeld 1999: 133).

While I largely agree with such interpretations of ambiguity, I argue that ambiguity does not inherently have the potential to imagine the world otherwise or to challenge the ideal order of the state. In the Balkans, for instance, "ambiguity can be as hegemonic and subject to disciplinary regimes as clarity" (Green 2005: 12). Under certain conditions, ambiguity may be manipulated to reproduce a position of power. As we will see in more detail in the third part of the book, "*Power,*" ambiguity can be managed—and, indeed, the ability to make ambiguous the responsibility for a welfare provision is linked with influence and power.

It is the more powerful people—decision makers and providers of social protection—who are able to influence when and how much a particular service is a matter of their professional duty and when and how much it is a matter of their personal goodwill to do a favor. If neoliberal restructurings position social protection as both a citizenship right and a social gift, there are (powerful) people able to increase and decrease this ambiguity and to decide in what direction it will be resolved, if at all. When someone offers access to a public resource through a favor, he or she decides how much this is a public, civic responsibility and how much a personal, moral one.

The case in point is Ratka, a woman with many public and private roles in the Town, who provides favors to many different people for many different things. Once she gave KM 200 (EUR 100) to Magda-

lena, another parent from the Sun, to send Magdalena's son's medical test results to Norway and Sweden for special analyses. Magdalena was not sure—and did not particularly care—where the money had come from. Ratka did not clarify in what capacity she provided this support. As the right hand of the Town's mayor, maybe Ratka provided the money from the municipal budget for individual humanitarian needs (over which the mayor had discretionary power). Maybe Ratka provided it from the budget of a religious charity over which she presided. Or perhaps the money had come from some other place, since Ratka was also the head of municipal committees and working groups for social protection and a former member of the local Red Cross and Red Crescent office.

For the parents, this money was ambiguously positioned as Magdalena's entitlement *and* as Ratka's personal gift. The parents interpreted gaps in social protection (and the ensuing need for someone's personal, compassionate support) as indication of BiH's "backwardness," rather than as effects of the new developmental emphasis on a local community and ethical citizens. In the parents' view, if Magdalena were living in a "normal state," she would not have had to worry about such expenses. Thus, in the parents' eyes, this was simultaneously a provision Magdalena should have had a right to, as a citizen, and a personal gift of a caring person who helped to close the gaps of a transforming, "backward" state.

By failing to explain in what capacity she had helped Magdalena this time, Ratka managed ambiguity of this entitlement-cum-gift and confirmed her importance as the person able to help when no one else could. In other situations, Ratka was very clear about what she, or the institutions she was affiliated with, could and could not provide. Her religious charity registered a "humanitarian telephone number"[8] during a humanitarian action for Marko's son, who had to travel to an experimental clinic and possibly receive surgery in Moscow. Humanitarian actions (*humanitarne akcije*) presented a grassroots form of humanitarianism, in which money was raised for an individual medical treatment abroad (see chapter six). Through this humanitarian number, around EUR 3,400 was raised for Marko's son from the people who called the number. A few weeks later, when Marko asked the municipality to financially support this trip, he was told the funds from the municipal budget for individual humanitarian needs were spent for that year and there was nothing anyone could do about it at that moment.

Thus, Ratka's charity helped Marko to raise money from the community, but she did not help him to obtain humanitarian support

from the municipality. By deciding when to keep ambiguity between a personal gift and a civic entitlement (as in Magdalena's case), when to provide private charitable support, and when to invoke bureaucratic indifference (as in Marko's case), Ratka managed ambiguity of social support.

Importantly, by providing ever more varied forms of help to ever larger numbers of people, Ratka gained official political influence, similar to the paradox of "keeping while giving" (Weiner 1992). Chapter five will outline in more detail how reciprocity of *veze* and *štele* is intertwined with the reproduction of political hierarchies. People like Ratka, who skillfully navigated multiple public and private arenas to grant favors to others, elevated their sociopolitical status: my interlocutors described Ratka as "a goddess," "a caring person," and "someone who can do what no one else can." By raising their sociopolitical status, such people were also able to step into the world of local politics and gain official political power.

Their power stemmed from the ability to move between and negotiate across various official and unofficial positions, expectations, allegiances, and claims. In a sense, people like Ratka were similar to what Wedel calls "flexians": people working in contemporary international politics, consultancy, and development who generate power by managing ambiguity of boundaries "between the state and private sectors, bureaucratic and market practices, and legal and illegal standing" (Wedel 2009: 15).

The ambiguity recursively appeared on different scales of welfare—from the mutual relations between social workers and users of social protection, to the state behaving as a humanitarian donor and paying hundreds and thousands of euros for a single person's medical treatment abroad during humanitarian actions, to the municipal plans and promises for construction of new social protection institutions, such as a day care center. My interlocutors claimed that without *veze* and *štele* it was difficult—if not downright impossible—to access various public and private services and resources. They suggested that "everybody" pursued favors to get things done. By claiming that "everybody does it" (*svi to rade*), they represented favors as not just inescapable but also egalitarian.

Yet, the bottom-up perspective of the parents from the Sun differed from Ratka's. Most people who needed support could not manage ambiguity of social protection. Instead, they had to navigate it, often by asking for favors. They had to keep moving through their social worlds and state institutions, trying to get various actors to see them, that is, to recognize their need. The case in point is those

who initiate humanitarian actions. Chapter six discusses how families in Marko's situation managed to raise thousands of euros from different actors in their local community: during a humanitarian action, hundreds of people, NGOs, private firms, schools, and municipal and state institutions donated small amounts of money. *Veze* and *štele* were of paramount importance in this humanitarian assemblage: most donors either personally knew the family members or knew someone who knew someone else who knew the family.

Marko and other organizers of humanitarian actions went from one office to another and from one acquaintance to the next, increasing the visibility of their personal family problem within their local community. Not knowing who may help them raise money for medical treatments abroad, they pursued favors in all possible directions and attempted to respond to various questions and expectations that different donors placed upon them along the way. Thus, if Ratka and other powerful persons could manage ambiguity of social protection, those who depended on welfare support had to find their way through it and adapt to different expectations of multiple actors in different moments. In brief, some people could manage ambiguity and others had little choice but to navigate it.

An Exceptional Case?

As I was presenting pieces of this research to different audiences, I was regularly asked, "How is this need to pursue personal relations specific to BiH?" It is not. It is similar to many other places and practices. However, similarity—not being quite the same as something else—is a form of difference (Green 2005). By placing a discussion of *veze* and *štele* in a conversation with works that explore links between neoliberalism, morality, and sociality, my goal is to move away from certain exceptionalism in the studies of BiH and to offer a critical conceptualization of ambiguity as intricately related to power relations.

BiH is often taken as an exceptional case of developmental challenges because it has been undergoing a postwar transformation *alongside* a postsocialist transformation over the past two decades. It also has a fairly unique political and administrative structure, which I will describe in the next section. As Blagojević (2009) notes, such "exceptional" places in social sciences oftentimes serve as a point of comparison with more "regularly" organized contexts. In the case of former Yugoslavia, these could be post-Soviet countries without a recent war or postconflict countries with an experience of colonialism

rather than socialism or Western states. However, the conjunctures between multiple social processes in such "exceptional" places may shed light on various, seemingly negligible, elements of more "regular" political practices.

In order to illustrate this and to follow the ethnographic convention of providing readers with a map of the researched place in the introduction, I turn now to an artistic installation: *551.35 Geometry of Time* by Lana Čmajčanin, a BiH artist (Figures 0.1 and 0.2). Čmajčanin selected thirty-five maps that show the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past 551 years, placed them one over another, and lit the background. In this way, as Jelena Petrović writes, "Overlapping on a lit background, instead of showing distinct and clear borders, these maps evidence their shifts, deviations and instability caused by colonial, imperial, conquering, migrational, martial, as well as 'peace-keeping' redesigns."[9]

Čmajčanin presents the shifts and contestations of the territorial integrity of BiH, not as the reflection of a weak or failed statehood but as an indication that state borders and territories are inherently unstable and historically contingent (Reeves 2014). Thus, instead of speaking about the presumable exceptionality of BiH, this work visually illuminates that borders as such can be understood as tidemarks: "Traces of movement, which can be repetitive or suddenly change, may generate long-term effects or disappear the next day, but nevertheless continue to mark, or make, a difference that makes a difference" (Green 2012: 585).

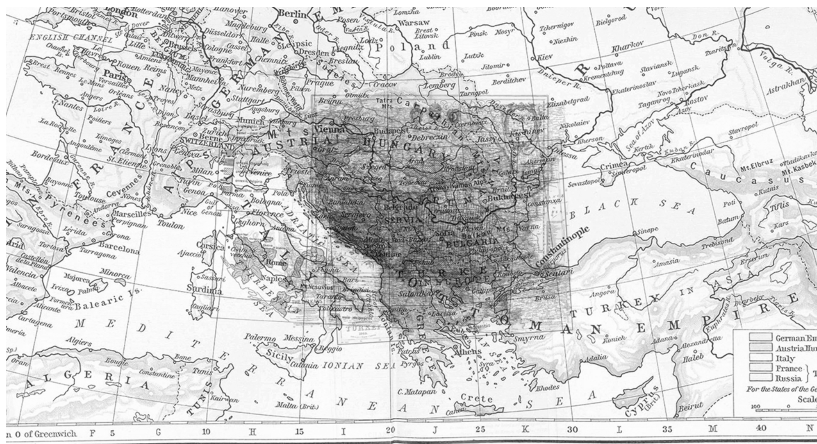

Figure 0.1. *Lana Čmajčanin:* 551.35 Geometry of Time, *video still, 2014, reproduced with the artist's permission*

Figure 0.2. *Lana Čmajčanin:* 551.35 Geometry of Time, *installation view at Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, 2014, reproduced with the artist's permission*

Ethnographically grounded research in the past twenty years, similarly critical of the presumable exceptionality of BiH, has fiercely criticized the dominant identitarian understanding of politics and personhoods as based upon distinctive ethnonational, cultural differences, suggesting that senses of belonging to a nation, gender, or any other identity are the result of continuous practice (Helms 2013; Jansen 2011; Kolind 2008). It has also demonstrated that, far from being an expression of a unique obsession with issues of nationality and ethnic belonging, the events in the former Yugoslav countries during and after the 1990s followed the globally dominant logic of organizing people, territory, and culture to its extreme:

> Put bluntly, in the post-Yugoslav context, "ethnic cleansing" of one form or other was the extreme but not illogical outcome of attempts to enforce a mosaic-like national order on a particular slab of territory. While many of the actual events were outrageous in their brutality, the underlying ideas were not out of line with the principle of national self-determination, enshrined in the United Nations charter. (Jansen 2005b: 61)

The focus of ethnographic research has also been on everyday struggles and differentiations that were founded in new socioeconomic

patterns that are largely made invisible by the identitarian-based understanding of politics. As in many other places, the post-1990 struggles in former Yugoslav countries "are not between 'classes' but between 'cultural groups,'" reflecting a global "shift in the political imaginary, especially in the terms in which justice is imagined" (Fraser 1997: 2). Attempting to articulate a new language for the new "grammar of claims-making" (ibid.), various social scientists have turned the discourse of transition and development upside down: "What if we posit that, in the present moment, it is the so-called 'Global South' that affords privileged insight into the workings of the world at large" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012: 114). From this perspective, the socioeconomic experiments tried in the Global South were later applied in the Global North, thus representing the future, rather than the past, of neoliberal transformation.

Whether or not, or how much, the former Yugoslav and other Eastern contexts belong to the Global South is debatable. The parallels between the former Second and the former Third World are uneasy at best (Chari and Verdery 2009). As Blagojević argues, the former Second World can be seen as a sort of semiperiphery that always "lags behind" the core and needs to be "updated," while it also seems to be "'too white,' too industrial, too developed and it does not share the colonial experience, at least not in the sense of how the concept is dominantly used when referring to the 'South'" (2009: 38).

Different historical trajectories create an "awkward relationship" (cf. Strathern 1987) between the East and the Global South. Still, the problems made visible by the 2008 economic crisis were "very much visible from [the] semiperiphery from the beginning of the 90s, because of the extremely high, and unnecessary human costs for the transition" (Blagojević 2009: 184). The changes that took place during social, political, and economic restructuring in so-called Eastern Europe may also help to understand future processes in other geopolitical constellations.

Instead of seeing Eastern Europe as catching up with the West, we could think of it as a region that points to possible global futures. For instance, Ledeneva's (2006) insight—that markets are inseparable from moralities and that economic rationale depends on certain forms of sociality in postsocialist, neoliberalizing Russia—could be taken as an entry point for an analysis of increasingly globalized forms of governance that transform the relationship between the state and society.

In post-Fordist Italy "the state marshals unremunerated labor by publicly valorizing sentiments such as compassion and solidarity" thus "attempting not only to mediate the effects of its own withdrawal,

but to craft an anticapitalist narrative at the heart of neoliberal reform" (Muehlebach 2012: 8). There may be important similarities here to the restructuring of welfare in postsocialist Russia where personal care has to go hand in hand with "bread"—that is, meager material support—in order for welfare programs to be seen as meaningful (Caldwell 2004). The politics of life are increasingly becoming regulated through compassion, personal kindness, and care, both in the East and the West, and this has serious implications for contemporary understandings of citizenship (Dunn 2012; Du Gay 2008; Fassin 2005; Muehlebach 2011; Ticktin 2006).

Yet, in postsocialist countries, the increasing ambiguity of whether life and well-being ought to be protected because of personal moral duties or because of state obligations to the citizens has often been understood as a country-specific or region-specific issue that would be resolved during postsocialist development. The ways in which neoliberal transformations have intertwined morality with the economy and citizenship with care have often been interpreted as specificities of particular nation–states and as remnants of their socialist legacies, rather than as a part of wider social transformations of state–citizen relations across the world. It remains to be seen whether sociopolitical processes in the former Yugoslav countries—and the ambiguities and tensions they produce—illuminate the futures of other spaces. At the very least, they reflect some of the globally present concerns, such as the intersections between "sociality" and "personal interest" that characterize neoliberal transformations well beyond BiH and Eastern Europe.

Recent History

As I have mentioned, during my research the main duty of the government was to create legislature regarding social protection. However, by "government" I do not refer to a governmental body that encompassed the whole territory of BiH—because there was no such body. Instead, I refer to the government of the BiH entity in which the Town is located, the Republic of Srpska. BiH has thirteen different governments that regulate various administrative units: its two entities (called the Republic of Srpska and the Federation of BiH), one entity-neutral unit called Brčko district, and ten cantons in the Federation of BiH.

State sovereignty is further fragmented by the role and influence of the international community personified by the OHR, which also

has governmental functions. Such a redistribution of state sovereignty across various levels creates complex issues, some of which will be discussed in chapter three. Despite the complexities, all these different governmental levels jointly constitute BiH as a state. Thus, whenever I mention the "government" or "state run" in the book, the state I refer to is Bosnia and Herzegovina.

BiH is commonly described as a consociational democracy, due to its labyrinthine administrative structure and three constitutionally recognized peoples: the (primarily Muslim) Bosniaks,[10] the (primarily Catholic) Croats, and the (primarily Orthodox) Serbs. Its constitution is an annex to the Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the 1992–95 war in BiH. According to the last population census, carried out in 2013, BiH has a total of 3,531,159 inhabitants, of whom 50.1 percent declare themselves to be Bosniaks, 15.4 percent Croats, and 30.7 percent Serbs.[11]

After the war, the Federation of BiH has a Bosniak and Bosnian Croat population as a majority, while the Republic of Srpska has a Bosnian Serb population as a majority. About half of the prewar BiH population, more than 2,100,000 people, was displaced during the war (Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007: 5).[12] Approximately one half of the displaced population relocated as internally displaced persons to other places in BiH, where "their" ethnonational group constituted a majority, while more than a million people fled abroad as refugees. More than 100,000 people are estimated to have died during the war.

The 1992–95 war in BiH can be understood as a monstrous effort to unmix ethnic groups (Duijzings 2003) and disambiguate multiple senses of belonging that were interwoven in the socialist Yugoslav polity (Sorabji 1995; see also Hayden 2007). This process followed what Malkki (1992) calls the "national order of things," a vision of the world divided into discrete nation–state units. One of the most powerful tools of disambiguating senses of ethnonational belonging has been ethnic cleansing, that is, the violent expulsion of ethnonationally defined populations from and to ethnonationally defined territories.

Another tool has been the genocide in Srebrenica, where an estimated 8,000 men and boys marked as Bosniaks were killed in the course of several days by Bosnian Serb armed forces under the command of Ratko Mladić (NIOD 2002).[13] Thus, during and after the war the above "national numbers" (Jansen 2005b) as well as their meanings were changed. War violence had a "constitutive" role (Bowman 2003), for it had reconfigured places not only through the expulsion of populations but also through transforming known and familiar places into new places of terror (Sorabji 1995: 92; see also Maček

2007; Jouhanneau 2016). The war can also be understood as a particular (violent) way of initiating and enacting postsocialist changes in the country (Duijzings 2002).

The efforts of the international community[14] to rebuild BiH further contributed to the fragmentation of its statehood. The international community played an integral part in the war, constituted through a wave of actions that "gave a rhythm to the development of internal war configurations" (Bugarel 2004: 39). The international investments in the post-Dayton development of BiH occurred in several stages. Initial efforts were dedicated to peace, reconciliation, psychosocial support of the war survivors, and minority return. Such efforts were interspersed with projects dedicated to building the state, democracy, and civil society.

Postconflict reconciliation initiatives were coupled with the reconstruction of destroyed property, the dismantling of the remaining elements of Yugoslav socialism, and the introduction of the principles of the rule of law, democracy, and the neoliberal market economy (Baker 2014; Bieber 2006; Coles 2007; Gilbert 2006; Hayden 1999; Helms 2006; Jansen 2006). Later, the international community focused on grooming BiH as a potential EU member state, fighting corruption, and, most recently, advocating austerity measures (Majstorović 2015; see also Kurtović 2015).

Field Site(s)

Many may consider my decision to conduct ethnographic research in a particular BiH entity (the Republic of Srpska or the Federation of BiH) to be motivated by political reasons. The very existence of the two postwar entities is a strong reminder of the nationalist logic of the Yugoslav wars. In post-Dayton BiH, the entity of the Republic of Srpska:

> exists as a product of the nationalist project, but at the same time it carries the stigma of that project. Although constitutionally equal with the Federation, it is still perceived as the "dirty backyard" of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a safe haven for war criminals, and a place where political and economic activity is enmeshed with the criminal underworld. (Armakolas 2007: 84)

Therefore, it is somewhat unsurprising that a disproportionately small number of ethnographic studies of BiH for an English-speaking au-

dience has been conducted in the Republic of Srpska or with Bosnian Serbs (but see Armakolas 2001, 2007; Duijzings 2007; Kostovicova 2004; Stefansson 2006, 2010; Wagner 2008; Jansen 2003).

When I was preparing for this fieldwork, my reasons for conducting ethnographic research in the Town were practical. It was the only town I found where two things relevant to my study intersected. First, it was a border town and, second, several humanitarian actions were taking place there at that time. My research was a part of the project Transforming Borders: A Comparative Anthropology of Post-Yugoslav Home led by Stef Jansen. Within the framework of the project, two Ph.D. scholarships were granted to people who would work on two BiH borders (for an account of how young people and retirees conceived their lives at the BiH-Croatian border in 2009 and 2010, see Čelebičić 2013). While I was preparing my research proposal and myself for fieldwork, I frantically searched for humanitarian actions organized in BiH border towns—and the Town popped up first.

In the Town, the war resulted in a massacre in 1992 and the forced expulsion of persons marked as Muslims as well as a large influx (throughout and after the war) of displaced persons marked as Serbs. The Human Rights Watch report from the year 2000 states that in 1992, the Town "came under attack by Serbian and Bosnian Serb forces and fell victim to the policy of 'ethnic cleansing' … [organized mostly by] paramilitaries belonging to [Željko Ražnatović] Arkan's Serbian Volunteer Guard, a.k.a. the 'Tigers,' together with other paramilitary forces."[15] After the war, the Town received a large number of Serb refugees, and a village in its municipality has had a very high percentage of Bosniak (Muslim) returnees.

Later on, I reflected upon my decision. Choosing not to conduct research in the entity of the Republic of Srpska, despite the Town perfectly fitting my required parameters (it was a border town and it had multiple humanitarian actions going on at the time), would have been a decision founded upon nationalist logic. People who live in the Republic of Srpska live in BiH, whatever one's political opinion may be concerning the existence of the two entities. Regardless of the personal or professional opinions of nationalists, "internationals," or social anthropologists on how the BiH state should be organized, its current administrative setup (which includes entities, cantons, and the district) is something that shapes the lives of Bosnians today—as it did during my fieldwork. This administrative setup structures people's lives in ways we should not discard just because they do not coincide with our political hopes.

To assume that I should have conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the Federation of BiH because it is somehow a "proper" BiH context, as I have been told once or twice by colleagues in academia, would have been a nationalist view. Similarly, to assume that I should not conduct ethnographic fieldwork among the residents of the Republic of Srpska because they are somehow, presumably, less Bosnian, would have been a very problematic and nonethnographic way of thinking. Ironically, this view would have been easily supported by Bosnian Serb nationalists in their struggles for the independence of the entity (see Kostovicova 2004). Thus, I decided to ethnographically learn and think about the Town, rather than make assumptions in advance about what kind of a place it is, and I found myself living there from September 2009 to September 2010, exploring several different domains and actors.

I was interested in how people raised tens of thousands of euros for medical treatments abroad through humanitarian actions and, more broadly, in how people cared for one another through official and unofficial channels. There were three families who initiated humanitarian actions in the Town during my fieldwork year (see chapter six). These families took a variety of different paths in raising money for medical treatments abroad, turning to social worlds they inhabited for help, which included the state institutions and civil society organizations. My ethnographic engagements were shaped by the paths they took.

The members of these three families, like many other people in their situation in BiH, turned to state welfare institutions and pursued favors within them in order to receive financial support. I therefore followed how they submitted formal applications and researched how other people in the Town negotiated access to state-run healthcare and social protection. I became a frequent visitor at a number of state institutions, such the local Center for Social Work (CSW) and the Public Fund for Child Protection.[16] I interviewed the officials who worked in these two institutions and attended their public meetings as well as nonpublic official routines, and sometimes I was allowed to look through their documents and observe their professional interactions with the users of social protection programs.

Furthermore, the families received various forms of financial and social support from local civil society organizations, so I paid attention to how and when this happened. I volunteered in two such organizations, the Sun and Holy Mother, because at least one of the families got help from at least one of them during humanitarian actions. The Sun worked with children with developmental needs and

their parents and I attended their meetings from December 2009 to September 2010. Holy Mother was a religious charitable organization whose members I accompanied on a number of birthday visits to the homes of children with developmental needs from September 2009 to January 2010.

Finally, the families organized many different humanitarian events over the course of their humanitarian actions with the help of their friends and acquaintances. I attended the majority of these humanitarian events and explored the reasoning and practices of the humanitarian donors and organizers. In brief, over the course of a humanitarian action, all three families pursued *veze* and *štele* throughout their social worlds. This led me to follow how favors served as a technology of translation that allowed people to move across the boundaries of the "state" and "that which is not the state" (Gupta 1995: 393) and to explore the work of favors in multiple public and private arenas simultaneously.

Anthropology at Home in a Post-Yugoslav Town

Because I was a citizen of Montenegro, many of my interlocutors perceived me as, in some sense, a native. The question of whether or not I was doing native anthropology or to what degree points to some of the problems inherent in the concepts of "native anthropology" and "anthropology at home." These concepts immediately raise the issue of what constitutes an appropriate frame of reference: native to what—a country, a nation, a language, a culture? What does "at home" mean (Peirano 1998; Ryang 1997)? An understanding of anthropology at home as primarily anthropology conducted in one's own country, or nation, is an example of methodological nationalism—"the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 301).

Before my fieldwork I had not spent more than two weeks in total in BiH. However, the changing forms of statehood in the (post-) Yugoslav region meant that I used to be a citizen of the same country as many contemporary inhabitants of BiH were before the war—the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Today, I share with my interlocutors a kind of parallel post-Yugoslav citizenship and a long-term experience of living in a post-Yugoslav country. Furthermore, while today Montenegro and BiH are two different countries, they share many similarities, including sociohistorical, economic, and po-

litical (post-)Yugoslav heritage, language varieties, and geopolitical positions.

In terms of nationality, there were two other reasons I was not a native. First, although I hold Montenegrin citizenship, personally I do not have a sense of belonging in the Bosnian, Bosniak, Montenegrin, Serbian, Croatian, or any other, (ethno)nationality. The distinction between citizenship (understood as a relationship of mutual responsibility and entitlement between a person and a state apparatus, materialized in a passport) and nationality (understood as an intimate sense of belonging to a particular group and its way of life) is important to keep for various political reasons, not just in former Yugoslav countries (see Vasiljević 2012; Jansen 2005b). The national order of things is far from a desirable framework for thinking about the relationship between people, their cultural practices, and the territory in which they live.

Second, I was not working with nationally defined communities. My analytical and research focus was on exploring not how Serbs (or Bosniaks or Croats) gain access to healthcare and the welfare they need, but how people who live in the Town do so. I worked with people who navigated through the healthcare and welfare systems and those who managed their ambiguities. The majority of these people considered themselves to be Serbs, but some considered themselves Bosniaks, or Croats, or Bosnians, and there were also people who did not see themselves as belonging to any particular nation, just like me. Ethnographic research in and on BiH has illuminated the *relative* importance of nationality in various contexts (Hromadžić 2011; Palmberger 2010; Sorabji 2006; Kurtović 2011).

Similarly, nationality was not *the* most important "power vector" for the pursuit of *veze* and *štele*: nationality often became very relevant, but like gender, age, profession, and other vectors of power, it was sometimes relevant and sometimes not. Therefore, I took nationality into account as much as it was relevant to the topic of my research. When it became ethnographically important, I included it in the description and analysis; when it was not, I let it sink into the background. In other words, instead of seeing people as already nationalized subjects, I paid attention to *when* and *how much* people behaved as nationalized subjects or differentiated others on nationalist grounds. I approached my interlocutors as people shaped simultaneously by multiple vectors of power and I followed when and how their multiple social positions enabled them to do certain things and prevented them from doing other things.

Except for citizenship and nationality, I perceived myself as being at home in many other ways. My first language is the one spoken in the Town (this would be a polycentric language that includes Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian language standards, see footnote 7). My experiences with the health care system and the education system before conducting fieldwork were similar to those of my interlocutors. Furthermore, during our conversations both my interlocutors and I regularly used the terms "our language" (*naš jezik*), "our spaces" (*naši prostori*), and "our politicians" (*naši političari*), which suggests that I was—at least somewhat—perceived as a local.

Also, when getting to know somebody, people usually located me within the Town's network of relations through the people I spent my time with, as well as through the part of the Town in which I lived. All of this suggests that I developed a shared "intimate affinity" (Narayan 1993: 671) with the field. This intimate affinity does not mean that the relevant frame of reference for "home" and "nativity" is citizenship or nationality—and this was not the case with my research. However, given that home and nativity are not essentialist possessions, but categories of practice resulting from the intersection of various shared social positions, my research presents a form of anthropology at home/native anthropology.

Navigating and Managing Ambiguity

Let us go back to navigation and management for a moment. I argue that, in neoliberal transformations in the Town, power and socioeconomic status were reflected in a difference between navigating or managing ambiguity. A great majority of people had little choice but to navigate their social worlds to survive and/or maintain well-being. Navigation refers to an attempt to get somewhere. On a ship, navigation means answering questions, such as:

> Where are we? and If we proceed in a certain way for a specified time, where will we be? Answering the first question is called "fixing the position" or "getting a fix." Answering the second is called "dead reckoning." It is necessary to answer the first in order to answer the second, and it is necessary to answer the second to keep the ship out of danger. (Hutchins 1993: 39)

Thus, navigation includes two things. First, navigation requires determining a location—of a ship, of oneself, of others. As we will

see in chapters one and two, my interlocutors invested efforts to "fix the position"—that is, locate themselves and others—by exchanging stories about their local social worlds. Second, navigation means going forward to make something happen—to reach a certain destination, to keep the ship out of danger, or to access social provisions, a particular doctor, and money for surgery. It is a pragmatic, goal-oriented pursuit that can be controlled only up to a point.

Navigation provides a useful metaphor for describing how people try to make things happen in the midst of ambiguous, uncertain, unsecured environments, whatever the reasons for ambiguity and uncertainty may be. For instance, developing navigation as an analytical concept, Vigh (2009) traces how young men navigated war and poverty in Guinea Bissau. Bear (2015) demonstrates how various people navigated austerity policies and fiscal crisis along the Hooghly River in India. As we will see in chapters three, four, and six, people who needed welfare support had little choice but to navigate their way through their changing social worlds, hoping to stumble upon the right person to help them.

However, a few people can manage neoliberal ambiguities of welfare. Unlike navigation, management marks efforts to organize, plan, and direct something in order to reach a certain objective. Management evokes much greater control in achieving a goal than navigation. It is a useful metaphor for conveying that some people can do something with ambiguity of social protection as both a gift and as a right. Chapter five explores practices of persons who were able to manage, rather than just navigate, ambiguity—they were able to intensify, reduce, or resolve it in a particular direction. For them, ambiguity was not a quality of social relations that potentially illuminates alternatives to the modernist organization of the world; neither was it an unforeseen byproduct of translating welfare policies in an unstable country. Ambiguity was the product of neoliberal restructurings of welfare that could be actively managed, while its management was inextricably linked with reproduction of power.

Notes

1. This book is the product of my ethnographic imagination and practice, and all the personal names and some biographical details throughout the book were changed to fully protect the anonymity of my interlocutors. I refer to my field site as "the Town," rather than by its name, for the same reason.

2. BiH is often represented as the Balkans' epicenter—a multiethnic, multicultural bridge between East and West (Helms 2008). Similar claims are often made about other Balkan countries, including Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, and Bulgaria, although sometimes instead of a "bridge," the country in question is represented as "the last line of defense" of the rational and civilized West from the dangerous and backward East (Norris 1999).
3. The OHR is an international institution established after the 1992–95 war to oversee the implementation of a document that marked the end of the war violence: the "General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (also known as the Dayton Agreement). The OHR can perform a number of governmental functions in the country: it can introduce new laws and remove elected officials from state positions.
4. The basic social protection provision in 2009 and 2010 was approximately EUR 20 (Džumhur, Jukić, and Sandić 2010: 45), while the average net salary was almost twenty times as much, approximately EUR 385. Gross salary was approximately EUR 600 (Republički zavod za statistiku Republike Srpske 2011: 437–38).
5. For instance, the 2013 protests were provoked by the story of a baby who needed to travel beyond Bosnian borders for a bone marrow transplant but could not do so because of a political-administrative glitch: BiH politicians could not agree whether the last digit of the citizens' personal identification number (*jedinstveni matični broj građana,* or JMBG) should indicate the entity they live in or be a random number. As a result, all children born from January to August 2013 in BiH were left without any personal identification documents, including travel documents (Armakolas and Maksimović 2013).
6. I use the term "*social protection,*" rather than "*social care*" or "*social security,*" because it is the literal translation of the term *socijalna zaštita,* which is used to name this field in BiH. I also occasionally refer to "healthcare and social protection" together, mostly because it was under the jurisdiction of the same ministry in the entity: *Ministarstvo zdravlja i socijalne zaštite* (Ministry of Health and Social Protection).
7. Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian are four standards of a polycentric language that was called Serbo-Croatian during the SFR Yugoslavia. After the dissolution of the SFRY, the languages in the post-Yugoslav republics were renamed and new language standards were introduced (see Kordić 2010; Hodges 2016). Despite this, the speakers of all four standards are perfectly able to understand one another. In BiH, the official language standards in use are Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian.
8. A humanitarian telephone number was a service provided by the local telecommunications company (see chapter six). An organization would register this number for a humanitarian purpose. All calls to this number had the same price, between EUR 0.5 and 1.0. The callers would hear a recorded message thanking them for their humanitarian donation. The

amount of money raised through the calls during one month was transferred to the organization and then the organization was supposed to transfer the money to the family for whom the humanitarian action was organized.

9. Petrović 2014.
10. The term "*Bosnian*" (*Bosanac, Bosanka*) refers to all residents of BiH, while the term "*Bosniak*" (*Bošnjak, Bošnjakinja*) is an ethnonational category encompassing Bosnian Muslims. "*Bosniak*" replaced the older Yugoslav term, "*Muslim*" (*Musliman, Muslimanka*), as an ethnonational category in 1993.
11. Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016.
12. According to the census carried out in 1991, before the war, BiH had a total of 4,377,033 inhabitants, of whom 43.5 percent declared themselves to be Muslims, 31.2 percent Serbs, 17.4 percent Croats, and 5.6 percent Yugoslavs (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2011).
13. Mladić was the highest military commander of the Army of the Republic of Srpska during the war. His trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague is ongoing. He is accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, and violations of the laws and customs of war in relation to several war events, including the Siege of Sarajevo 1992–96 and the genocide in Srebrenica in July 1995.
14. Helms notes that "the international community" signifies all foreign governments and agencies involved in relief aid and development but is most often used to refer "more narrowly to the group of supranational bodies and major aid agencies charged with implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement which ended the war in late 1995" (2003: 17).
15. Human Rights Watch 2000.
16. Centers for Social Work in the state of BiH are state-run institutions that provide social protection services. Because BiH has a complex administrative structure, Centers for Social Work are under the jurisdiction of the two entities and relevant ministries.