SCUOLA NORMALE SUPERIORE

The Cognitive Background of Activism

Exploring Ideas Behind Counter-Hegemonic Discourses in Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo

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The central topic of this work is the relationship between critical knowledge and the counter-hegemonic activist struggles in Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb. While looking at the "cognitive background" of activism, both non-theoretical and theoretical knowledge is taken into account. The accent is nonetheless on the theoretical knowledge. Critical ideas, on the other hand, have been inspiring social and political actions for centuries. The question of the nature of this relationship, including the mechanisms of diffusion, concrete sources and reasoning behind it, has thus far remained under - researched. Which type of knowledge is considered to be "movement relevant" today? Where does it come from, through which channels and which social, structural and organizational factors influence its consolidation and operationalization within social movement collectives? All these questions are addressed through a research conducted in a specific context of the post-socialist former Yugoslavia.

Contents

Introduction

Before the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, social movement studies were mainly focused on Western Europe and North America. Unlike France or the United States where big social and political changes throughout their national histories were, to an extent, pushed forward by social movements from below – East-European states lagged behind with respect to the development of so called "movement society" (Mayer and Tarrow 1998). First sign of discontinuity, with respect to direction from which social change usually occurs in these societies appeared in the late 1980s, when socialist regimes were contested by social movements. Among the most researched and certainly paradigmatic case of East-European resistance against the socialist regimes was the Polish movement "Solidarnošć" ("Solidarity").

Until recently, stream of research of social movements in this part of the world did not go too far from the point of the collapse of socialism. In some cases such as Serbia, the most researched movement was "Otpor" ("Resistance") against Slobodan Milošević in the late 1990s. Anyway, the "anti-authoritarian" movements of Eastern Europe remained in the focus of social movement scholarship. Currently, we are once again witnessing authoritarian tendencies in countries like Hungary, Poland and Serbia. It turned out that the perspective of turning into a "movement society" did not materialize after the collapse of the socialist regimes. On the contrary, post-socialism was often legitimized as "painful but necessary transition" from real-socialism to liberal capitalism.

This is why the comprehensive contestation of so called "transitional" paradigm[1] was, in most cases, missing in the post-socialist era. People would go out protesting against different government's decisions, or against different rulers. Serbian "Resistance" from the second half of the 1990s was one of such movements which tended to confront the "leftovers" of authoritarianism in Serbia, as if the era of Slobodan Milošević, the former president, represented continuation with socialism rather than the first stage of transition. All in all, no social movement or any other socially or politically relevant actor with a holistic critical approach towards transitional paradigm occurred in the period between the initiation of transition (in 1991) and the recent past.

This reality changed in the last decade, especially in the region of former Yugoslavia. After approximately two decades of uncontested rule of transitional paradigm, with occasional

[1] Two main conceptual pillars of this paradigm, as will be elaborated in the first chapter, are "Europeanization" and "democratization". Furthermore, this paradigm is composed of two dimensions: economic and political. The prior is uniform and by definition promotes free market economy, while the latter is somewhat bipolar and might be nationalistic or civic – or both at the same time.

particularistic remarks which may all fall under “give us real liberal democracy” or “give us real capitalism” type of complaints, some social movements in this region started questioning the very essence of the economic and social misconceptions of the post-socialist condition. Some ten years ago, different aspects of various “side-effects” of transition surfaced: lack of real political participation, powerful ethno-nationalism, corruption, commodification of education, high unemployment (due to privatization of factories and companies), violation of labor rights, and general social and economic deprivation. The appearance of social movements in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia (and Slovenia) opened the door for addressing all these issues as parts of a bigger whole, as compounding elements of the doctrine of transition and, thereby, articulating a systemic critique of the *status quo*.

This raises a question – what allowed for the occurrence of such social actors? What changed so drastically in Serbia that public spaces once again became important, causing the emergence of the movement “Ne da(vi)mo Beograd” (“Don’t Let Belgrade D(r)own”)? What changed in Croatia, causing the student movement from 2008/9 to be widely studied as one of the most radical and best organized student movements in the world? What changed, finally, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, enabling the rise of workers’ and popular movements of 2014? Looking at the structural conditions, there was no major change. The global economic crisis of 2007/8 came when the economy had already been destroyed and workers had already been suffering from the side-effects of transition. Material and economic deprivation were nothing new for this region. A couple of events indeed shook the “dreamy” citizens, but these events told them nothing new about their societies – nothing they had not known before. Instead, I assume, it was the *perception about the causes of such poor social and economic conditions* that slowly started shifting away from the transitional discourse. It was suspicion that appeared – suspicion whether certain policies, privatization and modernization with so many “casualties” were indeed necessary or inevitable – or whether they were logical consequences of clear political choices that could have been avoided.

The major premise coming out from here is that it was the *maturation of consciousness* rather than the opening of structural or other “windows of opportunity” that brought about potential and possibility for such radical actors to emerge. The following premise is that the maturation of consciousness during the last ten years or so resurged as a consequence of combination of several factors. On one hand, economic deprivation, as well as social and political degradation certainly represented the constant state of affairs since the dissolution of former Yugoslavia. Apart from these factors, the most intuitive one which could have affected

the maturation of consciousness was the *inflow of critical ideas*[2] that prompted future activists to construct alternative, hence counter-hegemonic perception of reality.[3]

These premises made the choice of studying the relationship between social movements and ideas/knowledge relevant. Nonetheless, ideas can be of different kind. Some are more abstract, others more practical; some are utopian, others realistic; some are perceived as dangerous, other as backing the *status quo*. The last dichotomy is the one that draws my attention. After almost two decades long rule of the post-socialist transitional paradigm, something changed and counter-hegemonic actors popped up in former Yugoslavia. Not only reformers of the *status quo* – but its radical critics appeared, actors who challenged the main pillars of transitional paradigm that dominated the former Yugoslav space during the last three decades. Therefore, my focus is on the corpus of counter-hegemonic knowledge and their relationship with the recent social movements in former Yugoslavia. One may refer to them also as critical ideas which had to a) come from somewhere; b) get diffused through some channels; and c) reach those people who are more likely to be responsive towards them.

Ideas often get reshaped and rethought in accordance with a given context. Sometimes, they are brought back from the past and updated. They get diffused through stories of older generations, books that open space for new imageries and shift the angle from which we observe reality and our own experiences. Brokers such as friends or subcultural milieu may help out in this process. In case of former Yugoslavia, the road towards the establishment of the critical discourse was the road of contestation of the entire post-socialist paradigm. It is, hence, relevant to look at the corpus of knowledge which is addressing misconceptions and systemic contradictions in their entirety and wonder about the role of this knowledge in the abovementioned counter-hegemonic tendencies. This led me to pay specific attention to the role of cognitive processes on the more abstract level and assess the importance of theoretical knowledge in the formation of critical discourses of these movements. My work thus focuses on the role of (generic) critical knowledge in changing the perspective from which the above indicated social actors started perceiving and contesting the *status quo*.

Certainly, the question of "what changed" and enabled the emergence of more radical actors cannot be answered solely through theoretical lenses. Firstly, the influence of theories, if present, has its non-theoretical background marked with worldviews, striking points in life or experience in general which led to the exposure to theory in the first place and, eventually,

[2] Under "critical ideas" I refer to those ideas that "more or less comprehensively challenge the existing social order". This definition is equivalent to the one of "critical theories" provided by Razmig Keucheyan (2013, 2). In the following text, I will interchangeably refer to (critical) ideas also as "critical knowledge".

[3] Hegemony is here understood as the process of reproduction of the existing power relations, whereas counter-hegemony stands for tendencies of contestation of the existing power relations. Further theoretical elaboration of these concepts is provided in the subchapter 2.1.

affected more specific theoretical choices. So, if one seeks to explore the relationship between theoretical knowledge and certain articulation of critique, one needs to take into account the whole process of cognitive "accumulation" and different stages that result in a given shape of "cognitive maps" (Jameson, 1990) of both individual activists and social movements.

Secondly, theory is always interacting with various activist practices – from social to political. Structures, macro-politics, economic crises, all sorts of events or *Events,* doubtlessly influence thoughts and ideas, including theoretical knowledge. Theory cannot change the consciousness of activists or any other actor by itself. Moreover, some activists are not affected by theory at all. However, the analysis of dynamics of collectively produced critical discourses of the three movements in former Yugoslavia, showed that conceptual level of the critique is very noticeable and in some cases, very significant when it comes to "critical cognition", both individual and collective.

The most general premise of this work is hence that theory (and especially critical theory) matters with respect to activism, even though some activists are affected by it more than others. This premise is deduced from the general task of theoretical knowledge to illuminate phenomena, shed light on inconsistences or helps in finding linkages between phenomena which, at first, do not look connected or dependent on each other. Claiming that theory played a decisive role in the construction of the new imagery or in determining the shift of perspective and the broad scope of critique in former Yugoslavia, would have probably overemphasized its significance. Claiming that its presence was necessary but definitely not sufficient condition for expanding and deepening the scope of critique would have made much more sense.

With the inflow of new ideas and maturation of awareness of causes of systemic misconceptions[4], different national contexts gave birth to different types of action. Similar ideas could have resulted in various activist outcomes, depending on specific context within which they were applied. The context of the former Yugoslav post-socialism thus gave birth to new social movements that, as mentioned above, managed to break the absolute dominance of transitional paradigm by accommodating certain ideas and developing them further within a given context.

Following that notion, the themes that this thesis seeks to address include: critical theory's relevance for activism; channels through which critical knowledge (including critical theory) spreads across space and time; the sources and factors that shape individual interests in (critical) theory; collective dynamics bringing certain concepts to the forefront of epistemic

[4] See more about the misconceptions of the post-socialist transitional paradigm in the subchapter 1.1.

discourses; the relationship between worldview (non-theoretical) and theoretical knowledge in the construction of critical cognitive maps.[5]

Through these themes, I am discussing the influence of both theoretical and non-theoretical (critical) knowledge on social movements. At the same time, I am bearing in mind that this is not a one-way street. In order to avoid the "chicken-egg" dilemma of discussing what comes first (practice or ideas), I am consciously choosing to focus on one of the two directions (ideas-practice), while keeping in mind the importance of the opposite direction as well. Apart from making the focus of research clear, this remark is important also because it allows me to emphasize what is not essential to it. In a nutshell, I am not focusing on the political outcomes of ideas, or any other consequences of their intervention apart from the impact on individual and collective cognitive processes and discursive breakthroughs made by social movements. I am not wondering whether the time for certain ideas has come or not.[6] Instead, I start from the initial assumption that certain (critical) ideas reached activists and movements, and helped out in the formulation of a critique which had been lacking in the post-socialist space of former Yugoslavia hitherto. Consequently, the role of ideas is assessed through a closer look at the individual and collective processes of cognitive accumulation and "maturation", as well as by looking at how movements' discourses relate to the dominant discourse (paradigm).

In order to grasp the link between critical ideas and action, theory and activism, theory and non-theory, or in general, counter hegemonic thought and counter hegemonic action in the given context of post-socialism, this thesis is divided into seven chapters, where each chapter contains a number of subchapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the (post-socialist) context within which this research is being conducted. The same chapter includes a subchapter on the post-Yugoslavian context, which testifies about additional specificities and peculiarities of this region. Finally, the first chapter is concluded by the overview of concrete case studies as well as the logic behind the case selection. The second chapter is dealing with the theoretical framework. The main pillars of theoretical framework include sociology of knowledge, critical theory and specific branches of social movement studies such as cognition and social movements, collective identity, diffusion and frames. The third chapter tackles research questions and methodological choices, including (epistemic) discourse analysis and in-depth qualitative, semi-open interviews. The fourth chapter is based on the (epistemic) discourse analysis. It is supposed to reveal the type of conceptual apparatus employed by each of the three movements. By "mapping concepts" and tracing the conceptual "backbone" of each discourse (of the three social movements in question), I am initiating the empirical research that seeks to look at the "conceptual background" of activism in former Yugoslavia.

[5] These "themes" served me as the basis for formulation of the research questions (bellow).

[6] This is a reference to an often used catchphrase from Viktor Hugo: "Nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come".

The fifth chapter is designed to give a simple answer: where do the concepts detected through epistemic discourse analysis in the fourth chapter initially come from. The research thereby embarks on a “bumpy journey” and digs deep into the origins and social and structural factors which allowed for the breakthrough of critical knowledge. This chapter is, on one hand, essential for assessing the level of importance that theory (conceptual knowledge) played in the construction of “alternative visions” of reality through acts of individual activists. On the other, it should illuminate the non-theoretical cognitive edifice which had previously paved the way for the receptivity of critical theory by the activists. The second part of the fifth chapter proceeds with the discussion about channels of diffusion of critical knowledge whose origins had already been elaborated in the first part. It addresses both institutional and non-institutional channels, as well as the issue of brokerage, subcultural and other factors which made diffusion possible.

The sixth chapter is supposed to complete the research “circle” and explore the collective processes that allowed individual cognitive inputs to become constitutive elements of the collectively designed critical discourses. After every factor constitutive of collective dynamics within the three movements is detected and elaborated, the concluding, seventh chapter summarizes the achievements of the whole research. Considering that the linkage between ideas and action has a centuries’ long tradition, on the very end of this work I am offering appendix tackling the historical perspective of this research. Unlike the appendix in which I can only map the most tangible examples of linkage between ideas and social and political action, the research itself seeks to get deeper into the nature of this linkage.

Chapter 1: Contextualizing the Research

Discussion on the general context of post-socialism is important for assessing the wider historical context within which the in-depth research takes place. This is the task of the first subchapter within chapter one. Elaboration of the post-socialist condition is important due to better understanding of the object of the critique of the three social movements in question. Just like one needs to understand the main characteristics of feudalism in order to grasp the French Revolution and the ideas behind it; or like one should be familiar with capitalism in order to understand the Bolshevik Revolution and ideas that fueled it – so does one needs to understand the post-socialist transition in order to tackle the "cognitive background" of its critique. The second subchapter within chapter one, narrows down the wider context of post-socialism and focuses on the specificity of the post-Yugoslav context. Finally, the third subchapter addresses the three case studies, its main characteristics and reasoning behind case selection.

1.1. Post-Socialist Context

In order to understand what kind of context we are dealing with here, I shall briefly elaborate the post-socialist "transitional" paradigm. I am thereby addressing the systemic features of post-socialism at the macro level, as well as the systemic misconceptions that became the object of the critique of social movements in Sarajevo, Belgrade and Zagreb. The reason why I find this explication necessary is purely conceptual: in order to understand the nature of the counter-hegemonic critique that is going to be analyzed bellow, one first needs to understand the very nature of the hegemonic paradigm that prompted social actors to make it the main object of their critique.

The problems with post-socialism already start at the stage of its label. Logically speaking, the so called "post" periods indicate that what is at stage is something that comes after a period with more clearly defined characteristics. In his book on "post-democracy", Colin Crouch (2000) gave a quite solid explanation of the conceptualization of "post". He suggested imagining three time periods: pre-X (time 1), X (time 2), and post-X (time 3). In the "pre-X" time, there is a clear lack of "X". Time period two is "the high tide of "X". In the "post-X" period, Crouch argues, "some things will look different from both time 1 and 2". However, he

continues, "X" will still have left its mark: there will be strong traces of it still around; while some things start to look rather like they did in time 1 [pre-X] again" (Crouch 2004, 20).

Generally speaking, there are several ways of understanding post-socialism: as a condition and as a paradigm, a narrative or even an ideology (see more in Balunović 2013). When it comes to condition, post-socialism definitely inherited some fallacies from the socialist period, and "buried" most of the emancipatory potentials and heritage of the Yugoslav socialist experience. On the other hand, the narrative side tends to represent the post-socialist time and space as a historical stage whose main reference is supposed to be the negation of the stage that preceded it. Moreover, all fallacies within the post-socialist condition are narratively ascribed to the resilient "traces of socialism". In this case, the "post-X" functions as a strong negation, discrediting the "X" which is perceived as the period of imprisonment.[7] Post-socialism is ideologically represented as a sort of *absolute beginning* and should announce a radical discontinuity with respect to socialism. In other words, it seeks to authorize itself "on the basis of itself" (Badiou 2005, 210). At the same time, the "pre-socialist" period is revitalized and reintroduced as the only "valuable" tradition upon which the post-socialism can build itself. The pre-socialist period, or the "pre-X" in Crouch's terms, becomes a constitutive element of the new tradition upon which the "post" period could lean every time it faces a conceptual deadlock and/or crisis of legitimation.

"As every historical rupture, every advent of a new master-signifier[8], changes retroactively the meaning of all tradition, restructures the narration of the past, makes it readable in another, new way" (Žižek 1989, 58), the post-socialist rupture, the turning point between socialism and post-socialism, reorganized the entire tradition of the former Yugoslav space. Certain segments of common, international heritage were given new (negative) meaning, while the national histories were pushed to the forefront. Thus, tradition is recreated by ascribing new meaning to the certain portions of heritage. This is, of course, the way in which tradition functions. It picks certain segments of (factual) historical heritage and sheds affirmative light on them, while discarding other segments and/or demonizing them. Moreover, tradition often purposefully "forgets" portions of heritage. "Invented" tradition (Hobsbawm 1983) in post-socialism rests partially upon the internalization of external perception of the Balkans as "backward" (Todorova 2014) and partially upon pride caused by the pre-socialist national heritage which was supposed to reaffirm the feeling of (national) pride after the time spent in the "dungeon of nations" (as the socialist Yugoslavia was called by the nationalists).

At first glance, these two pillars of the post-socialist tradition seem contradictory with each other. The two are, nonetheless, in a rather dialectical relationship. The internalization of the

[7] Yugoslavia is often described in the post-Yugoslav era as the "dungeon of nations".
[8] Master-signifier is Lacanian concept which does not have to refer to any other concept than itself.

perception of the Balkans as “oriental” and “backward” served to show the necessity of economic reforms. Pride, on the other hand, served for legitimizing political (ethnic) nationalism and insistence on national (and often religious) identity which went along with the global shift towards identity politics. In other words, transformation of the economy through primitive accumulation of capital, privatization of public and state owned companies and factories, as well as the overall liberalization of trade and the establishment of “free market” economy was, on one hand, justified as economic “modernization”.[9] On the other hand, the political endeavor of creating nation states followed by wars and bloodshed served to heat up national sentiments and upgrade pre-socialist (ethno) nationalist and religious identities. The link between strengthening ethnic and national identification (and thereby fueling inter-ethnic hatred) on one hand, and economic transformation with all its side effects and “victims” (of transition) on the other, rests upon the following logic: every time the side effects of privatization and other economic processes threaten the stability of the rapidly impoverishing post-socialist edifice, it is “the nation” and “the enemy” of that nation that jump to the front and sideline much more tangible effects of economic deprivation.

The concrete post-socialist paradigm (and the specific post-socialist transitology)[10] should have encompassed the above described trends and translate them into clear and tangible conceptual terms. While having its origins in the general theory of modernization and its three main pillars (civil society, industrialism and capitalism), transitology in Eastern Europe, has developed a kind of romantic perception of the European Union. This is how *Europeanization* has become one of the two master-frames of post-socialism. The second one is *democratization*, which should have announced discontinuity with socialism, that is, again, presented as undemocratic, authoritarian or even totalitarian. The task of this pair of concepts was to provide a more general framework within which the post-socialist economic, political and social practice could be justified and legitimized.

In this brief elaboration of the conceptual content of transitology, it is good to start from Europeanization. In literature, it consists of the following processes: a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things” and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies (Radaelli 2004, 3). In the specific context, Europeanization also has its “anti-oriental”, hence more normative side. This dimension of the

[9] As a matter of fact, industrialization (which is real modernization) already took place during socialism.

[10] At the general level, transitology is “drawing its origins from the turbulence of the Latin American context of the 1970s, (…) and has established itself as a specific scientific domain after 1989. It, further on, places the social sciences in direct service to neoliberal capitalism -- measuring the "adequacy" of the transformations towards market economy, as well as the adequacy of the introduction of forms of parliamentary democracy which support the former” (Pupovac 2010).

term might be understood as “de-Ottomanization” or simply, “Westernization” (Todorova 2009, 180). In this normative sense Europeanization consists of the adoption and adaptation of forms of life and production which were first developed among the intellectual classes and the rising bourgeoisie in certain Western European countries. The new forms of thought, life and production, can be very roughly, summarized as rationalism, individualism and industrialism (Kohn 1937, 259). The more administrative and less normative approach refers to Europeanization as an equivalent to the process of EU integration. The key term at this less but still quite normative side of Europeanization, becomes “conditionality”. European Union becomes the “main protagonist of the Eastern European Transition; according to its 1993 Copenhagen policy, it is supposed to educate, discipline and punish while offering EU membership as the prize at the end of the bumpy road of transition where awaits, so the story goes, the democratic and economic pay off” (Štiks and Horvat 2015, 8). According to some authors, the EU enlargement to the post-socialist Eastern Europe in practice appeared as a “prototype of imperial politics” (Zielonka 2007; in Vidmar Horvat 2020). Other authors argue that this imperial politics of the EU served for gradual introduction of neoliberal state through which the region was supposed to be subjected to the “entrepreneurial spirit” (Vidmar Horvat 2020, 15). Thereby the EU sought to secure itself a peripheral territory for fulfilling its own interests (*ibid*.) In addition, the strategy of “sticks and carrots” was often used for imposing discipline by the European Union. The relationship between the “role models” and the post-socialist “catch-uppers” was thereby established as the one between teachers and pupils (Buden 2009). Subordination, with respect to the “center”, was willingly accepted by the “pupils” represented by their “comprador elites” which were, to a significant extent, members of the old socialist nomenclature. Unlike most of the impoverished working and middle class citizens, the former nomenclature managed to survive disintegration of socialism and, in addition, enrich their positions (Ray 1993, xix) by converting their political capital into economic capital (Lazić 2011). Apart from traditional economic misbalance between center and periphery, surplus and deficit countries of the world economic system, the space of post-socialism internalized externally imposed perception of cultural, ethical and moral backwardness and placed itself “in school” in Europeanization and modernization.

The second conceptual side of the “transitional coin” is, as mentioned - *democratization*. The success of democratization in CEE[11] (post-socialist) countries, as suggested in the mainstream literature, “is to a great extent a consequence of effective Europeanization” (Zolkina 2013, Introduction). Keeping in mind all possible approaches of democratic theory, from direct to representative, minimalist to deliberative, instrumentalist to value oriented – it is difficult to understand what exactly any of these approaches have to do with Europeanization.

[11] CEE stands for Central Eastern Europe.

Even the most modest minimalist approaches such as Schumpeter's[12] or Dahl's[13], have very little to do with "Westernization" in normative terms, or EU accession in less normative, administrative terms. However, the historical moment of dissolution of Yugoslavia and the collapse of the real-socialist regimes in Eastern Europe brought Europeanization and democratization together, as compatible and almost inseparable conceptual "partners". Mutual dependence between these two conceptual carriers of transition was based on the intersection of their properties: from economic transformation and liberalization of the market to privatization process and abolishment of single-party political systems, and lastly, integration into the EU by catching up with the "developed" West. Overall, the two concepts served as a discursive backup to present transformation of "old" habits in social, economic and political life as necessary and a matter of confrontation between "civilization" and "barbarism".

The trouble with "democratization" of the post-socialist space is that it began in parallel with the "takeoff" of the worldwide neoliberal paradigm. Democratization was about to be launched at the same time when neoliberal governmentality started undermining "the relative autonomy of certain institutions - law, elections, the police, the public sphere—from one another and from the market, an independence that formerly sustained an interval and a tension between a capitalist political economy and a liberal democratic political system" (Brown 2013, 45). This is how democratization ended up as neoliberalization, which stood in a direct contradiction with (liberal) democracy due to "submission of political sphere to an economic rationality" (*ibid.*, 40). Considering that neoliberalism hits the periphery much harder than the center, the former Yugoslav European periphery was hit accordingly.[14] This region however, had its own specificities and peculiarities with respect to the rest of the post-socialist Eastern Europe.

1.2. Post-Yugoslav Context

Arguably, the Yugoslav transition is perceived as the most complex of all the Eastern European "post-socialisms" (Ritter, 2012/2013). On the one hand, former Yugoslavia shares general features with other Eastern European regions and states. Aspiration towards the so called "democratic transformation" is one of them. Capitalism, on the other hand, was not a 'grass-roots' phenomenon but the end result of democratic transformation (Mujkić 2015, 626).

[12] "Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them". Schumpeter 2003, 284-285.

[13] Dahl's minimalist definition of democracy contains two key dimensions of democracy: contestation - or the ability of contenders to compete in a fair electoral contest in which the outcome is uncertain; and participation – the extent to which competition encompasses the entire adult population. See: Van Cott 2008, 11.

[14] See more about the waves and social/economic consequences of privatization in Serbia in: Balunović, 2014.

Narratively, it was democracy that was directly opposed to socialism. With the downfall of socialism, one could not hear much about "capitalism" replacing "socialism". "Early revolutionary slogans of 1989 demanded 'socialism with human face', 'human rights and freedoms', 'freedom of movement' and not 'capitalism', or 'the establishment of a sharply divided class society' or a 'trickle-down economy' (*ibid.*). When reality turned out to be capitalist, with sharp class divisions, the national elites in Eastern Europe had to find an ideological solution for it. This ideological solution was supposed to serve as justification for sharp social and economic differences. As mentioned above, justification is partially found in the narrative of modernization. However, this was not enough and could not secure smooth capitalist transformation without creating a mechanism for drawing attention away from social and economic problems. In Yugoslavia, the perfect solution had already been there, rooted among certain segments of population including intellectual elites and writers, already during socialism.[15] This is ethno-nationalism that existed in the wider post-socialist space, but showed its most explicit face in former Yugoslavia.

Ethno-nationalism thus represents a political side of the post-socialist medal. It is often defined as "cultural" or "Eastern", as opposed to "civic" nationalism of the "Western" type (Kohn 1994). Other authors emphasize that such categorical differentiation between the two "nationalisms" contains a strong normative component. The former is often perceived as "bad" and the latter as "good" (Porter-Szücs 2009; 4 Jaskulowski 2009, 95-127; in Jaskulowski 2010, 290). The dichotomy could be also posed around different periods (or centuries). The former is the product of the late 20th and the 21st century, and the latter as the 19th century phenomenon. Finally, the former is usually associated with the post-socialism heading towards "democratic transition" and the latter with "stable" democracies. Regardless of one's academic positioning within this normative debate, ethnic nationalism is a dominant category through which post-socialist – and especially post-Yugoslav experience is to be addressed.

The result of playing on the card of ethno-nationalism was ethnically driven conflict in Croatia, Bosnia and later Kosovo and Macedonia. Gagnon's claim that "ethnic conflicts are happening when the elites are making ethnic belonging to be the only politically relevant identity" (Gagnon 2002, 134), found its remarkable realization in the Yugoslav conflicts. With ethnic/national/religious identities becoming the most appropriate distractors from difficult social and economic condition in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the post-conflict former Yugoslavia became the region of constant ethnic tensions. Hostile relations between the newly independent states, as well as among ethnic majorities and minorities within single states colored social, political and cultural reproduction of the post-Yugoslav societies.

[15] See more about nationalism and literature in the socialist Serbia in: Zunic 1999; Wachtel 2003; Perovic 2014;

An interesting twist followed. In spite of the dominance of the ethno-nationalist narrative, the political side of the "transitional coin" was eventually split into two camps: civic (liberal) and (ethno) nationalist. Even though the nationalist stream has often been presented as incompatible with "Europeanization" in both economic and cultural (political) terms, civic and nationalist streams turned out as equally good executers of the neoliberal (economic) reforms. In the post-war period, "civic" political forces insisted on political "pacification" – but the relation of complementarity between nationalism and economic (neo)liberalization became sooner or later, clear in all former Yugoslav republics. In Croatia, for instance, it was the nationalist leadership of the 1990s (embodied in Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and the first president of independent Croatia, Franjo Tuđman) that linked, both practically and narratively, neoliberal economic reforms to the far-right nationalism. In Serbia, this "tandem" was initially blurred under Milosević[16] but became clearer after his fall. In contemporary Serbia, the champion of economic liberalization is no other than President Aleksandar Vučić, the former secretary general of the ultra-right Serbian Radical Party (SRS).[17] In Bosnia, a country that represents the most paradigmatic case of internal tension between different ethnic groups, a "non-ethnic" politics is nearly impossible due to the convocational model of state organization[18]. The three dominant (and most of time ruling) parties, SDA, HDZ (Bosnia) and SNSD (but also SDS)[19], all have "pro-European" agendas. Moreover, they often accuse other parties for "anti-Europeanisms" in order to discredit them.

Nearly two decades after dissolution of the common state in some parts of the former Yugoslavia this blurry signifier called "transitional post-socialism" was challenged. Both sides of

[16] See more about the blurry ideological condition in Serbia in the subchapter 5.4. "The role of religion and other peculiarities".

[17] Serbian Radical Party (SRS) has been established and led by the convicted war criminal Vojislav Šešelj. After leaving SRS, Vučić and Tomislav Nikolić (president of Serbia 2012-2017) founded a new Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), which took a moderate turn, but never gave up on the nationalist rhetoric. Instead of open promotion of "Greater Serbia", Vučić (and Nikolić) simply accepted a more modest or more realistic version of Serbian nationalism.

[18] This is a consequence of the Dayton peace agreement. The annex four of that agreement, which represents Bosnian constitution, divided the country into two entities and one district. While the entity called "Republika Srpska" includes 49 percent of the territory, the second entity called Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina contains 51 percent of the territory. In addition, the later entity is divided into 10 cantons. See more in the document of Dayton peace agreement here: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/BA_951121_DaytonAgreement.pdf

[19] SDA is short from Party of Democratic Action. The founder was the first president of BiH and the war leader of Bosniaks, Alija Izetbegović. Today, the president of this party is his son, Bakir Izetbegović. HDZ BiH is short from Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This party is a major Croatian party in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The president Nebojša Čović is the former member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. SNSD is short from the Union of Independent Social-Democrats, led by the curent member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Milorad Dodik. This is the major party in the entity of Republika Srpska. SDS is short from Serbian Democratic Party. It is currently opposition to SNSD in Republika Srpska. This was the major Serbian party during the war and it was led by the convicted war criminal Radovan Karadžić.

the transitional coin, nationalism and economic neoliberalism, its discursive apparatus and practical social and economic consequences were put into the same discursive basket as objects of the critique. And when it seemed like there was "no end to the beginning"[20] of transition, the combination of some old and some new (radical) democratic ideas reemerged.

1.3. Case Presentation

The newly arisen social movements across the region of former Yugoslavia pushed contesting ideas forward and launched the struggle against *neoliberal transition*. Some authors labeled them as the "new left" in the post-Yugoslav space (Štiks 2015). Štiks places these movements in the post-socialist, post-conflict – but also the post-crisis context. The reason why he calls these new actors "new left", is because he directly refers to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia as the "old left". Even though similarities with the "new left" of the 1960s are admitted, the author nonetheless indicates more specific characteristics of the post-Yugoslav "new left", including "the critique of electoral democracy (…) critique of the neoliberal capitalist transformation of the post-Yugoslav societies and the so called "transition" (…) critique of the conservative, religious, patriarchal, and nationalist ideological hegemony (…)defense of common and public goods (…) and an internationalist approach to the post-Yugoslav and wider Balkan region, often coupled with an anti-nationalist and antifascist attitude(…)" (*ibid,* 137). In different (national) contexts this struggle got different shapes which consequently pushed different issues to the forefront.

In Croatia the leading role was taken by the student movement. While "catching the wave" of the global student resistance against neoliberal turn in the sphere of higher education (see more in Dolenec and Doolan 2013), this movement grew out of the student struggles at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. In Serbia, by the municipal initiative around the group "Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own sought to intervene through involvement in the local authorities' urban policies (Domachowska 2019). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the uprising that was initiated by the workers in Tuzla resulted in the rise of the popular movement in Sarajevo and several other cities. Chiara Milan (2020) rightfully emphasizes that the major characteristic of this movement was "social mobilization beyond ethnicity". In further presentation of the three case studies, I am going into more details.

The three cases I am covering thus include three social movements which occurred within the same post-socialist space and time. The common feature of all three cases is that the main

[20] This phrase is used by the Croatian philosopher Ozren Pupovac in order to point out one of the most often used justifications for damaging economic and social effects of transition: "We have just started…" See: Pupovac 2010.

object of their critique was the above described paradigm of transitional post-socialism. This general common feature, however, brings up the question of potential variations in terms of discursive performances upon which the critique was set and potential explication for these variations. As will be shown below, the variations are detectable. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, we are dealing with three different types of movements – one being student, the second being municipal and the third being "popular". Secondly, in spite of the shared condition of post-socialism, specific national contexts still diverged and affected each of the three discourses.

I shall briefly introduce the circumstances under which the three movements occurred. Thereby I am simultaneously presenting the three cases in a nutshell, and stressing out divergences of starting positions with respect to certain (predetermined) inclinations and possibilities of specific discursive consolidation. The three lines along which I am showing these *initial* divergences are:

1. Structural divergences and divergences in national contexts which affected macro conceptual articulations within discursive performances
2. The specific type of social movement
3. The issue of external *triggers* and level of state repression

These three lines, along which I am about to show divergences between the three social movements, are set up after I had already had a closer look at the final versions of all three discourses. In Sarajevo, for instance, it was clear that police repression significantly influenced discursive content. In Zagreb, hostility towards Yugoslav heritage (that is, the specific national context) prevented the straightforward usage of concepts related to Yugoslavia. In Belgrade, the specific type of social movement appeared as both the consequence of the national context and the reason for undertaking certain conceptual directions through discursive performance.

Let me start a more substantial elaboration with the case of a student movement in Zagreb which has become famous for its "free education for all" struggle in 2009.[21] The most important endeavor conducted by the movement was the occupation of the Faculty of Philosophy[22], which started on the 20th of April at noon. Around 300 students gathered in front of the faculty and carried the "One world one struggle" and "Education is not for sale" banners with them. Soon they started interrupting lectures and exams and uttering the "Free education" rallying cry. The students never canceled the educational function of the faculty. Even though they prevented professors from teaching, they organized alternative lectures and activities. The unlucky circumstance for the faculty management was that the dean was not in Zagreb at the

[21] See more in: Popović 2015, 105-106.

[22] English translation of the Faculty of Philosophy is "Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies". In this disertation however, I will use a direct translation from the local language.

time. He was in Brazil, spending time in Copacabana beach. This gave the students an advantage, because the management was neither complete nor ready and organized – whereas the movement was. Its activities, moreover, inspired others and the struggle diffused from Zagreb to 20 other faculties across Croatia.[23]

Many external incentives appeared to be equally influential, but none of them represented sufficient cause for the rise of the movement. The global economic crisis of 2007/2008, alter- and anti-globalization movements across the world, the "Bologna" process of higher education reform[24], negative practices of commodification of higher education (for instance, in Great Britain) or good practices in the same sphere (for instance, in Finland) – these were all moments indicated by my interviewees as "external factors" influencing the movement in one way or another. Its occurrence, however, did not have any direct external triggers. The blockade itself had some role models (for instance, the blockade of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade in 2006). What appears as crucial, nonetheless, has to do with the counter-hegemonic cognitive construction of meanings and imagination, rather than any external or internal events *per se*.[25]

On the other hand, the wave of protests and plenary meetings of citizens in the Bosnian capital were directly triggered by the workers' struggle in the former Yugoslav industrial capital, the city of Tuzla. On Wednesday, February 5th 2014, Tuzla's (mainly industrial) workers from privatized and destroyed factories took to the streets, as they had done many times before. Had the workers not been joined by the unemployed and other supporters from the town, that Wednesday would have probably looked like all of the previous ones, and would have had similar (zero) effects. But the workers' voice claiming the right to social security, work, pension and healthcare payments got louder as the crowd got bigger. Sarajevo, along with other cities such as Mostar or Zenica, heard it as well. The images of police repression against the ever larger mass of people on the streets of Tuzla became viral. The gathering of the protestors in Sarajevo started on the 7th of February at around 1.00 p.m. in front of the Cantonal Government. Soon thereafter, they moved to the front of the Presidency building. Both buildings were secured by the police and the television camera recorded a remarkable statement from an elderly protester, who said: "Had you been safeguarding factories like this, we would have been importing the workforce today". The protestor stressed, in other words,

[23] Apart from Zagreb, students from seven other cities launched blockades in their hometowns: Zadar, Rijeka, Split, Osijek, Pula, Varaždin and Slavonski Brod. Thereby Croatia was at the time the third most rebellious student country in Europe, just behind Greece and France.

[24] See more about the conditions and aims of the "Bologna reform" of higher education in Garben 2011.

[25] "(...) it wasn't like the tuition fees were sudenly introduced, for instance, and the students started rebelling. We literally constructed that struggle (for free education). Already in 2008 we fought agaist capitalism at the theoretical level and we found the niche within which we could fight (practically) in education. We created this space for mobilization consciously and this simply resonated with other students and citizens at the more general level." (Interviewee no. 8)

that the police should have taken care of factories and local production before these were destroyed by privatization, the same way they did with the institutions (and the political elite) on the day of protest.

By the end of the day the protests escalated and the poorly organized crowd created an inflamed atmosphere – both metaphorically and literally, as institutional buildings were set on fire. This time, unlike in the 1990s, it was not an external aggressor who was responsible for it. The inhabitants of Sarajevo themselves did it, targeting the symbols of "self-colonial" domestic aggression of the ethno-nationalist political elites against their own people. Thus, Sarajevo's Cantonal government and the Presidency building burst into flames. The state was ready, and reacted in Sarajevo in the same way as in Tuzla – with pure repression.[26]

Soon, it was police brutality and a serious number of arrested protestors which affected the discourse of the movement. When one faces such a strong reaction from the state, it is the very repression that occupies much of the attention of the public. Automatically, it occupies the movement's discourse as well, because the public is so focused on day-to-day events. This appears to be an influential structural factor, especially in comparison to the student movement in Zagreb. On the one hand, the student movement acted within University, which is immune to the intervention of the repressive state apparatus due to its autonomy. Such a structural advantage may, possibly, increase the likelihood of shaping day-to-day public discussions, rather than (predominantly) responding to them. Sarajevo's popular movement, on the other hand, interacted with the unfavorable structural conditions which resulted in an ad-hoc reaction to the external trigger (Tuzla) and the police brutality in both Tuzla and Sarajevo. Consequently, the ability of critical discourse to get a more focused shape and thereby cover misconceptions of the hegemonic discourse more broadly became limited.

The "Don't let Belgrade D(r)own (NDB) movement, finally, sits in between the two previous cases with respect to triggers and repressive response by the state. It reached the peak of public support after an event which might be considered a direct trigger for mobilization. Namely, in the night between the 24th and the 25th of April 2016[27], a couple of buildings (over 1,000 square meters) in Belgrade's downtown were knocked down by heavy machinery. People who witnessed the event were kept in custody for a couple of hours. Their phones were taken and checked by unknown people with masks. Citizens who lived in the area called the police, but no one showed up. The whole endeavor was conducted in the part of Belgrade where an exclusive area called "Belgrade Waterfront"[28] (BW), by the Sava River, was going to be built.

[26] See more about Bosnaian protests and plenums in: Arsenijević 2014.
[27] See more about this case in: Bieber 2019, 51-52.
[28] The project is worth three billion dollars and the investor is "Eagle Hills", the well-known company from United Arab Emirates.

Then prime minister and today's president of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, said that the highest officials of Belgrade's administration stood behind this action and that each and every one of them would be prosecuted. Almost four years later, while I am writing these lines, no public official has been charged or prosecuted.

Public visibility of NDB and the hype created by wide mobilization against BW were highly interrelated with this event. The night between the 24th and the 25th of April was the trigger for mass protests, but the terrain for it had been prepared in the previous years. The movement had worked on spotlighting the "Belgrade Waterfront" project in order to illuminate wider social, political and economic misconceptions within and behind it. This project became a matter of public debate mostly thanks to the activities of NDB. Therefore, here we may speak of a direct trigger for mass mobilization and popularization of the movement – but not of the direct trigger for the occurrence of the movement itself. On the side of the state's response to the protests, the situation is likewise somewhere in between the other two case studies. There was no visible repression during and after the protests, but the repressive circumstances under which the demolition in Hercegovačka Street took place could be taken as triggering mass mobilization and wider public reaction. The possibility of discursive expression was hence half-limited, or half-determined by the event that took place on the night between the 24th and the 25th. Lawlessness, police repression, insecurity and the like did come to shape the discursive content of the protests organized by NDB after the 25th. Yet, there was still some space for using the hype, while at the same time not reducing the overall discursive performance to the scope determined by it.

The fact that the student movement in Zagreb made its own cause, while being influenced but not directly responsive towards external events and/or direct repressive response from the state, placed it in a more advantageous position than the popular movement in Sarajevo and, partially, the municipal movement in Belgrade. Why? In terms of the ability to organize their struggle discursively, the Croatian students were not in a rush. There was no need for reacting immediately, and, on top of that, there was no need for referencing, accommodating and bridging the context of the "trigger" with the intended (general) discursive performance. This is why, in Zagreb, it was not only about expressing revolt, but about constructing a relatively autochthonous and new imagery, while contesting the hegemonic epistemological framework within which the mainstream knowledge is usually produced.

On the other hand, NDB enjoyed the advantage of having bigger or wider (social) mobilization capacity than the student movement, precisely because of the event to which the mass protests were responding. This capacity would have, nonetheless, never been upgraded by a single event, had it not been for the activities undertaken by the movement beforehand. This means that the movement had already become well-known among the wider public,

before the demolition and the atmosphere of repression increased its mobilization capacity. In other words, the NDB movement could respond directly to the specific event (the demolition) and increase its mobilization capacity while not having to reduce its discursive performance to it.

Finally, the popular movement in Sarajevo occurred as a direct consequence of the events in Tuzla. After the occurrence, it then kept on struggling with further discursive limitations which were imposed upon them by the brutal response of the police already on day one of the protests in the Bosnian capital. The police repression was however, just an additional aggravating circumstance which increased the heavy weight of the hostile national context of Bosnia and Herzegovina even more. National contexts in other two case studies were different, but not much "lighter" when it comes to the possibility of critical discursive breakthrough.

In Croatia, references to socialism and Yugoslavia have always been more discredited than in Bosnia, while Serbia again finds itself somewhere in the middle. In Bosnia, structural obstacles embedded in ethnically and territorially divided post-war society, made the possibility of anti-hegemonic discourse more fragile and unstable, from the very beginning. While in Croatia one had to be more careful with respect to the socialist (Yugoslav) heritage, public discourse in Bosnia had to be adjusted to the constant danger that universal anti-nationalism could be interpreted as an attack on one or another ethnic group. This was the narrative in the Bosnian entity of the Republika Srpska (Serbian Republic), in which the protests in Sarajevo and other parts of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina[29] were portrayed as being directed at destabilizing that entity. Serbia, on the other hand, has had ever since Milošević's rule and the 1990s, a ready-made counter-attack from the state to any sort of serious social upheaval, whether it is reformist or revolutionary. "Foreign agents", chiefly among them George Soros, are usually thought/suspected to stand behind those who seek to rebel and/or resist. This narrative is a typical feature of semi-authoritarian or authoritarian regimes. Unfortunately for NDB, one such regime has been established in Serbia (again after Milošević)[30] alongside with their occurrence.

Table 1.1: *Case studies*

Lines of divergence	Type of movement	Structure/Context	Triggers/Repression
Belgrade	Municipal	Authoritarian tendencies	Indirectly
Sarajevo	Popular	Structural Ethno-	Directly

[29] Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the second entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
[30] For the first time after the fall of Slobodan Milošević, Serbia has been declared a semi-consolidated democracy by the Freedom House report. See the online version of the report: https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/serbia

		nationalism	
Zagreb	Student	Strong anti-Yugoslavism/anti-communism	None

When it comes to *reasoning* behind this case selection, one should stress that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia were not the only cases where social movements and protests happened in the past ten years. Apart from these three cases, protests of the deprived and dissatisfied occurred in other former Yugoslav republics, such as Slovenia and North Macedonia. Some protests were similar to those in Milošević's Serbia in the 1990s, hence they were anti-authoritarian (this was the case in North Macedonia). Elsewhere, the protests gave birth to an alternative political agenda and new (relevant) political parties. Such was the case in Slovenia after the protests in Maribor, Ljubljana and other cities across the country. My selection of case studies for this research yet fell on the remaining three countries Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Why?

There are three main reasons for choosing these countries. *Firstly,* the three cases share the same linguistic space which is important due to: a) the fact that this is my mother tongue and this level of knowing the language is important especially if among the methods applied is discourse analysis; and b) because the politically driven barriers could not prevent communication among these societies completely – which is why the three activist scenes could have interacted with each other. This dimension (of interaction) may be significant for understanding where and how critically intonated discourse developed in all the three cases.[31] *Secondly,* the countries share similar consequences of the post-socialist transition: strong nationalism, involvement/exposure to warfare in the 1990s and the post-war consolidation through economic reforms.

At the same time, the contexts are somewhat different. Each case is specific enough for combining their similarities and differences, thus inferring the reasons for divergences in the relationship between activism and counter-hegemonic knowledge. *Thirdly,* the three movements do not overlap due to their nature. One is a typical popular movement, the other typical student movement and the third typical municipal social movement. This implies an additional dimension of the research and an additional explanatory tool – in a sense that one may trace three different conceptual trajectories of developing critical discourses. The

[31] This does not mean that there was no interaction with other republics, in spite of the relative language barrier - especially between Croatia and Slovenia, for instance. However, Slovenian social and cultural space has somewhat been detached from the rest of the region which shares many similarities with respect to which Slovenia has remained external. Furthermore, the interaction between N. Macedonia and Slovenia was rather limited in comparison to the interaction among the other three cases.

movements in Slovenia and North Macedonia, one should mention, were both popular movements, as well as in Bosnia which ended up being my choice as a case study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

At the beginning of this chapter, I am defining concepts of critical theory and hegemony. After that I am introducing a more general theoretical pillar, the field of sociology of knowledge. Through elaborating the main sphere of interest of sociology of knowledge, I am suggesting an additional dimension that is supposed to be included in it. Finally, I am finishing this chapter with theoretical reflections from the domain of social movement studies. Considering the main research interest, I am firstly discussing the subfield of social movements and cognition and then move to the literature dealing with diffusion and master-frames within social movement studies. More specific theoretical reflections are kept for each empirical chapter/subchapter.

2.1. Critical Theory and Hegemony

The significance of theory building for any sort of social change - be it progressive or regressive, has been shown by example of the neoliberal turn. Already since the 1950s, a small group of academics[32] started developing the idea of liberalism mixed with neoclassical economy. It turned out that this mixture, called neoliberalism, has brought the world to the stage (or the edge) of "post-democracy", which somewhat reversed the weal of historical progress. This means that it got it back to the stage of pre-democratic era[33] in political terms, and the stage of 19th century inequalities in economic terms.[34] Friedrich von Hayek, one of the masterminds behind the neoliberal turn and the author of the "key neoliberal texts such as The Constitution of Liberty, presciently argued that the battle for ideas was key, and that it would probably take at least a generation for that battle to be won, not only against Marxism but against socialism, state planning, and Keynesian interventionism" (Harvey 2005, 21). The moment when real policies based on Hayek's and Friedman's ideas have prevailed over both the orthodox and the "New Left" type of critical thought, drove critical theory to reshuffle its content and purpose. By saying "critical theory", I actually accept the understanding of Razmig

[32] "A small and exclusive group of passionate advocates - mainly academic economists, historians, and philosophers–had gathered together around the renowned Freedom's Just Another Word... Austrian political philosopher Friedrich von Hayek to create the Mont Pelerin Society (named after the Swiss spa where they first met) in 1947 (the notables included Ludvig von Mises, the economist Milton Friedman, and even, for a time, the noted philosopher Karl Popper)." Harvey 2005, 19-20.

[33] See more about this process in: Crouch 2004, 31-70.

[34] See more about this process in: Piketty 2014, 84.

Keucheyan who argues that critical theory should be used in plural – at least nowadays. He of course acknowledges the significance of the Critical theory which is usually linked with the "Frankfurt School", but comes up with a bit broader definition:

"Critical theories are theories that more or less comprehensively challenge the existing social order. The criticisms they formulate do not concern particular aspects of this order, like the imposition of a tax on financial transactions (the "Tobin tax") or some measure relating to pension reform. Whether radical or moderate, the 'critical' dimension of the new critical theories consists in the general character of their challenge to the contemporary social world." (Keucheyan 2013, 2-3).

Thereby Keucheyan provides a conceptual apparatus (of pluralized critical theory which does not reduce it to the Frankfurt School) that allows for a more comprehensive understanding of critical theory. Moreover, this definition gives us a chance to think broader in terms of the *social role* of critical theory. In this light he discusses the matter of emancipatory subjectivity and the absence of clearly identifiable, historically and materialistically rooted carrier of emancipatory social change in contemporary era. Unlike the Marxist orthodoxy which positioned proletariat in the center of historical process of emancipation from exploitation and alienation, today's critical thought, Keucheyan argues, faces many obstacles and challenges while developing critical conceptual apparatus for tackling contemporary issues. The need for a reshuffling of critical thought on the other hand, went in parallel to the crisis of possibility for tangible social transformation.

The crisis of critical thought often goes hand in hand with the crisis of radical political subjectivity. When political action gets either divorced from or "disappointed" by political thought, furthermore, it usually undertakes the road of "great regression" or simply, deadlock. Keucheyan reminds us that the "failed revolution" in Germany in the 1920s, apart from giving way to fascism, announced the breakup between intellectual critical thought and (communist/socialist) party politics. The main consequence of this "divorce" was the production of a more abstract theory which, according to Keucheyen, signified the beginning of theoreticians' deflection from the field of real politics. It was until the 1970's that the critical thought had persisted as "rigid", in a sense that Marxian thought and class struggle (with proletariat being the main emancipatory subject) were central to their theories in spite of changes in material, cultural and political conditions.

The 1960's and 1970's brought some change, but still not too radical. Herbert Marcuse for instance, recognized the need for taking into account other struggles *apart* from the one of proletariat. In the twilight of the "crisis of radical subjectivity", he saw emancipatory potential in struggles for national liberation or student struggles. The struggle of *the deprived* (mainly the working class), could have thus been supported by the struggle of *the dissatisfied* (students,

LGBT, anti-colonial struggles for national liberation) or both dissatisfied and deprived at the same time (African – Americans etc.), without losing the initial strength, whatsoever.[35] Nonetheless, Marcuse still thought of the proletariat as the backbone of revolutionary potential within society, and thought of other struggles as not being capable to carry the heavy burden of revolution by their own. The difference with respect to the past, in his view, was that this time the backbone of emancipation needed support from other social actors. The radical subject was nevertheless still seen as *one,* whereas other actors were perceived as desirable *"*catalysts for social change".[36]

The struggles in the 1960s and 1970s brought another change at the level of critical theory production. They accelerated the rise of the "new critical theory" which, again, corresponded to the rise of the "New Left". In the light of "crisis of emancipatory subjectivity", different authors sought to find a solution from this deadlock caused by the defeat of the 1968 movements as well as more traditional workers' movements. It seemed inevitable that the new critical theory *pluralized* emancipatory subjectivity and diverged from the strict structuralism, economicism and historical determinism. Conceptually, as Laclau and Mouffe argue, the question was how *to* "characterize that plurality of antagonisms emerging on a mass terrain different from that of classes" (Mouffe and Laclau 1985, 62). Some authors thus focused on theorizing from identity and queer perspectives (like Judith Butler); others paid attention to recognition (Nancy Fraser or Axel Honneth); or *Event* (Badiou or partially Zizek). Hardt and Negri tried with the notion of "multitude", whereas Laclau, Balibar, Habermas, Nern and Benedict Anderson questioned the notion of the "people" and its relationship to globalization. Others talked about the construction of *the European* (Habermas, Balibar); or the occurrence of antagonisms within nations (Laclau). Pluralization of critical thought hence "democratized" the notion of emancipatory subjectivity.

Instead of categorizing streams of thought *within* the new critical theory, or mapping critical thinkers and issues tackled by them like it was done by some authors (Wark 2017; Keucheyan 2017), the line of division I am suggesting is between orthodox (and homocentric) and contemporary (or polycentric) critical thought. While the prior undertakes a "materially – driven" path of defining the main carrier of radical subjectivity (which is proletariat), the later "allows" other actors to take over the epithet of a radical subject as well, usually through the process of articulation. One could thus wonder, which stream "talks" better to contemporary social dynamics and illuminates better the path for social struggle? Among the "new" authors

[35] See more in: Marcuse, P. 2017; In: Lamas, Wolfson and Funke. 2017.
[36] See more in: *Ibid.*, 3.

who seemingly managed to "speak" to the contemporary social and political actors were Laclau and Mouffe through their work on hegemony and populism. It was nonetheless, Laclau (and Mouffe) who always spoke about the importance of context. The absence of universal subject/carrier of social change, according to this approach, demands contextual accommodation of concepts and/or separate conceptual production for each context. For that purpose, scientific critical communities, both universally and each for its respective context should answer the following question posed by Robert Lynd eighty years ago:

"What social science evidently needs is to seek to make explicit its tacit criteria of the "significant". The most general criterion in current use is "a new contribution to knowledge" (…) But this vague reference of social science to the quantity of knowledge leaves unanswered the question of what it is to which knowledge is relevant*"* (Lynd *ibid.*, 187-188).

From discussion about the nature of critical theory, its orthodox and contemporary meaning and the meaning applied in this work, one should move on and provide a conceptual framework for dealing with the *producers* of critical knowledge. The heavy burden of tackling Lynd's question is carried by the so called "critical communities". It is their responsibility to push critical theory "more clearly into engagement with political practices and to clarify the kinds of issues that a critical theory needs to resolve-both about itself and about the external world (…)" (Ray 1993, xx). The social relevance of knowledge and the role of "critical communities" as the producers of critical knowledge in (specifically) cultural change is precisely the topic of Thomas Rochon's "Culture Moves" (1998). I took over this approach which links knowledge production and cultural change, and broadened it. Instead of cultural change I talk about actors who seek to accomplish a broader social change. In Rochon's view, culture consists of the linked stock of ideas that define a set of commonsense beliefs about what is right, what is natural, what works (Rochon 1998, 9). As will be shown in the next subchapter dealing with sociology of knowledge, the whole edifice of society is, as a matter of fact, built upon the same stock of ideas that constitute dominant set of commonsense individual and collective perceptions of social reality – which again constitutes consent which legitimizes the *status quo*. In this light, while talking about conditions and forms (and cognitive origins) of cultural change, Rochon provides a solid theoretical apparatus for looking at conditions, forms and incentives for counter – hegemonic projection of social reality – or, better yet, development of counter-hegemonic meaning systems. Patterns, in other words, remain the same regardless of whether we are talking about culture or broader social change. Importantly, the author looks at diffusion of new ideas, structural (societal, political, and institutional) constrains to the endeavors of actors to undertake the "original break from past ways of thinking about a subject" (*ibid.*).

The role of political and social movements in spreading, adapting and "translating" ideas originating in critical communities, according to Rochon, is essential for widening the spectrum

of audience and increasing the number of recipients of innovation in thinking about a specific issue or issues. The role of social / political movements, he argues, is to bring contesting ideas to the attention of social and political institutions. The author comes up with three possible models of cultural change which, at the same time, illustrate three possible ways in which newly developed ideas in critical communities are communicated to the wider audience by movements:

1. Value conversion
2. Value creation
3. Value connection

Value conversion signifies struggle over meaning which takes place in a domain of "zero sum" game. Rochon gives the example of the Civil Rights Movement, and takes the issue of racial discrimination in order to explain value conversion. In a nutshell, if there are white people and there are black people and if the hegemonic meaning prescribed to this dichotomy between races is that white people are superior to black people, then there is a need for converting this meaning and establishing a new one: no one is superior to others because of their racial background. The second model of *value creation* includes cases of cultural change through introducing a new issue to the public – or in Rochon's words, by "turning private issues into public ones" (*ibid.,* 69). The mechanism is explained through the example of Movement against Sexual Harassment in the United States, where what used to belong to the private sphere (or being absent from discussions in the public sphere), now becomes a relevant (and unacceptable) by the standards of the public sphere. Finally, the third model of *value connection* (also called by the author the "applied philosophy") represents the hybrid of the two previously indicated models. It "involves destroying old values and creating new ones by altering the context in which idea is evaluated" *(ibid., 56).* All three models of cultural change may, as emphasized before, also be applied to the widely understood process of striving towards social change.

Importantly, I am not inclining towards critical communities over social movements with respect to (critical) knowledge production and conceptualization of reality. Instead, I am simply acknowledging that "social scientists are in a good position to contribute to the production of that [critical] theory, both by virtue of their training and by the research time available in the academy" (Bevington and Dixon 2005, 191). At the same time, I do acknowledge developments in social movement studies which took the direction of perceiving social movements as "laboratories of innovation" (see: Pavan and della Porta 2017, 2). Nonetheless, I see critical communities as contributors or sources from which individual activists and social movements may draw *initial* incentives for constructing alternative meaning systems. Moreover, I see them as initial guideposts which may pave the way or trace the direction of the perception of reality,

as glue which may provide links and put various kinds of fragmented knowledge together. This practically means that critical communities may enable social movements to develop "a better understanding of the social mechanisms at work, so as to direct their efforts in order that their intentions might be more efficiently fulfilled." (Nilsen and Cox 2013, 73-74) As the group of authors illustrated by referring to one of the most influential branches of social theory ever produced, Marxism – this stream of thought has managed to provide the link between seemingly non-connected social issues and become a holder of "particular strength as a movement theory".[37]

Finally, what needs to be elaborated in this subchapter is the concept of *hegemony*. Considering that I dichotomized hegemonic and anti-hegemonic discourses and claimed that I am about to study the development of counter-hegemonic ones - it is necessary to cover the essential transversal of my study by reflecting about my (theoretical) positioning with respect to hegemony. The closest to my understanding of development of counter-hegemonic tendencies is Gramsci's conception of "war of position". In his terms the hegemonic forces rely not only on coercive means, but also on the means of cultural hegemony. This "two-headed" hegemony stands for reproduction of power in the realm of institutional/political and also the realm of civil society. Struggle of counter-hegemonic forces against direct coercion is called the "war of maneuver" and implies a direct struggle between the ruling and the subjugated class. In the sphere of "civil society" where the means of power reproduction are more sophisticated, contestation is more indirect. Considering that in the sphere of culture and civil society the hegemonic power legitimizes itself through consent, this "war" labeled by Gramsci as the "war of position" consists of the *struggle over meaning*. In such a war, counter-hegemonic knowledge and ideas play a decisive role against hegemonic knowledge and ideas in order to displace political frontiers onto the sphere of social struggles. (See more in: Gramsci 1971; Laclau 2005, 153).

At the same time, the concept of hegemony in my work is tightly connected to *articulation* and *discourse*. This means that the use of the concept is likewise reserved for the *internal dynamics within the anti-hegemonic block*. Here, I follow Laclau and Mouffe who argue that the main conceptual properties of hegemony are *social demand* and *articulation*. Firstly, they define articulation as "(…) any practice establishing a relation among elements such that the identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 105). According to Laclau, the central object of articulation is social demand which needs to be emptied from meaning as much as possible. Its task is to - apart from its own, articulate all

[37] "Marxism (…) contributes an emphasis on the connection between apparently disparate campaigns and issues: struggles over oil and gas, for example, can connect ecological questions with local concerns over health and safety, economic ones about the ownership of natural resources, cultural conflicts over the meaning of place, and, indeed, the politics of policing." Barker, Cox, Krinsky and Nilsen 2003, 15.

other (unrealized) demands (See more in Laclau 2005, 73). Hence, Laclau reaches the definition of hegemony:

"(…) there is the possibility that one difference, without ceasing to be a particular difference, assumes the representation of an incommensurable totality. In that way, its body is split between the particularity which it still is and the more universal signification of which it is bearer. This operation of taking up, by a particularity of an incommensurable universal signification is what I have called hegemony." (Laclau ibid., 70)

Struggles over meaning and (thus) struggles for hegemony do not occur only between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces. These struggles (and this is especially clear from Laclau), also take place within the counter-hegemonic block itself. Due to the proliferation of social struggles, Laclau claims, no specific social demand (and hence no specific actor or struggle) may claim superiority over others before/outside the sphere of the political. In more philosophical terms, this means that no actor or social demand may claim ontological and/or epistemological superiority in the political sphere on grounds of its materially determined privilege inherited from the social/economic sphere. Hegemony must be the result of a process, where demands in the political sphere manage to *articulate subjugation as oppression*, for the opportunity to become "empty signifiers" within which all unfulfilled social demands may be compressed. In my work, this way of reasoning is replicated onto the field of conceptual articulation, whereby in each case study a different concept takes over the role of a "master-frame" within each discourse. The centrality of one type of conceptual apparatus or even a single concept, in this sense, announces actually that one demand managed to hegemonize the space of articulation of discontent, by simultaneously representing itself and other unfulfilled demands.

2.2. Sociology of Knowledge

The formation of any sort of cognitive map whether it is hegemonic or counter-hegemonic, theoretical or non-theoretical, has bothered theoreticians of science ever since Descartes onwards. How do we know what we know? Are the objects of cognition given and "objective", or there is subjective intervention which may jeopardize our endeavors of "knowing the world objectively"?

I assume that there are certain social factors which could make certain directions of cognitive development more likely to occur. There should be some external patterns or sets of experiences to which one may be exposed, which make certain types of knowledge more likely

to be appropriated by an individual. Unlike Karl Popper who separates the "inner" and the "external" world to the extent of claiming that these worlds are autonomous, my position is way more interactionist.[38] This means that the two worlds, "inner" or "mental" and "external" or "material", interact and mutually shape each other. It is the task of sociology of knowledge to investigate and assess this process of interaction which sets directions of cognitive development and acquisition of knowledge.

Sociology of knowledge was not developed as a separate field of research until the 20th century. Before that, there were only Durkheim's and Weber's approaches. They represented a paradigmatic set of views that was used as a building platform for a specific branch of sociology of knowledge. On the one hand Durkheim's answer to the question of what is precisely about society that is being studied by sociology is unequivocal: social facts. According to him, "social facts make sociology a focused discipline with an eye for empirical detail, far removed from the metaphysical lumber of social philosophy" (Baert 2005, 23). Weber, on the other hand, launched the tradition of sociological thought which, apart from "social facts", likewise takes into account subjective meanings or subjective construction of everyday life. He believed that "the scientific constructs should include a reference to the subjective meaning an action has for the actor" (Schutz 1962, 62; in Schutz 1996, 47).

Since Karl Mannheim onwards, a separate field of sociology of knowledge has sought to shed additional light on the specific matter of the relationship between subjective perceptions and objective social circumstances in which one acquires them. The sociology of knowledge, in Mannheim's words, "has set itself the task of solving the problem of the social conditioning of knowledge and discovering workable criteria for determining the interrelations between thought and action" (Mannheim 1954, 237). The other two authors, who "popularized" the field of sociology of knowledge further, were Luckmann and Berger. They also thought of the "objective" and the "subjective" as compounding elements of a perfect dualistic image of reality. They argued the following:

"Society does indeed possess objective facticity. And society is indeed built up by activity that expresses subjective meaning. And, incidentally, Durkheim knew the latter, just as Weber knew the former. It is precisely the dual character of society in terms of objective facticity and subjective meaning that makes its 'reality *sui generis*' (…)" (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 18).

So far, my approach overlaps with Berger and Luckmann, as well as with Mannheim. The process of diverging, especially with the first-mentioned, starts when they proceed elaborating

[38] "Popper aims at defending the autonomous mind from materialism (being merely a product of the physical world). At the same time he defends the world of ideas (world 3) from being merely a product of our deliberate construction or manipulation." Garmann 2014, 33.

on what should be a more specific task of sociology of knowledge. The essential concern of this field of study, according to Berger and Luckmann is: "How is it possible that subjective meanings become objective facticities?" *(ibid.).* They argue, in other words, that sociology of knowledge should be about common-sense "knowledge"[39] rather than "ideas". It is precisely commonsensical knowledge, they argue, "that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist" (*ibid.*, 14-15). They further argue that "natural failing of theorizers" is *to* "exaggerate the importance of theoretical thought in society and history (…) and continue by arguing that the theoretical formulations of reality, whether they be scientific or philosophical or even mythological, do not exhaust what is "real" for the members of a society". Since this is so, they claim, "the sociology of knowledge must first of all concern itself with what people 'know' as 'reality' in their everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives" *(ibid.).* For Mannheim, similarly, "philosophers have too long concentrated themselves with their own thinking" and the sociology of knowledge should instead, pay attention to the "non-exact modes of knowing". As to the subjects of research, Berger and Luckmann talk about "common people", while Mannheim talks about "acting men" who "proceeded to develop a variety of methods for the experimental and intellectual penetration of the world in which they live" (Mannheim 1954, 1). Here starts my disagreement with both approaches.

Both works, of Mannheim on the one hand and Berger and Lukmann on the other distinguish between scientific (or theoretical) and non-scientific knowledge for which they believe it should be central to the sociology of knowledge. I argue that what people "know as reality" is not a uniform projection that may be predominantly prescribed to either scientific or non-scientific knowledge. My interest in theoretical influence upon the way in which individuals and groups perceive reality comes from another categorization which has to do with *hegemonic and counter – hegemonic* sides of the perception of reality. Unlike Berger and Luckmann who argue that sociology of knowledge should be dealing with hegemonic commonsensical knowledge, I set my research task around socially mediated construction of *counter-hegemonic knowledge* – which could be either theoretical or non-theoretical or often, both. This corpus of knowledge tends to deconstruct the ruling common sense and thereby disrupt, decompose and delegitimize the social fabric built upon a hegemonic paradigm. I am thus preoccupied with looking at the construction of what Mannheim calls "utopias", understood as "complexes of ideas which tend to generate activities toward changes of the prevailing order" (Mannheim ibid., xxiii)[40]; and with what Berger and Luckmann call "other realities" - which "appear as finite provinces of meaning, enclaves within the paramount reality marked by circumscribed meanings and modes of experience" (Berger and Luckmann *ibid., 25*). These enclaves or

[39] Whereby "common sense" is defined as the knowledge I share with others in the normal, self-evident routines of everyday life. See: Berger and Luckmann 1966, 23.

[40] The opposite set of ideas Mannheim calls "ideologies", referring to *complexes of ideas which direct activity toward the maintenance of the existing order* (*ibid.)*.

"provinces of meaning" in their understanding exist in contrast to common sense and they are "perceived as superstitious, marginal, or deluded, on the one hand, or overly abstract, specialized, or dogmatic, on the other" (Rosenfeld 2010, 14). The argument against Berger and Luckmann who think that "other realities" should not be included in the field of research of sociology of knowledge is that, without these "other" realities, we can talk neither about reality in its totality nor about the role that knowledge plays in social change (which is always driven by counter-hegemonic thought). Only these, "parallel" realities, may show that knowledge is both "social product and a factor in social change (…) since no (hegemonic) common sense is really fully consensual even in its time" (Rosenfeld *ibid., 87*). The fundamental difference between Mannheim on the one hand, and Berger and Luckmann on the other, is that Mannheim includes "utopias" into the analysis, whereas Berger and Luckmann find "other realities" irrelevant for the field of sociology of knowledge. On this point, I therefore follow Mannheim.

An important point of divergence of my approach with respect to Mannheim's, is that I include theoretical influences and indeed – theoretical thinking into the analysis of what he calls "utopias" and I label "counter-hegemonic tendencies" or critical knowledge. Moreover, I find theory crucial in some instances of contestation of the *status quo*. As a factor of social change, knowledge tends to become more abstract in order to contest the general common sense. Critical knowledge seeks to bring about social change by scaling up the common sense in order to shake its entire edifice, rather than its particular "rooms". To scale up the level of cognition and knowledge acquisition and communication of course, means including theoretical reflections which, as Berger and Luckmann rightly point out, "have their roots in pre-theoretical reifications established in this or that social situation" *(ibid., 90).*

If theory plays a role in "cognitive development" or the construction of critical consciousness, this process has its vestibule. This vestibule is compound of non-theoretical inputs that lead towards theoretical upgrade under certain social conditions. From the standpoint of a dominant paradigm and its (ruling) common sense, critical knowledge is perceived as deviant and shares "an inferior cognitive status within the particular social world" *(ibid., 66).* This is however not enough reason for reducing the study of sociology of knowledge (as Berger and Luckmann do) only to the hegemonic set of (ruling) knowledge and meaning systems. Here I am suggesting that studying "the deviant side of the coin" might help us to understand the formation of *contesting meaning systems*, which seek to deconstruct and overthrow the one dominating in a given moment. The level of coherency of these contesting meaning systems is, at the same time, tightly linked to the ability of a subject (be it individual or collective) to develop both abstract and non-abstract levels of thinking and combine them.

Other authors also draw attention to the common research practice of looking at the hegemonic knowledge and its social role. This corpus of knowledge usually comes from a grand narrative which manages to become hegemonic and hence "deserve" to be strengthened and vividly reproduced with the help of the whole network of "small" narratives and every - day, common sense knowledge. Another quote from Robert Lynd's book "Knowledge for What", written ten years after the biggest economic crisis of the 20th century:

*"*This over-ready acceptance of the main assumptions of the going system has been a source of confusion and embarrassment to the social sciences as that system has become highly unmanageable since the World War, and particularly since 1929*"* (Lynd 1939, 4).

The moment of my writing, it has been more than ten years since the beginning of the biggest economic crisis of the 21st century, so far. The situation in social sciences today is seemingly different than 80 years ago when critical thought was not as widespread in established social sciences and readily available as in the 21st century.[41] The amount of critical literature, theories and philosophical or scientific discussions on systemic fallacies of "predatory neoliberal capitalism" has skyrocketed due to the 2007/8 world economic crisis. This trend affected the former apologists, centrists who took a "lefty" or quite radical left turn after the crisis. The production of scientific pieces analyzing causes of the financial and economic collapse of 2007/8 and discussing (consequential) degradation of social and political affairs is probably at its historical peak at the moment. There is a clear reason for this and that is the need of the counter-hegemonic side of "reality" to get some conceptual and theoretical light. As Lynd argues, "(…) although empiricism is conducive to realism, it is also deceptively conducive to a kind of over-preoccupation with immediacies which may distract attention from critical larger questions" (*ibid., 123).*

This is why theoretical, more abstract thought, especially philosophical insights, are constitutive of every (desired or conducted) social change. With this respect, Habermas makes a distinction between the social (subjective) and the cultural and institutional spheres. In each of these two, he argues, different types of knowledge matter. "For the cultural / institutional sphere, Habermas refers to the fact that society becomes increasingly complex, and related to that, argues that there is a growing need for expert knowledge. Theory and philosophical discourses can have a role as critical expert knowledge. In the social sphere philosophy will increasingly have a role as hermeneutics as trying to find meaning and to guide meaning" (Garmann and Johnsen 2016, 92). Finding or guiding meaning nonetheless became more difficult in the light of events and social/political/economic transformations which somewhat speeded up the course of history in the past decades. Thinkers found themselves in an uneasy

[41] The process of "globalization of critical theory" has significantly contributed to widening and spreading of critical theory beyond the limits of "Western world". See more in: Keucheyan 2013, 3.

moment of "the end of determinism" which made holistic and plausible thought way more difficult to achieve. The crisis of emancipatory, critical thought somewhat overlapped with the crisis of the left. After 1989 and the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991, the new attempts of critical theory to reestablish balance with the dominant interpretation of 1989 as "the end of history" (Fukuyama) seemed to be failing. In parallel, the neoliberal stream of thought has become hegemonic and to a significant extent – commonsensical.

This is why, finally, I do not see common sense or counter-hegemonic contestations as something simply (and only) "given by ratio", by humans' ability to think or infer conclusions from certain premises. The crisis of critical thought and the dominance of neoliberalism are not understood here as the signs of inability to think and assess the misconceptions of the dominant paradigm. I do not see the crisis as being derived from human incapacity to think (see: Rosenfeld *ibid.*, 142). Where I place both (hegemonic) common sense and counter-hegemonic contesting tendencies - are social interactions and power relations. This means that contesting sets of meaning usually develop into relevant ones when ruling common sense starts functioning as "a kind of structural or even constitutive censorship". Their influence is more likely to increase when "common sense turns into an instrument of domination that works constantly and silently not only to keep individuals in line but also to exclude outlying voices as either criminal or crazy and to limit the parameters of public debate" (*ibid.*, 14). With the help of other elements of the theoretical framework, I am seeking to illuminate structural, organizational and generally speaking – social conditions under which "utopias" in Mainnheim's and "other realities" in Luckmann and Berger's terms, may become relevant contesters of the hegemonic paradigm and establish a tangible counter-hegemonic "block" in order to reset existing power relations.

2.3. General Theoretical Positioning Within Social Movement Studies

The two main positions concerning the relationship between social movements and critical communities (and ideas) may be presented through the two important works of (earlier mentioned) Thomas Rochon (1991) and Eyerman and Jameson (1998). In Rochon's "Culture Moves", movements are somewhat objectified and presented as playing the role of practitioners, or conductors of previously developed theoretical insights. In Eyerman and Jameson, the authors emphasize that movements are "producers of knowledge" and see their activities as "cognitive practice". They oppose the tendency of understanding movements as passive with respect to knowledge and cognition in general. The general compliant comes from another two authors who take Eyerman's and Jameson's side, arguing that "(…) the voices, ideas, perspectives and theories produced by those engaged in social struggles are often

ignored, rendered invisible, or overwritten with accounts by professionalized or academic experts" (Choudry and Kapoor 2010, 2)**.**

My approach is based on the analytical separation of levels of abstraction of knowledge precisely because it seeks to resolve this tension. I argue that movements are both receivers and creators of knowledge. Macro (conceptual) level is thus understood as taken over from critical communities, micro level as contextual intervention into macro conceptualization of reality, whereas meso level is understood as the one through which one can observe the combination of conceptual and presumed / contextual knowledge. It is at the meso level that we can see what applied theory looks like after being exposed to a given context. Knowledge occurring at this level represents the outcome of work done by what Jameson and Eyerman call "movement intellectuals". Hence we may talk about the influence of critical communities at the level of generic knowledge and the work of "movement intellectuals" at the level of knowledge driven out from the combination of generic (macro) knowledge and given contextual characteristics.[42] One approach in the above indicated discussion, therefore, does not exclude the other.

Table 2.1: *Epistemic discourses*

Level of abstraction	**Micro**	**Macro**	**Meso**
Type of knowledge	Presumed, contextual, common sense	Generic knowledge	Applied concepts
Source	Everyday events	Critical communities	Organic intellectuals

Taken the research themes indicated above, which include a reference to the relationship between critical knowledge on the one hand and social movements on the other, I believe I should tackle the concepts in social movement studies. After elaborating theoretical understanding of critical theory, hegemony and general features of sociology of knowledge, I wonder how the relationship between social movements and critical theory look like from the social movement perspective. Conceptually speaking, social movements supposedly, "do center on sustained challenges to authorities in the names of populations otherwise lacking direct representation" (Tilly 2002, 53). On the other hand, critical communities do take the

[42] I'm hereby not referring to "know-hows", but to the type of knowledge which composes discourses.

perspective of the "excluded" and theorize from the standpoint of the "weakest pillar of the bridge".[43] This makes the link between critical communities and critical knowledge on the one hand and social movements on the other – logically speaking, natural. Lasse Lindekilde, however, claims that "from the perspective of discourse analysis (which is precisely one of the two methods I am using in the empirical research), social movements are engaged in innovative and creative forms of discursive practices, which pose a challenge to, or reproduce the existing order of discourse in a given institution of social domain" (Lindekilde 2014, 205)[44]. Social movements, in other words, may be more or less radical in their demands. The first scenario brought up by Lindekilde assumes that "movement activities are not only instrumentally adapting to contextual challenges and existing resources, but they are also emergent as they contribute to transform those resources. This means that discourses and actions in fact create relations, rather than just reflecting them" (*ibid.*, 15). The later scenario implies acting within the already given limitations of a systemic framework. One could argue that the scenario in this context actually depends on the type of knowledge employed and applied through certain demands and actions.

The interconnection and intersection between social movements and critical theory (and critical communities producing it) thus seems to be logical and self-evident, to the extent that cognition behind direct action strongly affects the type and "nature" of that action. Studying the relationship between ideas and social movements, yet, on first glance seems like falling under a typical cultural approach to social movements. Ideas, cognition, symbols – rather than structures and classes are supposed to be in the focus here. However, my position is neither placed within structural/traditional nor cultural approaches, but between the two. My approach thereby takes into account both structures and material conditions which shape (and are shaped by) non-structural and non-material factors such as cognition and ideas. Thus a brief clarification of my position is required here.

In traditional approaches to social movement studies, "(…) social movement scholars attempt to explain the emergence and timing of social movements, the social and political context in which they develop recruitment efforts, the mobilization of resources, the way tactics and strategies change over time and outcomes and consequences of collective behavior" (Carty 2015, 20). Charles Tilly thinks that "it is better to stick to a definition of movements as

[43] "Just as the carrying power of a bridge is measured not by the average strength of its pillars but by the strength of the weakest pillar, and is built up from that strength, the confidence and resourcefulness of a society are measured by the security, resourcefulness and self-confidence of its weakest sections, and it grows as they grow." Bauman 2008, 142.

[44] Alberto Melluci addresses the issue of "alternative meaning systems" in the following way: "The analytical dimension of social movements (…) where conflictual forms of behavior are directed against the processes by which dominant cultural codes are formed. It is through action itself that the power of the languages and signs of technical rationality are challenged. By its sheer existence, such action challenges power, upsets its logic, and constructs alternative meanings." Melucci 1996, 169.

consisting of sustained campaigns directed at authorities who use the social movement repertoire of tactics and create public displays of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment" (Staggenborg 2011, 8). According to such traditional understanding, much research on social movements does not take into account the "cognitive perspective". Instead, its focus is on *"*the importance of mobilizing structures, the distribution of material resources, and political opportunities for the emergence of social movements" (Roggeband and Klandermans 2010, 4). In more recent studies, one could find, however, authors promoting the "cultural turn". This turn should have shifted focus on "(…) content of movement ideology, the concerns motivating activists, and the arena in which collective action was focused – that is cultural understandings, norms, and identities rather than material interests and economic distribution" (Williams 2007, 92). The "culturalists" in general terms (outside social movement studies) thereby broke up with the materialist understanding of society, and decreased importance of social classes and their "objective" interests. This shift took place at the level of social science (generally speaking), which then prompted social movement scholars to neglect class-driven understanding of social movements. As argued by Habermas even before the cultural turn was launched, "contemporary movements differ from earlier forms of collective action in that they address symbolic rather than instrumental needs (…) transition, he proceeds, from industrial to post-industrial society is marked by post-class movements" (Ray 1993, 59).

Some versions of the cultural approach nonetheless allow us to stay between the materialist and idealist frameworks and argue that materialism needs idealism as much as idealism needs material grounding. This can happen if one "concentrates on questions about how individuals and groups perceive and interpret material conditions and focuses on the role of cognitive, affective, and ideational roots of contention" *(*Roggeband and Klandermans 2010, *ibid.*). Materialism may thus evolve and move away from previously rigid positions that recognize only objective material conditions and start taking into account contextual (spatial) and historical (time) variations (factors). My general approach regarding the perception of social reality therefore has two frontiers on each side: the one on the material side which divides rigid from the non-rigid materialism (my position is non-rigid); and on the side of idealism which prevents limitless / infinite possibilities of interpretations, typical for the postmodern relativist approaches.[45] The same goes for my perception of social movements which is neither traditional/structural nor cultural. This means that my approach is essentially *dialectical* and assumes a contingent nature of social processes. I am seeking to build theory from scratch, through empirical research, while bearing in mind both general traditions in social movement studies, structural and cultural.

[45] See more about post-modernism in social movement studies in: Sotirakopoulos 2016, 72

In terms of specific literature and authors, my general theoretical position regarding social movements touches upon two authors: Colin Barker and James Jasper. Let me explain. In the end of his chapter on "cultural approaches in the sociology of social movements" Jasper stresses that what still remains to be researched are the "first stirrings of a social movement": "Given the sensibilities, ideas, values, and allegiances mixed together in different population segments, how does necessarily limited attention come to be focused on one set of issues rather than others? ". (Jaspers 2010, 100) Taking Jaspers as a reference, the point of my theoretical departure corresponds to the point where the cultural approach "lands" – meaning that I am about to focus on what Jasper considers to be a yet non-answered question. By researching these "first stirrings of social movements", I am not moving further away from materialism. Quite to the contrary, my path may easily be perceived as circular because it seeks to establish a mutually dependent trajectory of explanation, whereby material and cultural approaches do not negate but rather complement each other. On the one hand I shall keep an eye open for the material dimension, while on the other I will take into account the cultural approach with respect to social reality typical for scholars of "new social movements" which usually "look at the emergence of the new types of identities, based more on beliefs, than on structural positions" (della Porta 2015, 68).

Apart from Jasper, my general theoretical positioning within social movement studies also takes Colin Barker as a reference point. He argues that human beings "necessarily enter into social relations that are the product of previous activity and independent of their will" (Barker 2013, 47). From a pure materialist standpoint, this means that real life experience is shaped by materially rooted (class-determined) conditions of life which then dictate the type of social relations one is getting into. Barker proceeds and argues that people "regularly run up against features of these systems that impede them in the pursuit of their (self-developing) needs and goals" *(ibid*.). The twist, which actually makes a difference and places my understanding of social reality (and social movements) between material and culturalist approaches, is that these needs and goals might be material, cultural, spiritual, or (most probably) mixed – and not only material and "objective".

My theoretical positioning also needs to be synchronized with the specific context of the region I am studying. Material deprivation and massive pauperization in the region of former Yugoslavia have been, to a greater of lesser extent, present in the last three decades. The well-organized social movements with somewhat innovative agendas, nevertheless, appeared only a decade ago.[46] The aspect I am focusing on is hence the penetration of ideas and conceptualizations which could have illuminated contradictions, suggest non-hegemonic

[46] As indicated in the introduction, the exception is the Serbian "Otpor" which was a typical type of political movement described in the very introduction: anti-authoritarian, seeking to replace Milošević in the name of "European values", "modernization" and "democratization".

conceptualization, and thereby make actors aware of material conditions and various possibilities to contest the *status quo*. The assumption is that accessibility to such conceptual and theoretical insights had preceded the occurrence of social movements in the region and significantly influenced or shaped the formation of their individual "cognitive maps" and collectively constructed (epistemic) discourses. I am interested in the types of the ideas, their origins, mechanisms and channels through which they found their way to the activists and movement organizations, as well as the way in which certain ideas, rather than others - came about to become constitutive of the collective identities and discourses communicated to the wider public.

2.3.1. Cognition and Collective Identity in Social Movement *Studies*

The subfield of social movement literature dealing with "cognition and social movements" plays a very important role in this study. Starting from the basic *postulate of cognition*, cognitive foundations of human understanding of the world and meanings inscribed to its processes and conditions, come either from discourse and communication, reasoning and inference or, from individual observation and experience. No matter if the source of a piece of knowledge comes directly (from experience or observation) or indirectly (in the form of a story conveyed by a reliable broker for instance), it should always get generalized or abstracted in order to get processed in accordance to the framework of *generic knowledge*. This generic knowledge serves thus for organization, management and coherence of our propositions, perceptions and claims. After abstraction, the newly received "information" comes back in a systematic top-down form and generates the foundation of a new (cognitive) experience model which may be considered more advanced (and organized) than what had been firstly experienced / communicated/ inferred. The compounding elements of this new cognitive form are now set up more coherently. Abstraction and generalization are hence a necessary precondition of the formation of any kind of common space of communication, since the variety of experiences at the level of the so called "modally grounded (individual) knowledge"[47] provides no possibility for constructing a shared discourse or collective identity. Even at the level of individual cognition, people as language and discourse users, "need generic knowledge of the world in order to be able to "summarize" large, possibly incomplete or incoherent, sequences of local propositions in terms of more general, and more abstract global meanings" (See more about this process in van Dijk 2014, 49; 89; 246; 315). Provision of instances where every day experiences are constantly processed is secured by the framework of *generic*

[47] "Knowledge is grounded in the neurological structure of the brain and its modal specialization derived from our repeated everyday experiences with our environment." Gee and Handford (ed.) 2012, 588.

knowledge. In accordance to this framework we perceive lower levels of knowledge (ideas, information etc.), whereby its formation may be attributed to numerous social and political actors (from political parties to media). As argued before, the actor whose prior task is to provide (specifically) social movements activists (and not only them) with generic knowledge systems through which direct experience and particular information is processed and organized, are critical communities.

Now, when it comes to more specific theoretical guidelines with respect to cognition and social movements, the work of Doug McAdam is among the most relevant ones. Talking about one of the three central causal factors for the rise of social movements within his political process theory, McAdam spoke about "cognitive liberation". "(…) While important, he is stressing, "expanding political opportunities and indigenous organizations do not, in any simple sense, produce a social movement (…) Together they only offer insurgents a certain objective "structural potential" for collective political action. Mediating between opportunity and action are people and the subjective meanings they attach to their situations." (McAdam 1982, 48) My departing point, as previously mentioned, is the landing point of such cultural approach. I do share McAdam's point on the importance of subjective meanings attached to given situations, but I am taking one step back. Instead of just acknowledging the importance of subjective meanings, I will go deeper into the very process of acquiring ideas that shape individual and/or collective perceptions of reality. Taking these perceptions for granted of course is not something I criticize *per se*. For instance, McAdam in his peace on meaning and movements assumes that "movements are animated by participants' critical beliefs and alternative visions of the societies in which they live" (McAdam 2013). His research interest was building upon this highly intuitive assumption. He departs from it in order to explain other processes. Unlike McAdam, who departs from this point in order to "go forward", I depart from the same point in order to go "backwards" and look at where these meanings, ideas and sets of beliefs come from in the first place. My aim is to get the research to the place of *initiation of cognitive processes*, which open up the possibility of alternative or contentious perception of reality and hence, alternative and contentious politics and social action. I seek to learn how ideas originating in critical communities diffuse, incentivize activists, get transformed, get to the forefront of movements' discourses or get dismissed throughout the processes of construction of movements' discourses.

My focus is on the relevancy of, specifically, generic knowledge or sets of theory with respect to social movements. Most of these concerns are raised by Bevington and Dixon, who primarily stress that social movement theory itself, "is not seen as helpful by those persons who are directly involved in the very processes that this theory is supposed to illuminate" (Bevington and Dixon 2005, 189). What I aim at discovering is, nonetheless, not limited to the relevance of social movement theory for activists and movements. I shall rather look for those theories and

concepts in the fields of social science and humanities more generally, which were recognized by the activists as those able to produce a *"*cognitive click*"* (Gerring 1999, 370). This search is applied both at the level of individual activists, and social movements and their discourses. Generally speaking, I am in search for theory relevant for activism today.

Even though my research does not tackle collective identity formation in a specific way, the literature dealing with *collective identity formation* within social movement studies should be addressed when discussing social movements and cognition. My research namely, deals with collectively constructed epistemic discourses, which represent a segment of collective identity formation. Collective identity building is hence not reducible to the collectively set epistemic discourses, but the effects inherent to collective identity formation likewise affect construction of epistemic discourses.

The iterature on collective identity building thus dig deeper into the processes that shape collective identities, which go beyond a simple summary of individual contributions to it. This means that collective identities, same as epistemic discourses, cannot be reduced to the sum of individual "cognitive maps" but, in addition - come as a consequence of various factors such as power relations, deliberations, inner organizational factors, as well as structural and other obstacles. In order to tackle this issue I rely on Alberto Melucci's understanding of collective identity on the one hand, and the concept of "cognitive praxis" coming from Eyerman and Jamison (1991) on the other. Firstly, Melucci defines collective identity as "a process (which) involves cognitive definitions concerning the ends, means and the field of action (which are) incorporated in a given set of rituals, practices, cultural artifacts (and) framed between means and ends, investments and rewords" (Melucci 1996, 70). More broadly defined, collective identity is the main precondition for "making sense" of both reality and a given collective action by which a collective actor aims to change or challenge a certain aspect or totality of that reality. Even though internally conflicting, collective identity still requires a minimum of commonality at the very beginning of the dynamic process of its construction. As Melucci argues, "if unity cannot be conceptualized right from the beginning, it will never be forthcoming at the end, either" (*ibid.*, 64).

Collective identity also involves a sort of struggle typical for the process which Eyerman and Jamison labeled as "cognitive praxis" defined as *"*a process of integrating different sources of cognitive influences into a movement identity" (Eyerman and Jamison *1991*, 70). Furthermore, Charles Tilly reminds us that "some (political) identities lend themselves to mobilization and collective action, whereas others do not" (Tilly 2002, 49). This means that collective identities get shaped by following some and dismissing other particular (cognitive) influences and inputs. Certain ideas and concepts may, on the one hand, appear as suitable and resonate with a given context better than others and, as such, prove to be more suitable for mobilization than others.

Cases thus vary not only with respect to different "political opportunity structures", but also the type of "object of communication". This means that collective identity appears in different shapes and forms depending on who the target "audience" is. Such logic however, may be applied only partly, as certain conceptual features become master-frames and get to the forefront of movements' discourses (rather than others) as well due to reasons independent of pragmatics and tactics. These reasons are to be found within collective deliberations, persuasions, and internal group dynamics that affect the final outcome of the collective identity formation process, including epistemic discursive set up. In addition, identities of social movements also "depend on their connections with other political actors" (*ibid.*, 55), as well as hitherto established forms and units of social and political organization within a given context.

One should also bear in mind that, as Jasper rightly stresses, collective identity "requires continual reinforcement" (Jasper *ibid.*, 95). Looking at the factors typical for the process of collective identity formation, means looking at the dynamics happening between "social imagination and social interaction" (*Ibid.*, 77) - whereby the prior shapes the former and vice versa. Interpersonal interaction, finally, brings people and their ideas together. Interaction between ideas and concepts end up constitutive of discursive formations after being affected by factors typical for collective identity formation. After being diffused from various sources through various channels, ideas start "competing" for becoming master-frames of epistemic discourses. The last theoretical reflection should cover up these aspects.

2.3.2. Diffusion and Master Frames

Even though I am not dealing with classical diffusion of tactics, frames, and repertoires from one social movement to another, the literature on social movements and diffusion represents an important pillar of my theoretical framework. Instead of repertoires, tactics or frames, I am concerned with diffusion of worldviews and concepts from critical communities or other sources, to activists and social movements. The literature on diffusion in social movement studies may be very helpful since diffusion of frames, for instance, includes diffusion of ideas that is central to my research. Similarly to diffusion from one movement to another, ideas travel from critical communities to movements through interpersonal contacts, organizational linkages, or associational networks (Tarrow 2005). Brokers might be involved in diffusion of ideas from critical communities to activists, in a similar manner as repertoires and tactics diffuse between movements. Both types of diffusion are multidimensional and represent a mixture of formal and informal institutional arrangements and actors.

Generally speaking, the process of diffusion is not reducible to the process of "contagion" and simple imitation. Similarly to the process of diffusion of repertoires, tactics and frames, adaptation, contextualization and learning play an important role in diffusion of knowledge and "cognitive inputs", as well. This means that social movements engage in a "dynamic and interactive struggle over production of ideas and meanings" (Snow and Benford 1992, 136) and do not only operate as simple "receivers" of conceptual inputs from critical communities. Yet, this does not mean that inputs from critical communities (which later are additionally shaped, accommodated, and contextualized) are not crucial for initiating the cognitive processes oriented to counter hegemonic thinking, both individually and collectively. The process of diffusion in this work is therefore understood as a process of diffusion of ideas from critical communities to activists and social movements. There are two important remarks that should be emphasized with respect to this theoretical pillar.

Firstly, one should make some theoretical clarifications regarding the role of intellectuals (who are usually main "elements" of critical communities). The "social function of intellectuals", is emphasized by numerous empirical and theoretical studies, whereby the cornerstone of discussions taking place in the previous decades, has been set by Antonio Gramsci. His work on what he labeled as "organic intellectuals" whose role lies in "articulating principle capable of absorbing ideologically, economically, and politically other classes in the hegemonic system" (Ramos 1982), is among the most remarkable in this field. Organic intellectuals are nonetheless, at least in Gramsci's understanding, supposed to be found within every social group. According to this author, a social group is "coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production", and create together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields (Gramsci 1999, 134-135). In the shift from the class "in itself" to the class "for itself", the role of "organic intellectuals" is crucial, considering that the awareness of one's class position and consequently – class interest, is to be developed and systematized precisely by organic intellectuals within a given class. In order to dig deeper into the process of diffusion of knowledge from "critical communities" to social movements and their activists, I am reshaping Gramsci's understanding of the connection between the producers and/or "systematizers" of knowledge on the one hand, and social actors (movements in this case), on the other. I do not therefore, focus on intellectual production within social movements (which is indisputably often very rich) – but on cognitive inputs coming from critical communities to "organic intellectuals" who apply it both practically and theoretically afterwards. This means that the focus of this work is what incentivizes the very (cognitive) activities of "organic intellectuals". Again, the pillar of theoretical framework dealing with diffusion, to an extent, complies with the culturalist trend of shifting attention towards the way in which activists make sense of their own actions, as well as about the world around them (Jasper and Polletta 2001; Strang and Soule 1998).

Secondly, an important role in every process of diffusion is played by the so called "brokers". At the most general level brokerage "describes the linkages of two or more previously disparate sites" (Russo 2014, 35). Having that in mind, the role of brokers may be played by personal contacts, alternative subcultural centers or entire subcultural scenes, media and alike. All these types of brokerage are to be taken into account while assessing the channels of diffusion of (critical) knowledge from its source to its "users" who, again, may reshape and accommodate it, depending on a given (political/cultural/economic) context and a given historical moment.

Once when (critical) knowledge gets diffused, social movements step into the next phase of accommodation (or contextualization) and discursive consolidation of that knowledge. In social movement studies this process is called "framing". The concept of frame "refers to interpretative schemata that simplifies and condenses the "world out there" (Benford and Snow 1992, 137). "In Goffman's words, frames allow individuals to "locate, perceive, identify, and label" events within their life space or the world at large" (*ibid.*). There are different forms of frames recognized in the literature. The most common for is the so called "collective action frame", which "serve as accenting devices that either underscore and embellish the seriousness and injustice of a social condition or redefine as unjust and immoral what was previously seen as unfortunate but perhaps tolerable" (*ibid.*). Collective action frames are important also because they make diagnostic and prognostic attributions (*ibid.*), which is something they share with master frames, another type of frames - central to this work. Unlike collective action frames, master frames function at the more universal level, they include frames such as "justice" or "rights". In Benford and Snow's words, "master frames are to movement – specific collective action frames, as paradigms are to finely tuned theories." (*ibid*., 138). Master frames therefore include a wide range of ideas and operate at the higher level of abstraction. The so called "elaborative" master frames are especially to be focused on in this work, since they are defined as "flexible forms of interpretation, and as a consequence, they are more inclusive systems that allow for extensive ideational amplification and extension" (Benford and Snow, *ibid*., 140)[48].

Master frames are, furthermore, often linked to the issue of resonance, so the authors emphasize that master frames are usually comprised of "ideas of age", such as "freedom" or "self-determination" (Sanbridge 2002, 530). One should nonetheless wonder whether master frames may launch the initiation of "a new age" by themselves and thereby create new reality, instead of reacting to what had already been the dominant perception of reality beforehand.

[48] Elaborative master frames, according to Bernstein's classification, come from elaborative linguistic code. On the opposite side is the so called "restricted code" which is highly particularistic with respect to meaning and social structure (…) Benford and Snow *ibid*., 139.

The issue of proactivity vs. reactivity is certainly among the relevant ones tackled in the empirical analysis in the chapter four.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Questions

In this chapter I am introducing three research questions, addressing the issues of: mapping counter-hegemonic knowledge; origins and channels of diffusion of counter-hegemonic knowledge (constitutive of epistemic discourses); and structural, social and organizational factors that shaped conceptual content of final discursive outputs. Methodologically speaking the research uses discourse analysis (with an emphasis on epistemic discourse analysis) and in-depth qualitative interviews.

3.1. Research Questions

My research is, generally speaking, exploratory. This implies that hypotheses emerge during the process of the research. I seek to explore the phenomenon of the rise of counter-hegemonic discourses in the post-socialist context, rather than to draw any causal correlation between dependent and independent variables. The research undertakes a "cognitive approach" (Eyerman and Jamison 1991) within social movement studies. Its design is set up in order to follow the genesis of development of the counter-hegemonic discourses among the newly arising social movements in the former Yugoslavia. This does not mean however, that the research is conducted without initial premises. They were necessary in order to set direction of the research. The first premise is that social movements in former Yugoslavia made a radically critical discursive breakthrough. The second premise is that this breakthrough is tightly interlinked to the "comeback" of counter-hegemonic knowledge which has diffused from various sources, reaching individual activists and social movements.

By setting the research task around these two premises, I aim at exploring the whole edifice of ideas which had affected the occurrence and the final shape of such counter-hegemonic discourses. Thereby I am actually looking at the structure of knowledge providing "cognitive bricks" for the counter-hegemonic discursive edifice. My initial classification of knowledge introduces a binary opposition between *theoretical* and *non-theoretical* knowledge. While the prior includes conceptual, more abstract (generic) knowledge, the later includes worldviews or value systems acquired in the early phase of (political) socialization. I am nonetheless, as stated in the introduction, focusing on the way in which critical concepts (so critical theoretical knowledge) interacts with activism, meaning individual activists and movements. This dimension of the research includes mapping concepts present in discourses of social

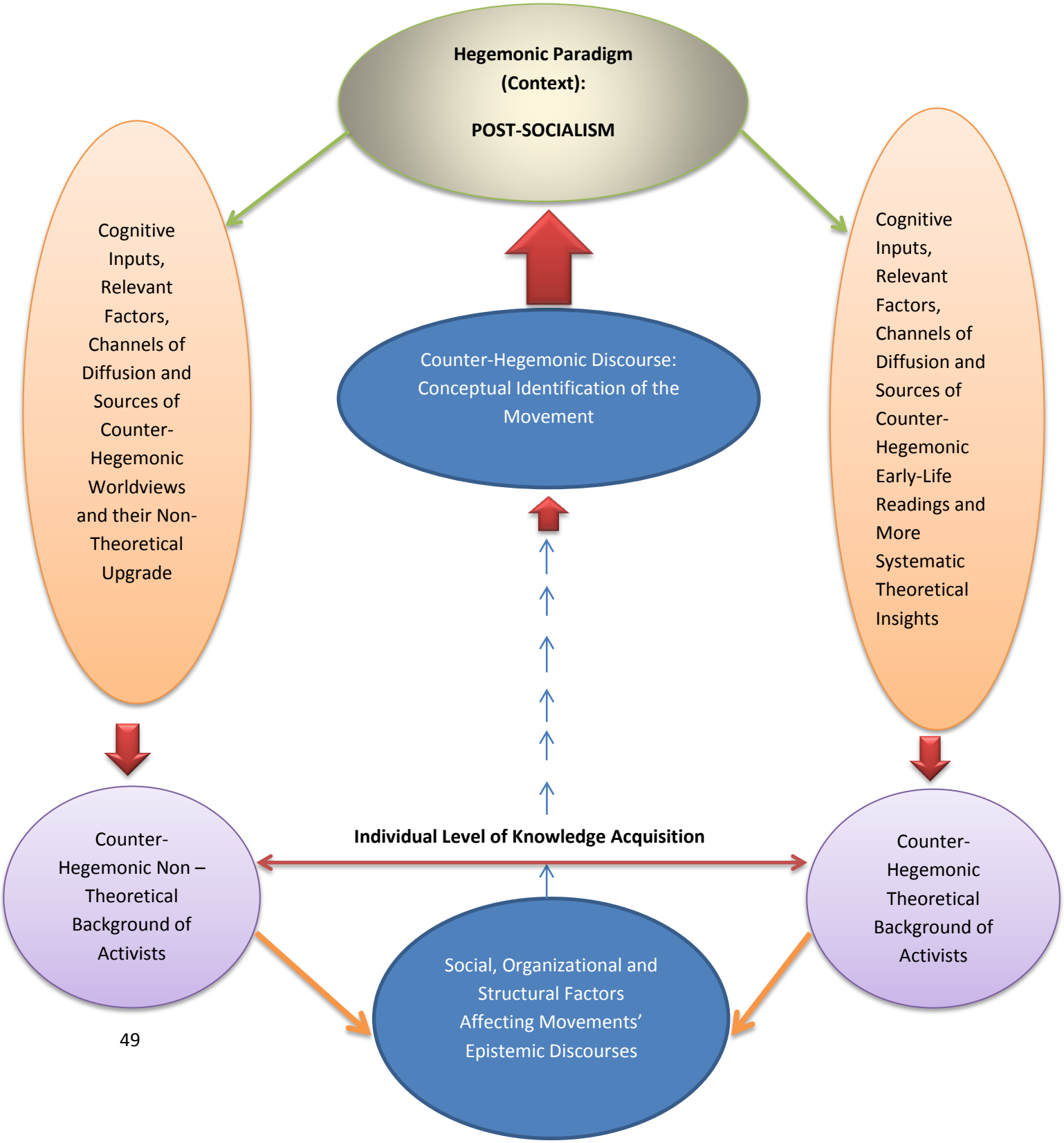
movements (in the chapter four) and digging into their origins at the level of individual activists (in the third part). Non-theoretical "camps" of knowledge are of the same importance, but I shall rather treat them as referent bodies for conceptual/theoretical knowledge. In other words, I am looking at non-theoretical knowledge as a "corridor" for a theoretical "upgrade". Non-theoretical knowledge always represents a compounding element of "cognitive maps" (individual or collective) which may, or may not be eventually affected by (critical) ideas from the domains of both theory and non-theory. In order to accomplish these tasks, I am undertaking the following *three research steps*:

1. Mapping the presence of critical, counter-hegemonic concepts and ideas in discourses of the new social movements in the former Yugoslav region (traceable in the documents issued by the three movements) – and assessing macro level (structural) factors affecting divergences in discursive performance of the three cases.
2. Looking at the origins and channels of diffusion of counter-hegemonic knowledge/ideas at the micro level of individual activists (from the early worldview level and value system to their theoretical upgrades).
3. Exploring which structural, social and organizational factors shaped conceptual content of movements' discourses (meso level).

As is evident from these three steps, there are, in more general terms, *two levels of analysis*: one being *collective* and the other *individual*. With the first research question, I start from the collective level in order to trace the presence of concepts in discourses of collectively issued documents which may testify to the objective (conceptual) content of collective identities. The second step and the second research question is directed towards digging deeper into the origins and channels of diffusion through which certain value systems and conceptual (generic) knowledge found its way to the individual activists. Thereby I am seeking to learn about the "cradles" of critical, counter-hegemonic perception of reality, or, initial "cognitive inputs" for developing critical "cognitive maps" at the individual level. The third and final step, serves for answering the third research question and addressing social, organizational, and (specific) contextual aspects affecting the process of consolidation of (epistemic) discourses. I am, more concretely, looking for mechanisms that shape the interaction between individual cognitive contributions and are bringing about the collectively "designed" discourses as observed in the first step of the research. These two levels of analysis, individual and collective, represent by the same token two different phases in the process of learning and the socio – cognitive process of climbing up the "activist ladder": from the level where fragmented sources of non-theoretical and (eventually) theoretical knowledge get to

shape individual cognitive maps; to the level where collective identity formation is triggered and itself triggers different social processes that (additionally) collectivize previous (more individual) cognition and affect the final "version" of epistemic discourses.

Graph 3.1: *Research Outline*



3.2. Methodology

The exploratory character of this research implies methodology which can meet the requirement of flexibility with respect to its hypotheses. The methodological choice should also respond to the necessity of conducting a multilevel research and thereby leave enough leeway for maneuver and formulation of hypotheses along the way. At the same time, the methodology seeks to respond to the emerging concern within social movement studies, that is to "convincingly explain why some topics, grievances, and demands came to the fore as the focus of political protests rather than others" (Lindekilde 2014, 195; in della Porta 2014). These requirements could be fulfilled by applying discourse analysis on the one hand and in-depth qualitative interviews, on the other. The prior is essential when it comes to mapping concepts present in discourses, as well as their inner organization. The latter is important due to possibility to trace the origins and channels of diffusion, as well as the collective dynamics through which these concepts found their way to collectively constructed (epistemic) discourses of social movements.

Regarding (epistemic) discourse analysis, I follow the tradition set by the social movement studies which "mainly use discourse analysis to study how movement texts (understood broadly as press releases, communiqués, websites, flyers, slogans, media statements, interviews with movement representatives, and so on) are composed and draw on existing discourses in order to communicate particular meanings, and how reception of texts is therefore co-shaped by their discursive context." (della Porta 2014, 230; in della Porta 2014, 198). Accordingly, I am looking at written documents, pamphlets, public appearances of activists (interviews, oral speeches at the protest events by both activists and "guest speakers"), press releases and other publications such as books or collection of articles (if any). Considering that my focus is on the conceptual side of discourse, the documents selected for the analysis include therefore, texts that can reveal *epistemic* content of discourse.

In the Croatian case, the accent is put on the brochures such as the "Blockade Cookbook" which includes discussion on the conceptual background of their demand "free education for all". Documents that *are not* covered by the analysis include press releases, which represented a significant channel of communication between the movement and the public – but usually dealt with day-to-day themes rather than conceptual discussions. The municipal movement from Belgrade had more protest events than their colleagues in Zagreb. This is why the analysis of epistemic discourse, apart from the text found on the official page of the movement or newspaper articles written by the activists, also covered the most representative speech from the most massive protest event. When I say "the most representative", I mean the one through which the movement's conceptual positioning was most clearly detectable. In the case of

Sarajevo's popular movement, the choice was much narrower, since the movement issued very few documents in written form. This is why I had to focus on the calls for plenums and the accompanying text of the lists of demands. The demands themselves, at least in the Sarajevo's case, served well for conceptual discourse analysis since their content varied, depending on the stage of development of the movement and the level of consolidation of the (epistemic) discourse.

Concerning the second method applied in this research, the in-depth semi-open qualitative interviews, it is worth mentioning that this method is "peculiarly well suited to the analysis of highly relevant aspects of phenomenological reflection: the sense actors have of their environment" (*ibid.*, 230). The purpose of this method is to illuminate the genesis of interaction between concepts, theories and in general terms – "cognitive inputs" on the one hand, and activists/movements who use these inputs to "make sense of their environment", on the other. Diffusion of non-theoretical knowledge (value systems/ worldviews); and diffusion of theoretical knowledge from critical communities to activists and movements - as well as the insights on the dynamics of discursive consolidation – are central tasks to be accomplished through this method. Qualitative in-depth interviews, in other words, serve for learning about individual social and cognitive "becoming" on the one hand, and collective social and cognitive "becoming" on the other.

When it comes to sampling, I decided to choose the "core members" as my interviewees. The fact that I am familiar with the three activist networks in the three selected countries, made the sampling easier. However, I left some space for the *snow-ball* strategy and learning from those already sampled about other possible interviewees who could possibly deepen my understanding of the processes of my interest. The first round of interviews was conducted in Zagreb, with 14 activists of the core group. The next round was conducted in Sarajevo with 11 core group members and the final round in Belgrade with 12 most relevant respondents from the "Ne Da(vi)mo Beograd". The number of interviews varied because the decision to stop or proceed interviewing was based on the tendency of repetition of similar answers – or the feeling that certain aspects of the research may be further enriched. The following two sections talk in more detail about methodological choices.

3.2.1. Discourse analysis

Discourses of course, do not bring about social change by themselves. It is the (epistemic) analysis of discourse nonetheless, that can help us in highlighting the conceptual (cognitive) background behind social/political action aiming at some sort of social change.

Through such analysis one may investigate the conceptual apparatus used, the complex set of imageries and their connection to the material/structural conditions standing behind as reasons and incentives for seeking social change (through action).

As to the general understanding of discourse, I take the widely accepted view about it being generated by the combination of cognition and interaction. On the one hand, cognition involves processes of meaning attribution, knowledge production, and opinion and belief formation. On the other, it is a compound of interaction mostly expressed through language (but not only), or the so called "talk in interaction" (Van Dijk 2007, xxiv). It is therefore a part of "social practice" (Fairclough and Wodak; in Van Dijk 1997, 258). Discourse is here, furthermore, understood as "the structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 105). My specific theoretical focus is on the epistemic discourse which tackles the "ways in which knowledge is presupposed, expressed, formulated, organized and managed in language use, communication and interaction" (van Dijk 2014, 9). I am looking at discourses from the perspective of *knowledge management* which represents management of complex schemata of *social interrelations* through which conceptual knowledge (ideas, categories, concepts, prototypes, domains, and scripts) become constitutive of movements' discourses and hence – form the dominant conceptual stream within those discourses.[49] Conceptual knowledge should be seen through the lenses of interaction between the exposure to theoretical influences and direct experience or, better said - between knowledge based on experience and generic knowledge.

I combine epistemic discourse (analysis) with Fairclough's critical discourse (analysis), which aims at revealing "the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of the social world, including those social relations that involve unequal relations of power" (della Porta 2014, 63). This combination is useful at the macro-level in dealing with the interaction (or specific relationship) between (critical) ideas and systemic and/or specific social contexts. Fairclough's approach also refers to the way in which the "new knowledge" is managed with respect to the "old knowledge". I shall interpret this feature as feasible for looking at how *counter-hegemonic knowledge is managed with respect to hegemonic knowledge*. This approach may also be useful for assessing those discourses that *challenge* existing power relations (or the ruling order of discourse in Fairclough's terms), structures and specific institutions and thereby compete with other discourses seeking to reproduce the *status quo*. Hence, the role of discursive practices may be, overall, significant both "in the maintenance of social order and in social change" (*ibid.*, 70) and my focus is on the later.

The selection of documents is made in accordance to the main research interest. As stated above, the focus was on documents in which the conceptual positioning was detectable.

[49] More on "conceptual knowledge" see in van Dijk 2014, 86.

Document selection had been done before starting the next phase of the empirical research, based on the qualitative in-depth interviews. Apart from having been a source of data and an object of analysis, the insights from the documents served me well as a preparatory tool for conducting interviews.

3.2.2. In-Depth Qualitative Interviews

The in-depth interviews have two main purposes: to address individual and collective "cognitive becoming". Tthe first group of questions (at the individual level) digs deep into the origins of worldviews and particular concepts, theories and, more generally– cognitive inputs, that entered along with the activists into the process of discursive consolidation. Tracing such cognitive inputs is important for understanding both individual and collective construction of (counter - hegemonic) "packages of meanings" (Jasper 2010, 77; in Klandermans and Roggeband 2010.) which, when attributed to certain social and political issues, politicize hitherto non-controversial and/or non - politicized issues. This implies the meaningfulness of human action, which "has a certain intentional content that indicates the kind of action it is as well as the action that can be grasped only in terms of the system of meanings to which it belongs" (Schwandt 2003, 296; in: della Porta 2014, 230).

My questions are inspired by the stream in social movement studies which emphasizes the need for "useful" theorization and knowledge production – meaning, useful for social movements and their activists. The already mentioned article by Bevington and Dixon, stresses the need for developing the "movement – relevant theory" (Bevington and Dixon2005, 186), which is understood as theory seeking to provide "useable knowledge for those seeking social change" (Flacks, 2004, 138). If the level of analysis is individual activists, one may alternatively call this theory "activist relevant theory". Learning about non-theoretical "bricks" of individual/collective cognitive edifices of activists and movements is, on the other hand, crucial for understanding what and/or who "opened the door" for counter-hegemonic reasoning within a given context; and what/or who "opened the door" for possible theoretical upgrade of non-theoretical counter-hegemonic reasoning. The question is hence which value systems, which channels of diffusion, which worldviews - shaped the counter-hegemonic mindsets of the activists, and which elements brought the activists closer to certain theoretical influences. Out of the two above indicated steps of the process of "social becoming" (individual and collective), the first group of questions is concerned with individual level of analysis and should be posed as follows:

-Can you think of the sources of your worldview, understood as set of values which prompted you to perceive social/political reality in a given way?

-Can you refer to any author or branch of literature which decisively shaped your theoretical interest? Was there any specific "cognitive click"?

-Which branch of theory and which concepts you perceive as relevant for you or "movement-relevant"?

-What are the channels through which you have gotten in touch with these sources? Friends, media, international conferences, university or high school professors, parents…?

This methodological choice partially overlaps to what is defined in the literature as "life history interviews". There are nonetheless two important remarks to be added. Firstly, the more general "life history method" would include questions regarding stories of activists' lives, "how they came to participate in the movement, the nature of participation and how it influences who s/he is" (Meyer and Lupo 2002, 104; in: Klandermans and Staggenborg (ed.) 2002).[50] My approach does not reach the level "reasoning behind mobilization", but deals more with (and stops there) the origins and channels of diffusion of cognitive inputs detected through epistemic discourse analysis. Logically, the first step of such search is to wonder about the origins and channels of diffusion of knowledge at the level of individual activists who later happened to become constitutive elements of social movements' discourses. This leads us to the second remark. Even though "life histories allow for understandings of different questions linked to cognitive mechanisms for making sense of external reality and acting on it" (della Porta 2014, 264.), life histories nonetheless "refer implicitly to the totality of a person's experience" (Bertaux and Kohli 1984, 217.). In this case, the in-depth qualitative interviews were semi-structured and had a clear research goal, including some previously defined assumptions and categories. This means that totality of one's life could become significant but not necessarily. Instead, the focus here is sometimes put on family relations, sometimes on subcultural influences and sometimes with specific situations in life related to various feelings such as the feeling of "otherness", discrimination or alike. The focus is clearly on *segments* of activists' life which may open up the space for assessing one's (counter-hegemonic) cognitive development.

Through such questions, one can collect inductively a number of sources and types of cognitive inputs - including worldviews, particular theorizations and conceptualizations of social reality. By grasping concepts at the level of initiation and inspiration of the activists, prior to the formation of collective identity and consolidation of epistemic discourses, it is possible to get to

[50] "According to McCracken (1988, 19), life stories are accounts given by an individual about his/her life; they become life histories when they are validated by other sources." (della Porta 2014, 262.)

the very sources of counter-hegemonic waves in the region of the former Yugoslavia. By posing these questions one is also able to learn how critical communities matter with respect to the development of activists' social and political beings.

The second group of questions addresses the collective level of analysis. It is concerned with the process of consolidation of epistemic discourses. Concerning this process, one should wonder about the filtration of ideas, meaning acceptance of some of them and dismissal of others from movements' discourses. The second group of questions hence, seeks to investigate the internal dynamics through which processes of discourse consolidation take place. The set of questions, among others, include the following ones:

-How conflicting were the differences within the movement and what has led to the prevalence of one stream of conceptual apparatus over others?

-Whether and how were the differences overcome?

-What theory turned out to be "movement relevant"?

The analysis of collected data is done thematically, through *coding*. As mentioned above in the context of differentiation between life stories and my qualitative interviews, the process of coding was both "open" and "a priori". Some of them I created before launching data collection (also with a help of data acquired through discourse analysis) and some came up during and after it. For instance, the code "cognitive clique" was designed before, whereby I specifically asked the interviewees whether they can detect a "window opener", an author or a piece of literature which has traced their further (theoretical) development and decisively shaped their "cognitive maps". Concerning the acquisition of "non-theoretical" cognitive inputs, coding was mostly done during and after the process of interviewing. Some codes related to belonging to the working class, or (ethnically) mixed family background were to an extent anticipated – but were not pushed forward before the interviewees would start talking about these issues themselves. A similar scenario took place when it comes to the collective level of analysis. Some codes such as "trust" were anticipated because I had a chance to witness some phases of collective identity formation (especially in the case of Belgrade and Sarajevo). Most of other codes from the part on consolidation of discourses were created during the analysis of the interviews.

Chapter 4: Mapping Concepts through Discourse Analysis

In the first chapter I outlined the conceptual features of the post-socialist paradigm. Here, I am starting the empirical analysis in order to reveal the way in which this paradigm is contested discursively by the three social movements in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. In order to comprehend (epistemic) discourses and assess their organization along the "ladder of abstraction", I made an analytical division between micro, meso, and macro levels of discourse. As indicated in the subchapter on "General theoretical positioning within social movements" (see the table 2.1.), *macro level* stands for the highest level of abstraction at which the content of discourses' "rooftop" can be traced. *Micro level* deals with knowledge based on commonsense and day-to-day events which serve as a direct link to the context within which a given discourse has been developed. *Meso level*, finally, links the macro and micro levels and puts micro level (everyday) knowledge and day-to-day events into the framework set by the conceptual (macro) pillars of discourse. Meso level appears as a sort of "organic" knowledge, produced by social movements or by the "organic intellectuals" in Gramscian terms. Knowledge produced at the meso level appears as a set of supportive conceptualizations which bridges over macro and micro levels of abstraction.

The novelty of this approach does not lie simply in an analytical separation of the three levels of abstraction. Primarily, aim is to unpack the three critical discourses in order to provide a detailed explication of the way in which counter-hegemonic voices have been organized and set discursively. Secondly, the analytical differentiation between levels of abstraction in discourses has to do with the specific position of movements *vis-à-vis* critical communities and, more generally, (critical) knowledge. Let me elaborate on the later point.

As indicated in the theoretical chapter, I am primarily stressing out the importance of variations with respect to theoretical/conceptual content of discourses. In this part, I am conducting the analysis of discourse, aiming at mapping the epistemic content and divergences with respect to concepts used by the three movements. In accordance with the commonly used terminology within social movement studies, I use the concept of master-frame for assessing macro level discursive contents. Subsequently, it should be clearly stated which concepts were used as master-frames and in addition – which among the *them* played a role of "front-runners" and which fell under the category I define as "supportive" master-frames. By using the term "front-running master-frames" I am referring to "carriers" of the whole epistemic discourse. When I use the term "supportive frames", I refer to macro conceptualizations that play a more specific role and cover at least one specific dimension of the epistemic discourse. Thereby I can make this exploratory endeavor more precise. Such analytical separation allows me to dig deeper into the reasons for divergences in epistemic discourses, along the lines of

(initial) differences[51] presented above in table 1.1. Before that, it is important to outline those differences.

As stated above, the central discursive trajectory of the student movement in Zagreb was formed around the notion of "free education for all" and an attempt to deconstruct systemic problems behind the issue of commoditized education. Other important discursive features were inclusivity and inclination towards representing student struggle as the focal (nodal) point for a wider social struggle. The way in which the students from Zagreb challenged the post-socialist paradigm discursively consisted of three conceptual lines:

1. Imposing the new perspectives of social and political reality by introducing a critical conceptual apparatus and conducting (mainly) value conversion and value connection

2. "Frontal" attack on the economic pillar of transition

3. Recalling chosen segments of socialism without explicit reference to its (total) revival

The entire discourse of Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own, on the other hand, was set around a simple message: municipal politics is the essence or the starting point of any plausible counter-hegemonic discourse. The main pillars of their discursive performance were therefore:

1. Shifting attention from "grand narratives" to more tangible instances of injustice

2. Building up conceptual apparatus that could justify and back-support such (new) approach (in Serbia)

3. Enhancing popular democratic participation in the process of recomposing power relations in the society

The "small struggles" are, as claimed by the activists, the ones tackling issues which make lives of regular people more difficult on a daily basis. The departure from small-scale everyday activism to macro levels of discursive performance serves for reminding the public about the connection between concrete and systemic features of the system. Thereby, they make, both symbolically and practically, a complete and coherent field of contestation.

Finally, the discursive performance of Sarajevo's popular movement was determined by two highly unfavorable components: structural and material. Structurally, the Bosnian society has suffered ever since the dissolution of Yugoslavia due to a highly complex political system. Among the many material consequences of that complexity, apart from a rapid and cruel

[51] The three lines of differentiation, to remind the readers, included "type of movement", "structural context" and the issues of "triggers" and "level of repression".

economic deprivation, the absence of a clear socially rooted (potential) carrier of resistance turned out to be the biggest problem for conducting a more radical activist/political endeavor. Highly unfavorable social and political conditions were also emphasized by the activists themselves, who tried to build up something "on the spot", both discursively and organizationally. Consequences had the following discursive characteristics:

1. Aggregate of particular demands coming from the people which should have justified democratic orientation of the people's assembly (plenum)

2. Usage of concepts at the highest level of abstraction which should have consolidated narrow and particular demands coming from the people

3. Occasional tension between micro and macro levels of discourse

Following these basic features of the three epistemic discourses, I am starting the empirical analysis with the student movement in Zagreb. Then I proceed with the popular movement in Sarajevo and, finally, I focus on the municipal movement in Belgrade.

4.1. Zagreb's Vanguard: Free Education for All

Before I proceed with the analysis of particular documents produced by the movement, I shall briefly refer to the documentary film called "The Land of Knowledge" (Bezinović 2011) which followed the meetings and protest events organized by the movement throughout the 35-day blockade of the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. This movie represents the most credible testimony of what happened during the blockade, and served as a good preparation before conducting interviews. For the readers, it could serve a similar preparatory purpose.

As we know already, the occupation had a single official demand: "free education for all". As one of the students declared already in the early days of the blockade:

"They demand from us to provide the list of demands in the official form. As a matter of fact, we're not talking about demands, there is no plural here. The demand is only one and it has been set in a very clear way: free education for all!"

The movement decided to impose its own rules of the game, rather than to play by the already established set of rules. In spite of accusations from both the public and the government for not being clear enough in expressing its demands and not "official" enough in terms of communication, the protesters refused, for instance, to direct an official invitation to the minister to come and address the plenum (which was the central "legislative" body of the movement):

"The "genre" we can potentially fall into if we invite the minister is the one of "his majesty coming down to the plebs" – which may potentially imply his willingness to listen to the people and show some kind of generosity. This may falsify the image of reality in which he is ready to communicate with us. The way in which he should in fact communicate with us is responding to the request directly – and not via "theatre style" performances."

The two above indicated quotes implicitly convey the message of *autonomy*. Practices such as making lists of concrete demands, or communication as prescribed by the authorities, were abandoned. Instead, the approach followed the tradition of University as an independent, autonomous institution. Furthermore, the metaphor in the second quote ("his majesty" and "the plebs") illustrates the uneven power relations between the minister and the students. The single issue upon which they built their agenda (free education for all) was seen by the activists as: a) an issue which belongs to the wider specter of social and political problems; and b) an issue which could have triggered other social and political struggles. As one of the activists stressed in the above mentioned documentary movie, "education is the point of focalization and the effects of our struggle should get widespread to other spheres and issues of public

interests – healthcare, social benefits, workers' rights etc." Another activist conveyed a similar message: "This is the oasis of rebellion. The whole state expects from us to keep it that way. It is important for us to be the symbol (of resistance) for the sake of the regular workers, textile workers and others who work for 1500 kuna (per month)".[52]

Finally, among the central claims was the notion of democracy and, more explicitly, direct democracy. The institution of plenum to which a significant attention was paid in the documents issued by the movement was considered a counterbalance to, or a consequence of, the *unfulfilled promises of representative democracy.* The failure of MPs (members of parliament) to meet the needs of their constituency spilled over into an increasing mistrust in University rectors, deans, and other people occupying high positions at the University. This is why one of the activists addressed the dean who came to support the student struggle in the following way: "You said "Long live the Faculty of Philosophy". What are you going to do concretely? Are you going to follow the example of the French University professors and get into strike yourselves?"

It turned out that this sort of suspicion was justified. The whole endeavor of the occupation and the perspective from which the movement was about to confront the status quo were simply more radical than the "softer" wing of the establishment could have expected. Thus, the initial (declarative) support of the dean was soon to be withdrawn.

Now that the most general discursive characteristics are outlined, it is time to proceed with an in-depth analysis of the conceptual content of documents issued by the student movement. The first is "Occupation Cookbook" (its most appropriate segments) and the second is "The Educational Brochure".

4.1.1. "The Occupation Cookbook"

"The Occupation Cookbook"[53] is a handbook which came out as a result of the occupation[54]. The group of authors covered organizational and other aspects of the occupation and provided their readers with insightful knowledge on how to organize a rebellion at university. This is a 70-page-long manual and I have no space to reflect on every aspect of it. I will instead focus on the last section, which deals with "The Social Context of the Protest for

[52] 1500 Croatian kuna is approximately 215 euros. The exchange rate is roughly seven kuna for one euro.
[53] The title of the handbook is similar to the worldwide famous "Anarchist Cookbook" (Powell 1971).
[54] There were two occupations of the Faculty of Philosophy in 2009. The first one lasted for 35 days, whereas the second one lasted for only two weeks and attracted much less attention from the public. This is why my focus is on the first occupation.

Free Education in Croatia & The Motivation behind the Action". This section will be fully analyzed, whereas I shall stress that the rest of the "cookbook" mostly contains what I labeled before as meso-level knowledge, produced (inferred) and conveyed by the "movement intellectuals" themselves. This includes knowledge on how to: organize an occupation of a university; organize and manage plenums; create and organize working groups and teams during an occupation; design a media strategy; manage security and general logistics; organize alternative educational programs during an occupation etc.

The key concepts at the beginning of the above-mentioned section of the "Cookbook" include: *modernization, socialist legacy, European Union / European standards* and the *transition process*. Deconstruction starts with the discursive trick according to which the meaning of concepts is considered to be automatically disputed when put between quotation marks. The master-frames within the post-socialist hegemonic discourse, such as modernization, Europeanization and transition, are portrayed as pure legitimizing means which serve for suppressing critical thinking in general. The hegemonic narrative thus constitutes and legitimizes itself on the basis of a newly established dichotomy between "the modern" and the "European" on the one hand, and the "socialist" and (hence) "backward", on the other. In light of this dichotomy, the introduction of tuition fees for higher education is conceived as being on the "modern" side. From the hegemonic paradigm's perspective, feeless higher education becomes a synonym for backward logic typical of socialism, whereas the introduction of fees becomes automatically progressive.

The European Union, as a concept under which "interventions in the social structure" are "easily justifiable", appears as the most tangible symbol of progressiveness and modernity in the hegemonic discourse. The symbolic meaning of "European Union" is hereof further deconstructed. The movement thus engaged in the endeavor of "value conversion" (Rochon 1998, 54).[55] The "value/meaning conversion" starts with the indication of what is considered to be the common sense. To paraphrase, EU membership is presented as a guarantee of welfare, so that all the sacrifices made in that name are automatically justified. The European Union thus comes to play the role of "object of desire".[56] This is why it is argued that the Western European welfare model, towards which Croatia is supposedly heading, had already been dismissed. Joining the EU thus means joining a union of states that has nothing to do with welfare anymore. While stressing the absence of this kind of critical reflections in the Croatian public, the authors assume another type of common sense: the desire of Croatian people to live in a welfare state. It comes without saying, in other words, that welfare is something everyone

[55] For the purposes of this work a more appropriate term would probably be "meaning conversion", but I'm nonetheless using Rochon's terms due to clarity and compatibility between the theoretical framework and the empirical analysis.
[56] Here I refer to the Lacanian concept which signifies an "unattainable" object of desire.

would go for. The activists use this chance to communicate their interpretation of the Lisbon Treaty which is perceived by them as "the basic document of the new and neoliberal European Union". From there, they are engaging in converting the commonly accepted meaning of the European Union (EU) in the public. By deconstructing the meaning of the EU through illuminating what the Lisbon Treaty really is about, they illuminated the contradiction between people's expectations driven by the hegemonic discourse (the story about welfare and the European Union), and the "real", "welfare-free" neoliberal structure of the EU. Thereby, the ground was set for proclaiming that "the elite still uncritically supports the myth of the European Union as a zone of general welfare."

From this meso level of discourse, in the following section titled "The Attack on the Acquired Social Rights", the activists get back to the macro level of communication and deconstruct the structural framework under which their struggle for free education takes place. The concept of "capital" is introduced for the first time. It is argued that the interests of capital stand behind the "ideological justification" of the degradation of social rights. The abstract concept of capital and its "interests" is illustrated through mentioning its social and economic effects (such as layoffs, manufacturing consent for decreasing social rights etc.). Activists here translate "flexibilization" of labor as the process of enabling employers to lay off workers more easily. This remark highlights the interconnectivity of the student struggle with other socio-economic issues and shows a degree of solidarity with other struggles (such as labor struggle), which reflects the same logic applied in the case of tuition fees in higher education. In Rochon's terms, here we may see the application of "value connection".

The transitional narrative is likewise addressed through its negative affiliation to the "socialist legacy". The group of authors does not express a direct sympathy for socialism, but instead illuminates a logical fallacy on the side of the hegemonic narrative. They argue that "all criticism against the attacking of the social rights is silenced by symbolic intimidation and the threat of labels such as "Yugo-nostalgia", "backwardness" or "parasitism". Two out of three concepts indicated here are typical of the wider space of post-socialism, whereas the negative connotation given to "Yugo-nostalgia" is especially conspicuous in the Croatian case. By unmasking the logic that frames "Yugo-nostalgia" negatively, the movement seeks to shed light onto the socio-economic, rather than identity-based reasons behind accusations for being "Yugo-nostalgic".[57] This type of discursive twist may again be interpreted as "value/meaning conversion". Labels such as "Yugo-nostalgic", the activists claim, primarily serve the purpose of legitimizing the degradation of social and economic rights that were guaranteed in the Yugoslav period. Instead of a "demander of basic rights" (including the right to free education), everyone who calls for these rights thus becomes "Yugo-nostalgic", "Serbo-Communist", "Serbo-

[57] The Yugoslav experience has been demonized in different ex-YU republics by a different degree. Undoubtedly, Croatia is on top of this gradation scale.

Yugoslav" or alike. Thereby, one gets automatically discredited due to the high level of public hostility towards the Yugoslav heritage (which is often equalized with the "Serbian hegemony").

From there, the activists proceed with deconstructing and delegitimizing the narrative behind measures such as tuition fees in higher education and, more generally, suspension/reduction of social rights. Concepts such as "budget deficit" or "fiscal limitations" are questioned through a discussion about "rights of the majority". This discussion, for instance, falls under democratic discourse and Roshon's "value connection" again takes place. The hegemonic public discourse and its main concepts are thus "divorced" from the context of "opposition to the irrationality of socialist privileges". The "necessity of reducing social rights due to fiscal deficit" is put instead, into the context of lack of taking care for the interest of majority". The economistic discourse, detached from any ties with politics and society (as present in the hegemonic discourse), is replaced by the one of political economy, which emphasizes the political character of economic policies. By referring to "the majority" as "working majority", which stands in opposition to a "tacit consensus among the political elites in favor of capital", the critique becomes more radical and, furthermore, labor-oriented. From there, the group suggests a more progressive tax policy which would "tax profits of banks or telecommunication companies". Thereby, the movement sums up this discussion on macro (conceptual) and micro (contextual) level by communicating its own policy suggestion at the meso level.

4.1.2. The Meaning of Democracy

The last chapter in the "Occupation Cookbook" is reserved for a discussion on democracy or, rather, lack thereof. The special emphasis was on the shortcomings of representative democracy. Once again, the authors highlight the way in which "political elites work against the interest of the majority". In their view, representatives of the general interest are only nominal representatives, and hence get easily corrupted by the power of capital. The rule of the people consequentially appears as "alleged" and democracy becomes its own opposite. The mistrust in representative democracy comes from its practical failure to meet real needs of the people. Direct democracy is therefore presented as a consequence and/or reaction to the "unfulfilled promise of representative democracy". It appears, in the authors' words, as a "security measure", as a "specter that does not stop to haunt".[58] The very way in which direct democracy is defined (as a "security measure") assists in legitimizing it and, thereby, legitimizing the plenum as its main institutional body. We may likewise detect the way

[58] This is a clear reference to the famous Marxian notion of the "specter of communism haunting Europe".

in which the student movement seeks to position itself with respect to other social struggles that suffer from the same anti-democratic tendencies within the Croatian society. Their struggle for free education is put into the wider context of social struggles, and presented as another "dam" for defending the interests of the majority, not (only) the narrow interests of students.

This message is obviously leaning towards radically democratic anti-capitalism, but the overall (epistemic) discursive content is, by the same token, keeping the classical model of welfare state alive by using the discourse of "rights" and by criticizing the "neoliberal attack" on them. This balancing between a radically democratic discourse and a "softer" one rooted in human rights (and welfare), tells us something about the way in which the movement sought to bridge over the gap between micro (contextual) and macro (conceptual) levels of discursive performance. On the one hand, namely, they acknowledge the factual condition of the disappearance of social rights and point the finger at "neoliberalism" as the main "offender" in this case. On the other, it is clear from the more radically articulated paragraphs (which, among other concepts, include "the power of capital"), that the remedy for such condition is not to be found within the "softer" discourse of rights. To the contrary, the remedy for the disappearance of social rights under the attack of neoliberalism must be, in their view, much more radical than a simple (social democratic) demand of "bringing the social rights back". By calling for a radically democratic method of decision making, the movement actually calls for going beyond representative democracy, as we know it.

4.1.3. Educational Brochure

The Educational Brochure addressed several issues, among which are: frequently asked questions; aims of the struggle and organization of the movement; specific demands; and statements of support from domestic and international intellectuals. The brochure also included financial data from the national budget and the list of EU countries where education is free, as well as the list of universities in Croatia which have joined the struggle alongside their colleagues from Zagreb. Last but not least, the brochure included a couple of lines quoted from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights concerning the right to education. I shall start from the section on intellectuals' statements of support. Among those who supported the movement were Boris Buden, Noam Chomsky, Slavoj Žižek and Judith Butler. For the sake of clarity, I will quote the statements and then address them all together:

1. *The question today of whether free education is realistic or not isn't a question of the objective perception, but the political position with respect to reality. In other words, this is the question of*

solidarity with those who have illuminated the antagonist character of reality and took a clear stand on it. It is too late for neutrality now. (Boris Buden)

2. *I have learned of the struggle of Croatian students to ensure that free education will be available to all. It is a worthy goal for every society – including my own, where such rights are not honored – and I would like to wish them success in their efforts.* (Noam Chomsky)
3. *Those who are old enough among us remember the "directed education" as a last attempt of the communist regime in the old Yugoslavia to subordinate education to the "social utility" and narrow down the space for alternative thinking. Western Europe is discovering again the "directed education" – and its name is the "bologna reform of higher education", which is a new attempt to subordinate education to the needs of social control and regulation. We need hence a cultural revolution in order to be able to participate in civil disobedience with all available means and fight against this dangerous tendency. You, the students, who occupy faculties, are not only doing the right thing, but also the necessary thing. Go 'till the end and persist, without any compromises*. (Slavoj Žižek)
4. *This is an important moment to oppose the decimation of the social welfare state, especially its impact on educational institutions, as well as the rise of neo-liberal circulations in relation to university life. Students are threatened with becoming an actually "precarious" population, exposed to poverty, debt, and lack of educational opportunities. Please accept my strong support for your brave and just actions.* (Judith Butler)

The supporting statement given by Boris Buden reveals a similar conceptual trajectory to the one seen in the "Occupation Cookbook". Deflection from the narrative which makes economy all about numbers, at the same time, means making economy less "mathematical" and more political. Boris Buden, whose name provokes a great (and almost undisputable) respect on the post-Yugoslav intellectual and activist (progressive) scene, finishes his statement with a strong message in which he declares: "It is too late for neutrality now". This is a call for taking sides, because his theoretical and political writings have always been about taking sides. Buden's statement reveals a clear "theoretical framework" from which he talks. It is not, according to him, about an objectively and convincingly articulated perception of reality, but about power relations and a clear political stance. Marx, in other words, has beaten Kant. By including his statement of support into the brochure, the movement gave us a hint about one of the theoretical incentives for the side taken by the activist group.

Both Judith Butler and Noam Chomsky are widely read on the activist scene as well. Their supporting statements touched upon the two discursive points concerning more general proclamations about the issues of rights and precariousness. Chomsky, obviously aware of the context of former Yugoslavia, accommodated a radical demand to the sensitivity of the post-socialist era. The epistemic/conceptual content of the supporting statement given by Butler, on the other hand, applies the notion of "monstrous neoliberalism", which affects every single dimension of society, including education and students' lives. Certainly, this narrative fits the overall collective identity built up by the movement, but also reflects the historical moment of the immediate aftermath of the 2007/8 economic crisis and resistance popping up worldwide.

Finally, Žižek's statement of support has a direct message. Similar to Buden's "no neutrality", the Slovenian philosopher declares, "no compromises". He touches upon the Bologna higher education reform and, interestingly, makes a parallel with the attempt of the bureaucratized socialist state to subordinate education to the so-called "social utility". "No compromises" is a line consistent with what we already learned about the struggle and demands from the section on "Overall Discursive Performance", when an activist said: "We're not talking about demands, there is no plural here. The demand is only one and it has been set in a very clear way: free education for all!" No wonder, hence, that Žižek's line found its place in the brochure.

Before I proceed to the section called "questions and answers", I shall briefly analyze the pair of quotations used in the brochure: the first from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the second from the Croatian constitution. The prior quote is article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights, which is concerned with the right to education:

"Everyone has the right to education (…) Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible on the basis of merit (…) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

The later quote is article 66 of the Croatian constitution:

"In the Republic of Croatia, everyone shall have access to education under equal conditions and in accordance with his/her aptitudes."

Both articles reveal the presence of legal discourse. Referring to declarations and legal documents conveys knowledge that communicates the following: "What we demand is nothing more than respect of valid legal documents."[59] This sort of twist appears both as a supportive master-frame within the overall discourse and a sort of preemptive defense from the expected counter-attack. Such discursive maneuver[60] is conducted in order to emphasize the fact that the government acts against its own rules (embodied in its own laws and constitution) and principles of the very hegemonic narrative itself (human rights as opposed to "socialist authoritarianism", for instance). The movement thus managed to strike a balance between

[59] Spanish Podemos or, better said, its Secretary General Pablo Iglesias, also became famous for his use of the Spanish Constitution in TV electoral debates. Interestingly enough, he has gone from demonizing the "regimen del 78" (the year the Constitution was approved) to actually bringing a physical copy of the Constitution to TV and reading excerpts from it – on the right to housing, for instance. (I owe this remark to Oscar Fernandez Fernandez).

[60] The presence of legalistic discourse was likewise explained to me by my interviewees. Apart from its strategic role (similar to the case of human rights discourse) it had another source, the so called "Bologna section" within the Faculty. This section organized protests before the blockade, and dealt with the legal perspective of addressing student issues. Later on, this section converged with more radical fractions of the movement, but knowledge they had gained before could serve to the cause of "free education for all" as well.

different concepts, hence keeping clear and visible the difference between the conceptual "front running" master-frames and the supportive master-frames.

The discourse of "rights" pops up again in the section "frequently asked questions" (FAQ). These lines are telling us that free education is morally and ethically just, but at the same time useful for the wellbeing of community. Thereby we got a little bit of pragmatism. The modernist paradigm, through which policies such as study fees are legitimized, is challenged through informing their readers the paying for studies is not considered "modern" in fifteen EU states. One of the remarks indicates that "sixty percent of students in Croatia are already paying for their studies." The activists emphasize that the fees in Croatia are among the highest in Europe. If this trend continues, they proceed, "only the rich and those from the middle class who are willing to step into debt slavery will be able to study." Hereby they are using the discourse of human rights in order to confront the system, which favors the rich minority and pushes the non-rich majority into "debt slavery". From there, a simple calculation came out. Through basic algebra, the amount of money which would be enough for free education and the ratio between this amount and the overall annual budget suddenly made free education not so difficult to achieve.

"Around 300 million of kuna per year would cover the expenses of all fees (while only the Zagreb Arena costs 650 million). This amount equals only 0.25 percent of Croatian yearly budget which amounts 120 billion of kuna."

In the following text within the same FAQ section of the Educational brochure, novelties are concentrated around two concepts: that of "knowledge society" and that of "commodity". The latter is typical of contemporary social movements and its usage, especially in student movements, does not come as a surprise.[61] What the movement tried to communicate by using this concept is that people themselves are reduced to commodities if their knowledge is commoditized. Their function within society is not determined by what is defined in the text as "public interest" but, rather, by their ability to sell knowledge in a commoditized form which, again, reduces them to sellers of labor force. This condition is linked with the concept/master-frame of "knowledge society", which plays a supportive role. Similarly to discourses of legality and rights, the one organized around the concept of "knowledge society" announces the presence of a contradiction between the hegemonic narrative on the one hand and policies implemented by the authorities, on the other. This is an interesting discursive twist. If one should choose among the different definitions of "knowledge society", the Croatian context most probably corresponds to the following one:

[61]Commodification of knowledge is the condition in which education is subordinated to the needs of the (labor) market.

"Economic success which is now determined by the ability of individuals and firms to accumulate and transform information in such a way as to produce and market goods efficiently and flexibly". (Smith 2002, 39-40)[62]

Wider debate on the concept of "knowledge society" was left aside and it seems like the movement declaratively accepted its validity. The way in which they operate discursively is by pointing at the contradiction between the desire to create a knowledge society and the practical application of the concept in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries such as Croatia. The very concept of "knowledge society" promotes the commodification of knowledge, which is of course in direct opposition to the agenda of the student movement. What they wanted to show, nonetheless, is that even such concepts serve for justifying the worst practices (namely, the introduction of tuition fees), which not only negate the right to education but also the endeavor of establishing a "knowledge society". They simply faced the system with all of its rottenness, by holding up a mirror to it and exposing its contradictions.

It is worth mentioning that activists use an academic/scientific reference in order to emphasize the absence of correlation between *studying successfully and paying fees*. They go against the dominant narrative of merit-based society, which has been established in the past couple of decades. This has, of course, nothing to do with being against the notion and practice of making an effort or disputing merit as such. Rather, it illuminates misconceptions of the narrative which often interprets final results of competitive processes as effort-driven, without taking into account different positions from which "competitors" start running the race. Apart from this point, they draw attention to the *catastrophic policies both locally and globally* which make *societies less just*, in general terms. Obviously, they are quite hostile towards the "market laws" which they find not only unstable, but also unsustainable. The context within which they make an argument is the sphere of education. The way they put it (and, often, repeat it) in different contexts reveals a more general hostility towards the market-driven logic. Again, they talk about rights which cannot be "just an offer on the market" and thereby, one more time,

[62] "As far as we can determine, this literature ["futuristic business literature"] has conflated at least four different sets of a "knowledge society". Definition 1 claims that a 'knowledge society is (…) a society organized around the production of knowledge in the same sense that an agrarian society is organized abound agricultural production and the industrial society is organized around manufacture'. Definition 2 claims that advanced countries are "knowledge societies" in that technological change is much more important for economic growth than before. Definition 3 argues that advanced countries are 'knowledge societies' in the sense that economic success is now determined by the ability of individuals and firms to accumulate and transform information in such a way as to produce and market goods efficiently and flexibly, something which has never before been the case. Definition 4 is that advanced countries are 'knowledge societies' in the sense that without the ability to understand and transform knowledge (in other words, without high levels of education) it is hard for individuals to find decent jobs in such societies." Smith (ed.) 2002, 39-40

argue that no rights are to be guaranteed within the free market liberal systems. Due to the whole post-socialist context, they do not go further than this in arguing in favor of socialism or alike. However, it is quite clear that the critique is stemming from the radical, rather than the reformist left.

Finally, the micro level of epistemic discourse is not underrepresented either. It is traceable in the “Open letter to the Croatian public”. Since the blockade was receiving significant media coverage, the first couple of lines of this open letter refer to the presumed, common knowledge. The duration of the blockade, the lack of responsiveness by the ministry of education and the government as a whole, as well as the occupation of other universities across the country, was supposed to make the Croatian public familiar with the day-to-day development of events. Apart from reusing elements of legal and rights-based discourses, activists used the micro level of their general discourse for pointing the finger of responsibility for a given situation at the authorities. This discursive feature, along with all the other “front running” master-frames analyzed above, unequivocally testifies about the readiness of the movement to frontally confront not only then government, but the system in general.

4.2. Sarajevo's (Almost) Impossible Struggle

The only town in Bosnia and Herzegovina that somewhat diverged from the highly unfavorable structural and material reality (regarding the absence of solid social/political subjectivity) was Tuzla, which had a solidly organized industrial labor force. Their discourse and the overall collective identity were highly determined by its proletarian basis and there was no need for so much hard discursive work. The deprivation of workers spilled over, in terms of discourse and narrative, into the wider perspective of social deprivation of the majority of citizens of Tuzla. That was clear. The uprising in Sarajevo, undoubtedly, represented a different case.

As in Tuzla, its factories and companies had already been destroyed in the process of privatization at the moment when the uprising took place. But had it not been for Tuzla's workers, Sarajevo would have never happened, at least not in that moment and, most probably, not in that shape. The workers in Sarajevo were not as organized as in Tuzla. The necessity for prescribing meaning retroactively, to both protests and plenums, was much more evident in Sarajevo. The process of articulation of "the people" had been weighed down by the lack of a clear material base, in the sense of lacking the dominant social subject which could have taken the leading role in the articulation. Under such circumstances, the popular movement in Sarajevo had to balance between proliferation of particular (and very concrete) demands coming from the fragmented and heterogeneous "people" on the one hand, and the necessity of finding a common denominator, on the other. The analysis of documents departs from the one issued before the plenum was established. This document is the first attempt to formulate some demands and thereby initiate more tangible confrontation with the status quo.

4.2.1. In the Name of Citizens

On February the 9th, two days after the first protest was held on the streets of Sarajevo, the informal group of citizens who later stood behind organization of the people's assembly, issued a statement "in the name of citizens on the streets of Sarajevo", declaring:

"We, the people who went out onto the streets of Sarajevo yesterday, also regret the injuries and damage to properties, but our regret also extends to the factories, public spaces, cultural and scientific institutions, and human lives, all of which were destroyed as a direct result of actions by those (ALL THOSE) in power for, now, over 20 years. We ask our fellow

citizens and fellow sufferers not to allow these unpleasant scenes to cloud the fact that this kind of government and those in power have cost us immeasurably more."

The first paragraph of the statement contains several concepts, among which property, public space, culture, science, "human life", people and power. The introducing sentence refers to the most recent events during which the two buildings of the Cantonal government and the Presidency got inflamed, while dozens of citizens and police officers got injured. This section refers to the context and a very micro-level, common-ground knowledge about the recent past.

The first sentence contains an epistemic discursive trick. It discredits the accusations of hooliganism, coming from the political elite and the media, by putting an emphasis on "damage to property" that was inflicted by the "hooligans". By introducing the concept of *property*, the informal group of activists immediately puts the damage made into a subordinated position in comparison to the damage made by the process of systemic and systematic damaging of *factories, public spaces, cultural and scientific institutions, and human lives* throughout the last 20 years (of transition). By introducing the concept of *property*, in other words, they opened up the space for counterweighting this concept with other concepts at the same level of abstraction such as human life or public spaces. In terms of Thomas Rochon, this might be interpreted as an example of *value connection*. At the meso level of knowledge production, they simply apply the logic of Brecht's famous statement "What is the robbing of a bank compared to the founding of a bank?"[63] The conveyed message is thus the following: "what is (the "sin" of) burning the buildings of the Cantonal government and the Presidency, compared to (the "sin" of) not burning them, after 20 years of suffering". Thereby, the activists *change the context,* or connotation *within which the idea is evaluated* and devaluate the issue of damage to property by *connecting* (or comparing) it to the issue of damage done to human lives, factories, public spaces etc.

The activists, further on, demanded "unconditional and immediate resignations of both the Sarajevo Canton and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina governments and the formation of non-party governments. Secondly, they demanded that "no measures, of any kind, are to be undertaken that would limit peaceful citizen protests". Finally, they demanded the "immediate release of demonstrators, no criminal case filings against them, and an end to the witch hunt of people". These demands reveal the contextual limitation of discourse, which had to be initially kept at the micro level of abstraction due to the above-described circumstances (repression and external triggers). The last two demands address issues related to the most recent protest events and demand allowance of peaceful protest activities as well as release of the arrested protesters. By calling for the *formation of non-party governments* in the first demand, the informal group who organized the plenum established a binary opposition between politicians,

[63] See: Žižek 2014, pp, 4;151.

on the one hand, and "non-politicians", on the other. Given the context, the politicians were supposed to be perceived as corrupt, unskillful and unworthy of holding positions in public offices; while the non-politicians, or the "non-party" personnel, were supposed to represent the opposite from politicians and political parties. The reason is that the level of trust in politicians and political parties had significantly decreased by that moment. Before the protests, the level of trust in politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina was probably reaching a historical minimum: 62.3 percent of the citizens did not have trust in political parties and politicians at all, while 14.9 did not have too much trust.[64] In practical terms, some kind of a non-party government was seen as the only possible remedy for the corrupt political system.

What is nonetheless more important is that, in the remaining text, the activists constructed through demands for what happens "after the non-party government is established". They are pointing at the social and economic deprivation, the violation of human dignity, and the need to (re)introduce welfare and social justice for all strata in society. All these problems were supposed to be addressed after the passage from "party" to "non-party" government. Hereby we may trace the pair of front running master-frames, consisting of *human dignity* and *social justice*.

The usage of *human dignity* as a concept is exceptionally sensitive in the Bosnian post-war context. Similarly to the post-WWII period in Europe, the relevance of this concept comes from the essentialist value of the human being, which obliges others to treat him/her as a value in itself. The main context in which this concept's relevance has reoccurred is the 1990s war and the atrocities committed against civilians, including the genocide in Srebrenica. This is symptomatic, because the concept likewise covers the period of "transitional theft, corruption, nepotism, privatization of public resources, and the implementation of an economic model that favors the rich and financial arrangements that have destroyed any hope for a society based on social justice and welfare." This means that the violation of human dignity through war crimes and atrocities during the war has been prolonged in the post-war era by using different means. The main causes of the violation of human dignity in the post-war Bosnia are thus found in the economic model and political practice established after the Dayton Peace Agreement. At the same time, the concept of *human dignity* reveals the need for discursive coverage of a wide spectrum of causes affecting the violation of each and every aspect of human existence in Bosnia.[65]

[64] The results came out of the research conducted in the period between 2013 and 2015 by the Bosnian center for social research "Analitika".

[65] The usage of the concept of *dignity* may likewise be assessed by using the emotional/affective, instead of cognitive approach in social movement studies. For looking at the concept from this perspective, see: Eklundh 2019, 114.

As for the second front running master frame, demanding social justice was (also according to my interviewees) the only concept which could simultaneously be progressive and wide enough so that many could identify with it. Considering the absence of a clear social base[66] and the (popular) nature of the movement, this sort of "signifiers" were the only ones that could leave enough maneuvering room for a future (more solid) articulation and construction of the "carrier" of social change. On the other hand, the trouble lied – as with many widely set conceptual features and formations – in losing depth in favor of width. Other (supportive) concepts/master-frames mentioned, such as *transitional theft*, *nepotism* and the like, were expected to help out in setting the list of problems to be addressed – ranging from violations of human dignity to the absence of social justice.

4.2.2. Plenums, not Political Parties!

In the first statement released by the informal group of activists, one may notice how *politics* is blamed for cloaking the larceny of society. This "(party) politics / society" cleavage may be understood in classical populist terms as a division between the elite and the people. Considering the absence of a potential "radical" subject, this is to be understood as the first step towards a possible occurrence of such subject. The call for participation at the first Sarajevo plenum goes into the same direction. In this text, we learn that "us" stands for "the citizens", which gives a civic tone to the discourse. "No political brokering" represents an exclusivist standpoint whereby the activists pose an ultimate line of demarcation between them and the political elite, which is blamed for the distorted social image of Sarajevo and the whole Bosnian society. Behind this demarcation line posed through the statement "there is no party or organization behind us whatsoever" one may notice the presence of a sort of disclaimer which should have represented a sort of *sine qua non* of any progressive social change. Unlike politicians who have gotten richer in the past decades, behind the activists there are "years of humiliation, hunger, helplessness and hopelessness". These four features delved deeper into the "violated human dignity", thus concretizing its meaning. So hunger stands for economic deprivation; helplessness for disempowerment of those who have been economically

[66] The issue of social base becomes even more relevant in the chapter six, where it becomes one of the main categories through which I am assessing the process of "discursive consolidation". This is why it is important to stress here already, that by clear or "solid" social base I mean a well – structured, organized and self-aware group of people who could be mobilized for a given cause. Usually, the term "social base" is used in studies dealing with political parties who always seek to establish a solid base of its activists, supporters and voters. However, as argued by Agh, "(…) it is not only parties that are looking at a solid social base but also the newly emerging social strata who are seeking political representation (…)". See: Agh 1998, 48; in Columbus (ed) 1998.

deprived; humiliation for the violated self-esteem due to the previous two features; and hopelessness for the vicious circle of the political, institutional and general systemic framework which prevents any sort of intervention of the deprived into mechanisms which determine the conditions of their own lives. The concept of human dignity thus gets its further conceptual elaboration.

It is not by chance that this sort of conceptual apparatus was used in the call for participation at the first Sarajevo plenum. Its aim was to raise awareness of common feelings among the citizens, as well as shared emotions among potential participants in the plenum. The reasoning behind stressing all these feelings was to widen the common basis for future plenum participants. The "Initiating Committee for Organizing the Plenum"[67] tried to communicate, presumably, the common sentiment of the majority of Sarajevo's population. The binary distinction between the majority who shares the feeling of "violated human dignity" on one side and those who enjoy privileges on the other, is made even clearer by refusing any possibility of making deals or arrangements behind closed doors. This instance of discourse tells us that privileges in Bosnia and Herzegovina have not been earned, and very rarely even inherited (the exception might be the Izetbegovic family).[68] Instead, privileges have been mostly allocated to those who kept sustaining the very political and economic system that perpetuates and widens the scope of benefits for the holders of political and economic power.

Demands coming out of this argument were similar to those which appeared in the first public statement. An additional ingredient had to do with the newly emerging political actor, the plenum. The phrase, "let us keep on working for the good of us all", reveals the necessity for building trust outside the institutional system, which had shown a lack of sensitivity for *common interest.* The cause behind founding a new civic body (plenum) is again presented as a sign of mistrust towards the institutions and all those who had been shaping *the real* of Bosnian society in the previous two and a half decades. Demands are pointed to the irresponsibility and inability of the political class to meet the needs of the protestors, who are conceived as the voice of the deprived and dissatisfied majority. This is why the second demand emphasizes that after the resignation of the cantonal government, the new administration must be constituted on the basis of "future conclusions of the Sarajevo Citizens' Plenum".

The organizing committee is (still) careful and plays strategically, because it calls specifically for the resignations of the *cantonal* government and the government of the *Federation of*

[67] This was a temporary informal group which was supposed to cease its activities when the first plenum took place. After that, the plenum became the only official body of decision-making, including communication with media and the public.

[68] Alija Izetbegović was the first president of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), which since the dissolution of Yugoslavia has been most of the time the main representative of the Bosniak ethnic group in Bosnia. His son, Bakir, is presently the president of the party, as well as a former member of the presidency, just like his father.

Bosnia and Herzegovina. The question is why only these two governments, why not the whole political/bureaucratic apparatus? The answer lies in the complexity of the Bosnian political system. The other entity, which is the Republika Srpska (RS), is not mentioned by the activists in Sarajevo because the political elite from there kept on claiming that the protests in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the other entity) were oriented towards destabilizing the RS (through spreading "false discontent" from the Federation to the Republika Srpska). The discursive performance from Sarajevo, hence, could not cross certain structurally imposed limitations. Instead, it started with macro concepts, while sticking to the context of Sarajevo and the Federation on the micro and meso level of discourse. Thereby, they tried to prevent further attacks from the Republika Srpska and to create the conditions for a bottom-up reaction from the citizens of that entity.[69]

Finally, a demand reflecting upon the police brutality against the protestors which escalated on the very day when the protests started is portraying demonstrations as peaceful. This is, of course, what most movements in general, and protest movements in particular, tend to do. However, the Bosnian context had an additional ingredient, which made this micro level even more important to be kept under (discursive) control. Namely, after the events from February the 7th (the ignition of institutional buildings), many people were ambivalent with respect to the protests. While supporting the outburst of discontent on the streets, many did not like the idea of setting the buildings on fire because it reminded them on war. Here one could see the example of accommodation of discourse to the context (between the first public statement and the first call for a plenum).

Going back to the first document, it should be recalled how the activists remember the *"*factories, public spaces, cultural and scientific institutions, and human lives, all of which were destroyed as a direct result of actions by those (ALL THOSE) in power for, now, over 20 years*".* The capital letters in "ALL THOSE in power" imply a critique of the entire political elite, regardless of the level of governance, entity or canton in question. In the second document, they had to be more careful and specifically direct their critique at "their own yard", meaning their own canton and entity.

[69] During the 2014 uprising in Bosnia, no serious rebellious group popped up in the Republika Srpska.

4.2.3. Plenum Takes Over

The first plenum in Sarajevo was held on the 12th of February 2014. This gathering did not bring any list of demands. The second plenum held on the 14th of February was more successful with that respect. The list contained four "urgent demands" and the plenum kept sticking to them more or less until the end. The first demand urges for the establishment of a *government of experts*, without political affiliations, in consultation with the Citizens' plenum. The second is concerned with *the audit of the salaries and benefits of public officials*. The third calls for the *audit of privatization*, and the fourth for the *establishment of an independent commission of experts for verifying the facts of the events of 7th of February*.

One must notice that three out of the four demands are in line with the set of claims indicated in the two previous documents issued before the plenum was established. Firstly, the persistence of the dichotomy between the politicians and non-politicians is traceable here as well. What changes is that the non-party government from the first document now becomes the "expert government". It is worth mentioning at this point that there is a certain tension between this demand and both of the front running master-frames (human dignity and social justice) from the previous two documents, as well as their supportive master-frames. This tension, furthermore, exists also within this list of demands, between the *establishment of a government of experts* (though *in consultation with the Citizens' Plenum*) on the one hand, and the *establishment of a more socially just order for all social strata - for all those whose human dignity and material basic needs have been endangered or destroyed by the transitional theft, corruption, nepotism, privatization of public resources,* on the other. The twist is that the simple binary opposition between corrupt politicians and their political parties on one side, and independent experts whose professional affiliation is a guarantee for the absence of all side effects of "party politics" on the other, had already been discredited in the context of the European Union and elsewhere. Several countries, namely, such as Greece or Italy, had already had these types of governments in the past and their rule meant everything but the rule in favor of *all social strata.* While calling for the abandonment of the "economic model that favors the rich and financial arrangements that have destroyed any hope for a society based on social justice and welfare", the Bosnian plenum at the same time called for the establishment of a government of experts whose prime role has proven to be satisfying, primarily, the macro-economic indicators. There would have been nothing wrong with this *per se*, had it not been proven many times that taking care of macro-economic parameters practically means (further) violations of human dignity and further attacks on social justice and welfare (mainly through austerity measures).

This tension may be induced from two sources. First, those who stood behind the first statement were people who tried to avoid the term "expert government" due to well-known experiences of other European countries in the recent past. At the same time, they were fully aware that no other formulation apart from stressing this binary opposition may resonate with the wider public. Obviously, theoretical and worldview influences of the core group hit the wall of social reality once the plenums started. This reality was not simply opposed to certain conceptions and value systems, on the contrary. But there was no space for more abstract, systematic and, most importantly, long-term visionary thinking. Considering the "years of humiliation, hunger, helplessness and hopelessness*",* this sort of endower was (almost) "mission impossible". Secondly, regardless of the context, one indeed tends to hit a conceptual "wall" when one starts thinking beyond political representation, due to its fallacies. If there must be some government, and political parties are discredited, who should take over? Do we need leadership at all? Is there any political system in the world without leadership? What the plenum did manage, nonetheless, is to emphasize the need for setting up a controlling civic body (plenum). This means that the core group still succeeded in pushing forward the idea of "popular democracy" as a controlling mechanism.

Similarly, the third demand, dealing with *auditing the privatization* process of public enterprises in Sarajevo Canton, is only partially in line with the previous two documents. Privatization is, of course, often taken in critical discourses in the region as euphemism for transitional robbery. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that it is targeted in such a direct manner. Here, the demand got its concrete articulation and the argument is pushed further by listing the firms and factories (by name) which must stay out of reach of the economic logic which had already destroyed thousands of firms and factories, including those enumerated. However, this is not communicated through demanding abolishment, but rather "auditing" of privatization of strategically important firms and factories. Privatization is thus addressed through the most "suspicious" cases, rather than through a wider scope of economic logic behind it. The discursive performance is here less radical than in the first statement. This shift, of course, has to do primarily with "massification" of the decision-making body (the plenum), which led the initial group of activists to face the constraints of having to operate within a popular and hence poorly organized "social base". In the first document, violations of human dignity and transitional theft were discursively *connected* with an economic model that favors the rich. From there on, the core group tried to pave the path of the future discourse. But the plenum was a different story.

Finally, the second and the fourth demands operate at the micro level of discourse. The second makes it evident that people wanted things to happen immediately. They wanted immediate satisfaction, if not by improving their own social and economic position in absolute terms, then at least by witnessing the downfall of those whom they found responsible for their

own deprivation. This is where demands like “audit of the salaries and benefits of public officials” come from. Other points from the second demand reflect a strong urge for tackling the unjustified privileges of the political elite. The call for limiting the maximum wages of public officials is aimed at narrowing the gap between the citizens and their public servants. The fourth demand addresses, again, the events from February the 7th, when the police used excessive force against the demonstrators and the arrested. The following days and weeks were marked by more subtle means of intimidation of activists. Many of them were followed, some even intercepted on the street, intimidated by criminal charges, etc. The state’s reaction revealed panic at the beginning but soon, repression became a (successful) means for limiting civil disobedience at any cost.

4.3. The Fresh Air of Municipalism in Belgrade

The case of the "Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own" movement shows, similarly to the student movement in Zagreb, how a seemingly single-issue-oriented discourse may use a given (single) issue as a paradigm for a much larger-scale (systemic) critique. As previously indicated, the "Belgrade Waterfront" project, with its damaging consequences, served both as the focal point of intersection of many dimensions of the post-socialist condition and the point upon which the movement built its mobilization capacity.[70]

The "methodology" of activism was thus inductive and the direction of struggle could be perceived as bottom-up. The activists often stressed the importance of everyday life and everyday actions. While putting an emphasis on struggles at the local level, the movement nonetheless sought to establish a network with other local initiatives (both in Serbia and the rest of Europe)[71] and thereby build a strategy and agenda for national engagement of a network of local initiatives.[72] The emphasis on "everyday life" was supplemented by the macro-level conceptualizations which, in turn, were again combined with the specific context. On the one hand, concrete struggles were not followed by big ideological narratives. Discourses, on the other hand (as expressed usually in written form in documents, articles and interviews), were both micro and macro, so that concrete struggles could have been connected to other struggles via conceptual apparatus. Thereby, the bottom-up strategy actually reached its full potential, which includes both "bottom" and "upper" levels of discourse. As one of the activists explained, *the key was to try to change things at the local level and thereby show that it's possible to make people's lives better by everyday action. Only then,* he argues, *when concrete things change, one can go to higher levels.*

[70] In a statement given for the only documentary made about the NDB, one of the activists explains: *"*From the beginning the issue of Belgrade Waterfront was the topic from which other topics should unroll. This is to show what democracy means for us and how to get there. We have to start from the small things. See: "Inicijativa", video file 23:35, Vice Production, 2016, https://video.vice.com/rs/video/inicijativa/58ef418b572f8bfc021989a6

[71] The movement cooperates with other local initiatives in Belgrade and throughout Serbia, but also with other movements in Europe, such as Barcelona en Comu. In 2019, NDB created the "Civic Front" together with other local initiatives from all around the country.

[72] As a matter of fact, this has already happened officially. The NDB, namely, formed the "Civic Front" together with the Local Front from Kraljevo, and the United Movement of Free Tenants from the city of Niš.

4.3.1. About us: NDB's Manifesto

"Don't let Belgrade d(r)own" is a movement which, according to its manifesto, gathers activists, individuals and organizations interested in issues related to cultural and urban policies, as well as sustainable city development, fair use of resources and the involvement of citizens in the urban development of their environment. If one analyzes the conceptual content of these general lines of the manifesto, it is evident that the group is preoccupied with issues that had never played a major role in public discourses of neither Yugoslav nor post-Yugoslav societies. The NDB chose the road of introducing new issues and presenting them as publically relevant. This is evident from looking at the section "About us" on their website.

The initial set of concepts, through which this movement communicates its agenda with the public, include urban planning, culture, sustainable development (above all urban development), and the commons (common resources). The importance of the "involvement of citizens" is made clear from the beginning, more as a means for tackling these issues than as an end. It is democratic participation, in other words, that sheds light on the political character of these issues. By linking democratic participation or "involvement of citizens" with urban planning and "fair use of common resources", the movement states its commitment to the politicization of topics which had been left out of political debates up until then. Thereby they launched the process of what Rochon calls "value creation".

The proceeding part of the "About us" section is concerned with the project proclaimed to be a symbol of systemic fallacies. The "Belgrade Waterfront" has been spotlighted as a paradigm through which the "degradation" and "robbery" of Belgrade are clearly detectable. The activists describe themselves as a "group of people of different profiles, occupations and beliefs, gathered around the common aim", which is "stopping degradation and robbery". The way they express this endeavor, in the following paragraph, is Rochon's "value connection". One can, namely, notice that certain concerns (about common resources, lack of participation and hence democratic practices, etc.) are connected to the "private interests of non-transparent actors" and "shady deals between investors and politicians". The former is connected to the "appropriation of the city", the latter with making "collateral damage" out of public goods and funds.

It is known from linguistics that metaphors serve for linking more abstract concepts to more concrete ones, to everyday experiences (see: van Dijk 2014, 294). "Collateral damage" here plays a role of indicating the waste of public goods (and public funds) for the sake of fulfilling private interests. It follows that the "appropriation of the city" is a consequence of the fact that public affairs are driven by private interests. Another metaphor appears by the end of

the text, where the authors stress the following: “This city is our home. We are responsible for each of its parts, processes, and problems, both for the present and for the future.” A metaphor which describes Belgrade as “our home” brings up the general concepts behind which the collective body of this movement is formed (common resources, common space, and sustainable development) and “translates” them into something that might easily be understood. Responsibility for “parts of our home” leads to the need for democratic participation. That is to say, the authors do not content themselves with praising the principle for its own sake.

4.3.2. The Speech from the Protest Event

As stated above, on the night between the 25th and the 26th of April 2016, a couple of buildings in the city center of Belgrade were knocked down by the bulldozers. This event, as previously mentioned, was tightly related to the Belgrade Waterfront project, since it took place in the area where the project was supposed to be realized. This is why it triggered mass mobilization, initiated by the NDB group. The speech I am hereby analyzing took place in 2017, at the protest event labeled “Following the Footsteps of the Phantoms”, exactly one year after the demolition in “Savamala”. One of the core group members of NDB started his speech with the set of knowledge claims that is presumably shared by both the movement activists and the protesters. The speech starts from the micro discursive level, from the demolition in “Savamala” that specifically triggered the mass mobilization. Wreckers are called “phantoms”, which clearly refers to the fact that the people who knocked the buildings down wore masks. The speaker proceeds with normative claims (about the criminals and their accomplices, masterminds and ideologists), based on common sense about the series of unlawful elements of the event in “Savamala”, including the already published interview with the former wife of the Belgrade Mayor who publically confirmed that he knew about the demolition in “Savamala” in advance.

From the level of discourse which reveals the content of the common sense and the presumed (shared) knowledge, the speaker moves into the abstract (macro) level of discourse, while still keeping an eye on the contextual (micro) level. He proclaims: “We lost our state. The institutions are privatized and instrumentalized.” The state is occupied, its institutions are coopted by the ruling structures and their purpose is to fulfill private interests of individuals. The state as a concept and its concrete institutions should serve the interests of its constituency, its people. Instead, the activists claim, *the state serves for fulfilling personal interests and interests of the small group of privileged people.*

Secondly, the meaning inscribed here tackles the issue of democratic subjectivity and provides an answer to the question: "Who is the liberator of the state?" The answer is: "Us"! The answer to the question what is "us" comes right after, it is "us" - *education workers, scientific workers, police officers, solders, unemployed, pensioners, the youth, the elderly* etc.[73] In this case "us" does not imply any particular social class, but "the people". With this respect, it is a classical populist subject that is being searched for. This is even more evident from the closing sentences of the speech, where the activist declares that "the top of a small group [of politicians] has been changing, but most of them belong to the top since the beginning". Even though the term "establishment", typical of populist discourses is not used, we may anticipate without any concept-stretching that "the top of the small group being against society and the state" is euphemism for "the establishment.

The last relevant observation from this segment of the speech comes from the part in which the speaker stresses: "The accomplices and the profiteers came first and they divided the country among themselves. Then they started competing in who's going to privatize more state and social enterprises. Once they had sold out all that, they started selling out the land itself piece by piece, public goods, communal enterprises, public space – all that under the excuse of investments." In the first sentence, the activist refers to the early stage of post-socialism, the stage of primitive accumulation of capital in Serbia. Due to the lack of capital and absence of a capitalist class (which was supposed to be the carrier of economic transformation from real socialism to capitalism), the new ruling class had to be created from scratch. The solution was found in the practice of conversion of political power into economically privileged status. The old political nomenclature, hence former high officials of the Communist party, thereby became the main protagonist of the new economic logic. So when the speaker talks about the *profiteers* who *came first and divided the country among themselves*, he explicitly refers to the class which profited the most from the dissolution of former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

Apart from the former nomenclature, which secured a better "starting position" for itself through the privatization of public enterprises (mainly in the 1990s and early 2000s), the new ruling economic class was also made up of the so-called "war profiteers". Those were the people who got rich during the war through robbery and illegal businesses, such as smuggling (cigarettes, for instance). In the post-war period, until nowadays, those people came to be labeled as *tycoons*. The activist refers to privatization as the central process of transition, on the one hand, and the most powerful means for converting political influence into economic

[73] This segment of the speech concretely, is related to the protests which took place after the victory of Aleksandar Vučić in the presidential elections in April 2017. The protests which were organized via Facebook did not have any official organizer and were labeled "Protests against dictatorship". The NDB movement supported these protests, but never took a leading or more proactive role in them. People were protesting against the means by which the newly elected president secured his victory in the first round (by winning more than 50 percent of votes).

benefit, on the other.[74] ”They sold out everything” the activist stresses, and thereby deprived people of common goods, pauperized the ever-greater majority and brought it to the edge of existence. Even though power was moving from one clique to another, he continues, most of those who have been among the usurpers of public goods “still belong to the top”. They are, in his words, a group of “veterans of a dirty battle of power against the state and against society itself.” The battle on the side of power, he further emphasizes, takes place under “the excuse of investments”, which have become sufficient reason, at least narratively, for every further step in the process of transformation of social, political and economic reality.

The speaker then proceeds with communicating some contextual, micro-level knowledge which represents the “running start” for continuing the speech where he again shifts to more abstract conceptualizations. “We have the power” and “The citizens of this country are its authority” are statements by which the gathered people are reminded that their democratic rights are at the same time an obligation to take the power back into their hands. Terms such as “usurpers” or “occupiers” tackle the meso level of discourse. Namely, the speaker brings together the presumed knowledge on the one hand, and the macro level illustrated through “the power of the people”, on the other. From there, he implies that those who “trick people”, cut legally acquired pensions, resort to blackmails do not represent the people who transferred their sovereignty to them. Instead, they aim at fulfilling their personal interests. The “occupiers” and “usurpers”, both metaphorically and directly, serve as labels for the people who are marked as those “doing private business” while holding public offices (an example is the Mayor of Belgrade, Siniša Mali).

The speaker soon points out that the struggle *takes place in every place where injustice stays*.[75] This seemingly abstract claim gets contextualized immediately in the following sentence where all the “places of injustice” are listed (flea markets, forced evictions etc.). He engages in an interplay between the common sense (expressed through metaphors such as “we’ve been watching the same movie”) and the abstract level (“a different distribution of power is inevitable”) and consequently, adds up the meso level at which he implies that caring about *issues concerning the city we’re living, studying and working in* indeed means “doing politics”.

In Rochon’s terms, what discursively happens here is a classic example of *value conversion*, whereby “doing politics” becomes liberated from the negative connotation acquired in the past decades. Strangely enough, all social actors who have been seeking to change the rules of the political game (in the entire former Yugoslav region, generally speaking) have been accused by

[74] For more on the process of the post-socialist economic transformation see: Lazić 2011; for the overview of the phenomena related to the process of privatization specifically, see: Balunović 2015.

[75] Which reminds us on the famous proclamation by Martin Luther King: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”.

the very same mainstream political parties that degraded politics of harboring "political intentions". The aim of such accusation is no other than the degradation of their endeavors. In other words, what they (the political elites) say is that doing politics is bad, as long as someone else, apart from them, wants to do politics. The answer by the movement is clear: doing politics is not reserved only for those who have been doing it for decades in order to fulfill personal interests. To the contrary, the message is that politics we have is not the kind of politics we want. That is why "we want different politics". The added knowledge here deconstructs the narrative coming from the "political class" and its insistence on the professionalization of politics. Instead, the speaker argues that "doing politics" means caring for the city and the conditions we are living, studying and working in.

In the concluding words the activist uses metaphors. The one of "darkness and light" which stands for "us" and "them", gets concretized and contextualized and appears as a call for struggling "against the darkness of the unavailable health care and education"; "against the darkness of the sale of PKB"[76], etc. The strongest message comes in the end, in the form of a slogan with which most of NDB's public talks finish. When a speaker asks: "Whose city"; the answer that comes from the protestors is: "Our city". It is the "crowd" itself that closes the circle of communication and it is the people who shout the motto. It is the people who sum up what had previously been communicated to them by the speakers. It is the people themselves, in other words, who are reclaiming sovereignty.

4.3.3. Local Community: Local, or Community?

Clearly, the front running master frames of NDB rely upon two pillars: one is concerned with the concept of "public" and the other with the concept of "participation". "Public spaces" are in their focus, but "public resources" or "public services" follow up. "Participation" is in a close alliance with "democracy" and hence composes the overall emphasis on "participatory democracy". Supportive master-frames serve for widening the conceptual scope of the frontrunners. I have already gone through some of them (power, state etc.). Hereby, we are coming across another supportive master-frame which is closely attached to the socialist period. The column written by one of the core activists, published on the 28th of April 2014 in the daily newspapers "Danas" ("Today"), sheds light on the way in which the movement refers to the entire socialist heritage (more in conceptual than in political/ideological terms). The

[76] "PKB" is short from "Agricultural Combine Belgrade".

article addresses the *concept of self-management*, in the context of self-managing local communities, which was among the main pillars of Yugoslav socialism.

The writer starts with the reflection on the presidential elections and initially opens up the Pandora's Box of the relationship between voting and democracy. Voting is here perceived as an act of consent, a pure legitimizer of the already set political agenda. Imposition from above, rather than participation from below, appears as crucial in politics. Such practice is the main object of criticism in the article. Embracing a (conceptual) perspective of thinking of our everyday problems, the author claims, might lead us towards accepting an "inductive instead of deductive method of politics". In this case, the inductive method represents euphemism for the democratic participation that precedes elections, which means that voting should not be the only, or maybe not even the most important act of democratic participation. "Deciding about our destiny for the next five years in thirty seconds" (of voting) thus becomes a unique paradox of democracy, which reduces itself to elections.

From the macro perspective, the author shifts to the meso level of discourse. On the basis of the conceptual discussion analyzed above, he suggests a possible solution to the indicated paradox of "electoral democracy". The suggested direction of thinking goes straight to the socialist (Yugoslav) past, and includes the reinvention of the concept of self-managing local community (Serbian: *mesna zajednica*). The writer assumes that some people are familiar with this concept, but at the same time assumes that not so many, especially among youngsters, are familiar with its essence. This is why he engages in a further explanation in which he reminds the readers that "local communities represent the specific mode of self-management", typical of the time of self-managing socialism. The call for the reinvention of such an important concept from the storage of the socialist heritage, tells us about the relationship between this heritage and the counter-hegemonic tendencies in Belgrade. The way in which the concept is recalled and discursively used, nonetheless, points to the degree of carefulness. By picking a concept rather than the entire ideology of Yugoslav socialism, the movement leaves the space open for attaching different meanings to the usage of self-management. This concept is not recalled (only) because of its socialist connotation, but (also) because it is complementary with the overall discursive performance of the movement. All the paradoxes of (electoral) post-socialist democracy, including discontents with the lack of inclusion and participation in social and (especially) political processes (of decision-making), are indeed likely to be remedied by a solution that encourages participation. This comes as a logical common sense, rather than as an open claim about the superiority of socialism over post-socialism. The revival of self-management from the past does not play the role of a call for going back to the past. Rather, it calls for looking into the future while remembering and taking from the past what seems to be plausible for resolving current social and political problems and tensions.

The article also contains a section reserved for scientific discourse, in which the author communicates the results of the research conducted by the Center for Free Elections and Democracy. Its purpose is precisely to show the validity of the old socialist concept in present times, since the results show the "low level of trust and inclusion of the citizens" at the local level. From here, the activist further argues in favor of a top-down approach which is supposed to bring change at the "level of the desirability of shifting the delegation of responsibility to the lower levels of decision-making." Already in the following sentence, it is stressed that an *even bigger change* may come from the bottom up, in the form of change of the *consciousness of citizens and taking over the sense of real responsibility for their own lives.* Thereby he "admits" that, initially, incentives for a real change may come from the top, but emphasizes that a much more essential dimension of the desirable change must be set from the bottom up.

This is pretty much in accordance with the overall discourse of the movement. The article further on, emphasizes the necessity of a wider transformation of the relationship among the people themselves, as well as the power relations in general. Considering that these issues cannot be easily resolved, what is necessary is a wide social consensus about potential solutions suggested in this article. Clearly, the author is calling for consensus with respect to the suggested conceptual and practical solutions, mostly embodied in the concept of self-management of local communities. Before that, nonetheless, consensus is supposed to be reached at the level of diagnosis, hence at the macro (conceptual) level.

The concluding words, again, link the three pillars of knowledge conveyed by this article: presidential elections and their banality with respect to resolving the everyday (deeply rooted) problems (the micro level of discursive communication); change in the approach towards governance and transformation of the relationship between the citizens and the state (the macro level of discursive communication); and the emphasis on issues concerning local communities, the critique of the professionalization of politics, the call for self-management and the bottom-up approach (meso level of discursive communication).

4.4. Conclusion

It is time to conclude on the basis of the in-depth analysis of discursive divergences between the three movements along the three lines of contextual and structural differences presented in the table 1.1. *Firstly*, the focus was clearly on how discourses were organized at the macro (conceptual) level and on how a progressive critique of the post-socialist condition was built in the three similar but at the same time different national contexts. Within conceptual apparatuses, I spotted the difference between the front-running master-frames and supportive master-frames. From there, I was able to see how generic knowledge gets combined with a given micro context and how the meso level of discourse appears as a product of movements' "cognitive praxis". Divergences on both the macro and the meso levels of abstraction, at least partially, have something to do with the differences in *type of social movement, specific national context and direct circumstances related to the occurrence of these movements and their actions*.

In all the three cases certain master-frames came to the forefront of discourses, whereas others served as a backup. Starting from Belgrade, the front running master-frames were "commons", "public good", "participation" or "democracy" at the level of local communities. Municipal concepts could have ended up at the forefront of NDB's macro discourse due to both the specific type of movement and the specific national context. As to the movement's affiliation, NDB managed to catch the wave of municipal ideas and municipal social movements which had been spreading across Europe. The movement started its endeavors as a collective of several enthusiasts whose professional affiliation or personal (activist) interest relied on issues related to the "commons" and the like. No wonder that the macro level of discursive performance reflected this type of specific affiliation of the movements' activists. On the other hand, the occurrence of such a movement in Belgrade owed something to the national ideological context, as well. Serbia had gone through a sort of proliferation of ideological confusions in the 1990s, where the nationalist leader Slobodan Milošević was (self-) portrayed as an embodiment of the "(dark) communist rule".[77] The left-leaning ideas were usually demonized by equalizing former President Milošević with socialism. This is why the context of post-Milošević's Serbia was highly hostile towards any discourse which would directly refer or reproduce the socialist discourse. Moreover, municipalism could have represented a way out of the contextually driven division of society along the lines of binary opposition – pro or against the present "ruler", who has developed clear authoritarian tendencies in the past seven years.

[77] I call this situation a "Serbian ideological paradox". This phenomenon will be further elaborated in the next empirical chapter.

On the other hand, the front running master-frames of Zagreb's student movement reflected the influence of a different national context, as well as the difference in the type of social movement. Even though the specific accent was on "free education for all", concepts such as *(the rule of) capital* and *neoliberalism* were set as the dominant conceptual "satellites" placed around the main demand. Starting from a different context, one should firstly emphasize that the period of 2008/9, when the student movement occurred, were years when the concepts of *capital* or *neoliberalism* hit a peak in public attention due to the global economic crisis. This is why such master-frames could "land" more safely even in countries of post-socialism, despite their hostility towards any left-leaning (critical) ideas. Croatia, unlike Serbia, had not had a proliferation of ideological confusions, whatsoever. It was quite clear from the beginning that the right wing had taken over after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The only obstacle to the revival of critical discourses and ideas was the (dominantly) negative perception of the Yugoslav period, whereby the accent has primarily been on its political (identity) dimension (Yugoslavia has been perceived as "Serbo-Yugoslavia", hence dominated by the Serbs). Within such a context, master-frames like *neoliberalism* or *capital* could have possibly resonated with certain segments of society, under the condition that Yugoslavia stayed somewhat "out" as an explicit point of reference.

Secondly, the fact that it is a *student* movement that we are talking about, allowed for such (critical) ideas to be brought up much "easier" than for the majority of other social (and political) actors. The reasoning behind this claim is twofold. Firstly, student movements have had the tradition of operating with and within critical discourses, not only in Croatia but worldwide. They are usually more immune to attacks from the political mainstream. Publics are usually less likely to "buy" arguments such as "someone is paying them" and the like. Primarily, students are seen as voices of the youth, so that political messages coming from them are in a sort of privileged position. They cannot be so easily dismissed, in spite of their radical content. Secondly, student movements are more likely to develop such radical discourses due to their internal dynamics and the specific habitus of university (especially a Faculty of Philosophy and especially in Zagreb).

Finally, the discursive performance of the popular movement in Sarajevo rested upon the two front-running master-frames: *social justice* and *human dignity*. In this case, the most decisive factors were the limitations imposed by the national context, on the one hand, and the absence of a clear social base, on the other. Context-wise, Bosnia suffers from a dysfunctional state character. Its constitutional configuration (which divided the country into two entities, ten cantons, and one district with a special status), as well as the permanent perpetuation of ethnic tensions (primarily by the elites), have created enormous rigidity. This rigidity has mostly been reflected through a high level of structural resilience with respect to any sort of progressive change. Under such circumstances, every statement and every social or political action has to

be carefully communicated. Any move outside the ethno-national "box" in which Bosnia was put by its own constitution has proven to be nearly impossible.

The social and economic degradation that has followed from these structural shortcomings has, nonetheless, created a bit of a maneuvering space for critical discourses. The attempt was precisely to overcome, or circumvent the above-indicated structural obstacles and get out of the ethno-nationalist "cage". Alongside these front-running master-frames, one could also trace concepts such as *transition* (specifically *transitional theft*), corruption or nepotism which represent supportive master-frames. The intention was again clear: it is not about Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, but about the "winners and losers" of transition, about the human beings whose dignity has been violated by those who enjoy undeserved privileges.

When it comes to the concept of *social justice*, its discursive role could be assessed by referring to the specific type of social movement. The popular character of a movement usually carries both opportunities and dangers. Opportunities concern greater mobilization capacity which may overcome barriers typical for more narrowly set activist collectives. Dangers, on the other hand, come from the overly general character of such movements, which usually cannot fully benefit from the greater mobilization capacity, due to lack of a stable and clear social basis. Popular movements thus often suffer from overgeneralizations of discourse, which come from the vagueness of their social base. Concepts such as *social justice* may indeed resonate with a large portion of society. The trouble is that often one should take a step further if one wants to make both the social base and the discourse more solid and politically potent. In the case of Sarajevo, this was indeed tried. Structural obstacles however, turned out to be too strong.

Another way to look at the supportive master-frames is through the perspective of meso level of discourse. This means that, sometimes, the supportive conceptual apparatus could have been used as a bridge from the main pillars of macro discourse to the micro (contextual) features of a given society and the very "nature" of the movement. In that sense, the three cases showed three possible scenarios, depending on contextual and other abovementioned specificities. Starting from Sarajevo, the activists had to supplement the main discursive focus (expressed in the front-running master frames of social justice and human dignity) with demands such as "expert government". This was a direct response to the popular "anti-political" sentiment coming from a huge disappointment, which made citizens highly mistrustful towards the entire political elite. The combination of these two factors, the absence of a clear social base and the "anti-political" sentiment, brought the overall discourse to a certain contradiction between the supporting and front-running master-frames. This contradiction was embodied in the groundlessness of the relationship between dignity and social justice, on the

one hand, and the historically and recently proven inability of “expert governments” to inherit these kinds of values, on the other.

The supporting master-frames of NDB were more compatible with the front-running master-frames. Self-management, power, (occupied) state and the like indeed supplemented the conceptual essence of NDB’s discourse. The front-running master-frames were, on the one hand, clearly chosen in accordance with the type of social movement. NDB’s orientation towards municipalism and the emphasis on empowering local communities and the struggle for public space is clear. Yet, the reasoning behind the choice of supplementary concepts (such as self-management) has only partially to do with the type of movement and partially with the specific context of Serbia and its relationship with the socialist past. Even though the Yugoslav legacy has been demonized and to a large extent delegitimized, some of its (conceptual) elements have nonetheless remained unsoiled. In Yugoslav times, self-management was introduced as a conceptual response to the growing tendency of bureaucratization and divergence from the ideal of democratic socialism. As the “father” of the concept claimed, “the working masses which had once gained their right to decide for themselves through the national liberation struggle, were not ready to give up that right so easily and leave it to some new state bureaucracy” (Kardelj 1978, 17). Considering that Serbia has not become as hostile towards Yugoslav heritage as, for instance Croatia, such concepts which glorify participation and democracy (in both politics and economy) were suitable for the new municipalist tendencies. On the other hand, such concepts could resonate with the public if applied without a direct reference to the entire Yugoslav context. Self-management is undoubtedly “safer” as a supportive, than as front-running master-frame.

Zagreb’s student movement incorporated legal and human rights’ discourse within the set of supportive master-frames. At first sight, the legal discourse embodied in referring to the (Croatian) constitutional principles or the human rights discourse (which recalled the UN charter on human rights from 1948) do not fit the more radical and clearly anti-capitalist essence of the epistemic discourse. However, the supporting corpus of these concepts served for contextualizing the main conceptual pillars (of neoliberalism, capital and the like). It was a way of saying, “we also beat you on your own discursive field”. Conceptual inconsistences of the dominant transitional paradigm are thereby illuminated not only from the standpoint of the opposite discursive camp, but also from within the very dominant paradigm. A similar trend may be detected in the case of the use of concepts such as *learning society*. Playing the card of winning at “the enemy’s” field served for showing that the front-running master-frames were not out of touch with reality and that counter-hegemony should not be equalized with utopia. Through such a discursive maneuver, in the light of the misconceptions of the hegemonic concepts, the counter-hegemonic conceptual apparatus gains more solid and context-driven ground.

Here we come to the question of divergences with respect to the degree of state/police repression and the question of *triggers*. Apart from structural and contextual features, as well as the ones concerning the specific type of social movement, the presence or absence of direct triggers and the degree of repression could possibly turn out to be important for assessing differences in discursive performances. Why is this relevant? Micro, macro and meso levels of discourse revealed the extent to which movements had to react to concrete (micro) events, direct triggers for mobilization, or state/police repression before, during or after the protest events. These questions are important for assessing the proportion or balance between different levels of abstraction at which discourses were set. This assessment, on the other hand, should lead us towards a conclusion about the role of concepts (macro level of knowledge) in the overall discursive performance.

In the concrete case of Sarajevo, the factor of state/police repression evidently influenced the inner organization of the popular movement's discourse. The movement had to deal with arrests and police brutality after material damage had been done by the protestors. The discourse was hence full of immediate reactions and attempts to reframe the way in which the protestors' violence was portrayed by the state and the mainstream media. The case of Zagreb's student movement was somewhat different in this respect. The main activities took place at the university. Due to its autonomy, this is the last place where one should or could expect police repression. The discursive organization of messages communicated to the public was balanced, and it contained all the three levels of abstraction. Media releases were dedicated to the micro level (reactions to everyday accusations coming from numerous sides), whereas other documents (analyzed above) were clearly dominated by the macro and meso levels of discourse. The concepts were not, in other words, loaded with day-to-day issues but rather empowered and, in some cases, revived through references to commonsensical knowledge. They could thereby be set and used discursively without carrying too heavy a burden of micro-level "directives".

Belgrade's NDB, finally, fell somewhere in between Sarajevo and Zagreb in this regard. The peak of their protest activities followed the act of violence by the unknown group of people who secured the demolition of buildings in Belgrade's city center. The demolition was the trigger for mass mobilization, but also shaped, to an extent, the discourse of NDB afterwards. Unlike Sarajevo, nonetheless, there was more space for closer tying-up of the macro and micro levels of discourse. As for the violence, it had to be addressed through different discursive means than in Sarajevo. The crucial difference was that the violence committed in Belgrade was not carried out by the official police forces, but by the unknown masked civilians. This is why

the supportive set of master-frames in Belgrade included some less explicit[78] references to the rule of law.

Table 4.1: *Master Frames*

Social Movement	Zagreb	Sarajevo	Belgrade
Front-running Master Frames	(Rule of) capital; neoliberalism	Social justice; human dignity	Commons; public good; participation; democracy
Supportive Master – Frames	Human rights; legal discourse; learning society	Transition; corruption; nepotism	Self-management; power; (occupied) state

[78] Rule of law had already been degraded as a concept typical of the transitologist paradigm and had already become known as a (liberal) empty word.

Chapter 5: Activists and Critical Knowledge

Critical discursive "worlds" were not created by a "big bang". As we could see in the previous chapter, they surfaced under specific circumstances and sought to conduct a dialectical endeavor, both to resonate with given contexts and to launch a more tangible social change and transform these contexts. Except for various social and structural factors which shaped discourses, their content was also determined by direct inputs of those who happened to participate in the activist struggles.

The three contexts share the common Yugoslav heritage and the common post-socialist structural, social and economic condition. At the same time, they differ in many ways. Both similarities and differences shaped the newly awaken critical voices. Most of these voices were socialized in war and after-war conditions, surrounded and exposed to the dominant post-socialist narrative which created somewhat uniform image (in each of the national contexts) of the past, present and future. The anti-hegemonic critical perception of reality was developed along these three time references, which all interact and complement each other.

Firstly, whole post-socialist edifice was built on the established hegemony over meaning of the *past*. This comes as no surprise. Famous novelist Milan Kundera argued that "the only reason people want to be masters of the future is to change the past. They are fighting - he proceeds, for access to the laboratories where photographs are retouched and biographies and histories rewritten" (Kundera 1979, 22; In: Berardi 2015, 125). The one who "conquers" the past thereby comes to the position to legitimize its rule in the present, as well as its plans for the future. This is why counter-hegemonic reasoning has to deal with new tendencies embodied in historical revisionism. Secondly, *the present* is, as we could see in the subchapter on the post-socialist condition, usually legitimized as "transitory" and hence "necessarily painful" period. Present suffering, thus the narrative goes, should change the course taken by the socialist past, and lead towards a brighter future on the wings of free market economy and newly established nation states. The resistance, again, must follow the path of deconstruction of the narrative of necessity or inevitability of the present condition. Finally, *the future* is, according to the post-socialist paradigm, foreseen as "European", democratic and "modern". The critique thus, must also deconstruct the narrative of the "brighter future".

Now, the question is who the carrier of such critique became. One may rightfully wonder *who is an activist*[79] in the counter-hegemonic movements in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia

[79] "Who is an Activist" was the name of the conference organized by the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb in 2017. I owe this exact formulation of the question to the organizers of that conference, where I presented my (ongoing) work.

and Croatia and what are the sources and channels through which critical knowledge reaches them. In addition, it is very important to trace the social, cultural and structural factors that mediate and affect the process of the acquisition of critical knowledge at the level of individual activists. Along this research trajectory, it is important to discover what type of knowledge influences "cognitive maps" of activists and whether theory (still) plays an important role in challenging the *status quo*. In order to get to the essence of the relationship between ideas and activism, one should wonder if there is such theory that could be considered activist relevant and, consequently - "movement relevant" in the contemporary era.

Here, I am hence continuing the research journey by tracing the initial origins of the epistemic discursive content detected in the previous chapter. Digging into the origins of activists' "critical cognition" implies both the search for non-theoretical and theoretical knowledge that became essential in their cognitive maps. I wonder about the production of alternative visions of reality, along the three time frames, and, simultaneously, wonder about social factors that bring activists to the opposite side of what has been established as seemingly uncontested hegemony of "transitology". In the subchapter 5.1, I am dealing with the role of non-theoretical knowledge in cognitive development of the activists and wonder about the factors that had an effect on the development of counter-hegemonic worldviews and early-life value systems. In the subchapter 5.2, I am proceeding with the role that (critical) theoretical knowledge had in the process of further upgrading progressive worldviews (meaning that earlier acquired worldviews got their theoretical articulation) or transforming conservative ones.

5.1. Acquisition of Worldviews

As shown in the previous part on discursive performances, the hegemonic paradigm of transitional post-socialism produced tangible social and material consequences. Social disintegration, degradation of dignity and economic deprivation are, on a general level, something that former Yugoslav post-socialist condition brought to most people. However, the means of legitimation which included systemically propagated national, ethnic and religious hatred hindered the awareness about the real material condition of the majority.[80] Nonetheless, certain social mechanisms allowed the counter-hegemonic trajectory of thought to be paved in the case of minority within the deprived and dissatisfied majority. The most

[80] For a detailed study on the economic effects of transition in former Yugoslavia see for instance: Stambolieva and Dehnet 2011.

important factors that played a role in laying the foundation for more comprehensive critique of the post-socialist condition (as traced in the previous chapter) are, among others: belonging to the working class, progressive social habitus, subcultural influences, "ethnic otherness" and progressive family narratives. These factors affected the cognitive formation of activists cross-nationally, so the analysis is also following the cross-national trajectory.

The issue that is somewhat crosscutting all these factors is linked with memory. If the one who ruled over the past is capable of ruling over the present and the future, then the "battle" for meaning over the past is essential for changing the present and the future. The line that divides hegemony from counter-hegemony is, thus, the same line that divides collectivized (ruling) memory from individual (contesting) memory. For the purpose of this work, it should be emphasized that both individual and collective memory are subjected to reproduction, as well as transformation. In precise terms, the field of consideration here are individual memories which could have counter-weighted the hegemonic collective memory. Depending on the way one engages with others or depending on the type of social networks one engages in, memories may be, in various periods of life, individually processed in different ways and within "different systems of notions" (Halbwachs 1992, 47). The way one perceives memories, as argued by Bartlett (1932), depends on cultural and internal values and norms. This perception, again, has a direct impact on the way one perceives present and imagines the future. In Bartlett's schematic terms[81] this means that hegemonic reasoning usually employs memory through *assimilating*, whereas counter-hegemonic reasoning primarily resists assimilating through *sharpening*.

A very important set of insights presented in this chapter refer to the so called "activist biographies". Doug McAdam (1999) and many others before him researched from this perspective. This literature usually talks about "biographical impacts of activism", while looking at various aspects of "life after activism" or continuation of advocating certain (for instance, left) political attitudes, as well as activities in contemporary movements or other forms of political participation - or even – a number of divorced among the former activists of a single social movement (McAdam 1999, 121). In this research, I am indeed dealing with activist biographies – but with the specific focus on biographical impact upon "cognitive mapping" – rather than "activism" (in the sense of "incentives" for activism). I am looking at social dynamics and factors which have shaped activists' "cognitive maps" before they became members of social movements. Hence, I am looking at number of factors which could have enhanced critical perception of social reality (past, present) and alternative assessments of the (desirable) future.

[81] Bartlett's theory of reconstructed memory is based on the scheme that includes the following elements: a) leveling - which means simplifying memories; b) sharpening - which has to do with (over)emphasizing and highlighting details from the memory; and c) assimilating - which implies changing details from memory in order to fit what we learned in new situations (Bartlett 1932).

With help of these two theoretical notions I can proceed with the in-depth investigation of the very origins of (non-theoretical) counter-hegemonic reasoning within a given context, and discuss factors that affected this process in the three case studies in question.

5.1. Social class (direct experience), family narratives

There are different sociological understandings of the concept of class. Among the most significant theories are the ones from Max Weber on one side, and Karl Marx on the other. In his book "Understanding Class", Erik Olin Wright provides a typology of three general streams in literature on class. The first, he argues, "identifies class with the attributes and material conditions of the lives of individuals; the second focuses on the ways in which social positions give some people control over economic resources of various sorts while excluding others from access to those resources" (Weber's perspective)*;* and the third "identifies class, above all, with the ways in which economic positions give some people control over the lives and activities of others" (Marxian perspective) (Wright 2015, pp. 3,12).[82]

At first glance, it seems like the third, Marxian approach to class, is the most appropriate for assessing the relationship between class belonging and (counter-hegemonic) cognition in this work. In Marx, this link is famously called "class consciousness", which allows for the dominated (working class) to become aware of its subordinated position, transforming from "class in itself" to a "class for itself". As to the later, Lenin has become famous for arguing that the task of making proletariat "the class for itself" has to be delegated to the group of professional revolutionaries or the vanguard (party). My understanding of class, nonetheless, follows Wright who defines this concept as:

"(…) a way of talking about the connection between individual attributes and these material life conditions: class identifies those economically important attributes of people that shape their opportunities and choices in a market economy and thus their material conditions of life. Class should neither be identified simply with the individual attributes nor with the material conditions of life of people, but with the interconnections between these two." (*Ibid.,* 4)

[82]Wright further elaborates each of these three sociological approaches to class. He also labels them: the individual attributes approach (first); the opportunity-hoarding approach (second), and the domination and exploitation approach (third). See: Wright 2015, 1,15

There are also different traditions of putting labels on "classes". It is not irrelevant whether we use terms such as "working class" or "lower class"; or whether one uses the term "middle class" or favors "class dualism" typical for Marxian kind of division between proletariat and bourgeoisie. Nonetheless, in this discussion I am using the term working class (as in Marx) because I am talking about a class which shapes discussions about both socialism and post-socialism and is widely recognized as such in the field of my interest. In socialism, the working class was the main carrier of "revolutionary society", and in post-socialism the working class "has gone to heaven".[83] Simultaneously, I am combining this concept with the concept of middle class that stems from the Weberian theoretical heritage.[84]

Most of activists I had the chance to interview are coming either from the working class or, in some cases, from the (lower) middle class families.[85] Here, I am talking about the class structure in the 1980s and (in the case of older activists), 1970s. In 1990s, however, the former middle class declassed and "joined" the former working class in its impoverished social and economic material condition. The middle class almost disappeared.[86] Some of the activists I interviewed (especially in Sarajevo – six out of eleven interviewed) remember the late socialist times, while others have clearer reflection on the early post-socialist period. For instance, an interviewee coming from the suburbs of an industrial town in Bosnia testifies about hard living conditions during the late Yugoslav times:

"Before the war, my family belonged to the working class. Life wasn't easy – I remember my mom got her first washing machine in the 1990. I was a child but I was conscious of how difficult our life was, and how some people suffered more than others. This is the reason I always felt like I should protect the weaker." (Interviewee no. 20)

The working class in former Yugoslavia was not, of course, homogeneous in material terms. Washing machine was not a privilege, but it was not owned by every family. Bosnian, Macedonian or Kosovar working class stood lower on the social and economic scale than the ones in (north) Serbia, (urban) Croatia or Slovenia (see more in: Vojnić 1995, 78-81). Despite divergences between different Yugoslav republics different regions within single federal units or differences between urban and rural areas overall, what appears as a common denominator

[83] This is a song tittle from "Haustor", one of the most popular rock bands from the 1980s, from Zagreb.

[84] When I say "Weberian theoretical heritage, I refer to the "opportunity-hoarding mechanisms identify the central mechanism that differentiates "middle class" jobs from the broader working class by creating barriers that in one way or another restrict the supply of people for desirable employment. The key issue here is not mainly who is excluded, but simply the fact that there are mechanisms of exclusion that sustain the privileges of those in middle class positions." (see: Wright *ibid.,* 12)

[85] This means that none of the interviewees came either from the class of "red bourgeoisie" during socialism (politicians, directors of big companies and alike), or from the class of "nouveu riche", who were the only ones who were not working class (or underclass/lumpenproleteriat) in the early post-socialism.

[86] See more about the economic downturn in the 1980s and (especially) 1990s in: Bartlet 1996, 151-156

among those interviewees who remember socialism is a memory of minimum of social and economic protection socialism offered. Another interviewee from Bosnia and Herzegovina, this time from its capital, indicates:

"The old man was a typical socialist worker and my mother was a housewife. I was a typical socialist kid, like any other, at the time. You were in someone's care. You lived in a country where nothing bad could happen to you. You weren't hungry or thirsty. You knew that you would have a roof above your head." (Interviewee no. 21)

Social class as a potential factor in the process of construction of counter-hegemonic cognitive maps shows both its potential and limitations. With respect to the potential, difficult material conditions of the working class by the end of the socialist period could have brought a sense of solidarity and awareness, in relation to difficulties to which "working people" were exposed to. The post-socialist narrative advanced towards individualization of social and economic suffering, where every member of the community should struggle for itself, in order to achieve better material conditions of life. The situation was such that great majority of people remained on the social and economic margins. An activist from Belgrade:

"In Yugoslavia, we were a typical "military family". In the nineties we were really poor, and my father lost a lot of money because he was scammed. My mom lost her job and we survived by buying food in the local little store, without having to pay right away. Poverty marked an entire period of my life. What I also remember from the 1990s was that we were all in a similar situation. Others didn't have much more money…" (Interviewee no. 35)

Another potential of "class" comes from vivid memories of belonging to the working-class during socialism. In Sarajevo, most activists belonged to the generation older than their activist "colleagues" in Zagreb or Belgrade. Many of them were able to compare the two systems, socialism and post-socialism. Some of them had "only" basic social security (food, healthcare, housing, employed parents) in socialism, whereas others also remembered events such as holidays. The issue of holidays was insightful because, in the meanwhile, vacations became almost like a distant dream for the working class and "losers of transition". A kind of life that the working class had in certain parts of former Yugoslavia (mostly urban areas with the exception of the least developed areas of the country) appeared as similar to what is nowadays considered a decent middle-class life.

"At first, we lived with my father's parents and then in 1985 my mom got an apartment from the company she was working for. I lived there with my parents and my late brother. I fondly remember that period of life. We had a house on Brač, an island in Croatia. Every year, we would spend our summer holidays there." (Interviewee no. 17)

Some activists from Belgrade are old enough to have similar, almost identical memories:

"My childhood was marked by a memory and the experience of life in a system that was suddenly interrupted. Some things were taken for granted – you were Tito's Pioneer, you carried a flag with the red star. Every anniversary of Tito's death was announced with air-raid sirens, and I remember that they made us stand "at attention" in school. I once asked my grandfather what changed since then and he answered – everything. In 1996/1997 I was in high school when the protests [of students against Milošević] started. This is when I started thinking in more political terms. The protests were anti-government, and you could see that the government was doing bad things – there was no heating in schools, no buses, there was drama in our house. Then you started comparing present with the past, remembering that you went with your family to the seaside, to Dubrovnik, by plane. In the second grade of the elementary school we flew with our peers to the island of Brač in Croatia. You felt very intuitively that you're fighting against those who interrupted this kind of life and made this mess. " (Interviewee no. 27)

Serbian case shows that the notion of class may include influences of both proletarian material condition and rural environment within which this condition was portrayed. "Industrialized peasantry" could have thus, combined both material and non-material (discursive) conditions of the working class on one hand, and material and non-material conditions of life typical for rural environment, on the other. One of the activists from NDB says:

"I was exposed to the working-class milieu, because my father worked in a factory. I remember his colleagues coming to our home and singing folk songs and playing harmonica. Maybe this was a folk subculture of sorts. On the other hand, I grew up in the rural milieu, surrounded by industrial workers and poor peasantry. They were working in factories and, at home, they were working on fields. I think this environment significantly influenced my thinking, this lower-class milieu. " (Interviewee no. 30)

Limitations of class as an explanatory tool, crop up when we simply declare: if most of the population in former Yugoslavia belonged to the working class, a significant number to the low middle-class and majority in early post-socialism to the impoverished precarious "underclass", how come only a tiny minority ended up being on the track of progressive critical position with respect to the post-socialist reality? The answer can be found in the fact that belonging to the working class contained more than one *normative aspect*. Normative dimension of the working class in Yugoslavia was composed of historical background that discursively (and narratively) constructed it as a class in political terms. Working class in Yugoslavia was standing side-by-side with the Partisans, the carriers of the most important narrative about the anti-fascist struggle in the WWII. This narrative with two pillars, the working class and the Partisans, in both its official form and as private memories, had persisted several decades before it was contested by the

new (national) political elites. Whether or not a working class member had higher chances of developing counter-hegemonic perception of reality in post-socialism depended mostly of whether one safeguarded the "old" (Yugoslav) interpretation of the tight connection between the working class and anti-fascism. Majority among the working class members did not safeguard this image and this is why they could be used as material for voting and fighting in wars. Majority of activists nonetheless, came from the remaining minority among the working class, whose value systems remained similar to the ones dominating the socialist period. An activist from Zagreb:

"When you're coming from a working-class family, you're facing everyday routines and habits you don't recognize as "high philosophy". Solidarity, work, communities... The memory of self-management and the socialist system remained alive and strong after the dissolution of Yugoslavia." (Interviewee no. 5)

Narration about class belonging played a significant role in paving the road for critical perception of the post-socialist reality. In both Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav era, social class and the material condition typical for the working class could have been interpreted in a progressive, self-conscious manner. Does the fact that some Yugoslavs did not have a washing machine make the Yugoslav experience inferior to the present one? Was Yugoslavia only a nice dream about solidarity, brotherhood and unity of all its nations, which had to collapse under its own weight? Or quite the opposite – was it a good opportunity, especially for the working class, which got destroyed violently from above? What is the legacy of this state? What about the heritage of anti-fascism and multi-ethnicity? All these, and many other questions needed to be addressed after dissolution of Yugoslavia. In some cases, they were addressed within families. An activist from Sarajevo:

"My father was telling me about Yugoslavia, what kind of country it was, and what kind of society. It was my father who introduced me to the concept of class. I remember his stories about the period, right after the war just finished. I got back to these those concepts and stories ten of fifteen years after that, by myself - through readings and research." (Interviewee no. 16)

Establishing the rule over meaning with respect to the socialist past became extremely important, in the light of the events from the post-socialist period. On the other hand, the opposite tendencies of keeping memories of progressive achievements and the unfulfilled potential of this period alive became an obstacle to the new, post-socialist hegemonic narrative. Counter-hegemonic tendencies thus, became inseparable from a certain amount of awareness about progressive elements of the Yugoslav socialist legacy. Cultivating memory of the anti-fascist struggle in Yugoslavia is among its most important legacies. An interviewee from Sarajevo:

"The Partisan narrative is mediated through my family roots. My aunt was a very influential person in my life. I remember stories about her being in Partisans, how she was saving the wounded at Kozara.[87] All these details, very powerful and vivid, remained in my head." (Interviewee 25)

Interestingly enough, the battle of Kozara became a "victim" of historical revisionism when, mainly Serbian and Croatian nationalists, started dealing with it during the 1990s. Croatian nationalists were actively ignoring and neglecting the heritage of Kozara because pro-Nazi forces of then Independent State of Croatia (NDH) participated on the side of the German Nazis. On the other hand, Serbian nationalists changed the rhetoric and instead of the common resistance of the Yugoslav anti-fascist Partisan army, put an emphasis on the fact that majority of prisoners after the battle were Serbs who were taken to the notorious concentration camp Jasenovac in NDH. The new Serbian interpretation of this event spoke about genocide committed over Serbs (mostly by Croats, but together with Germans), rather than the anti-fascist heritage.[88] Here we can see the significance of the anti-nationalist (and hence anti-hegemonic) narratives and interpretations of certain events from the socialist and anti-fascist Yugoslav past. The link between anti-hegemonic tendencies and the socialist legacy (of anti-fascism, in this case) was very tight because the link between new post-socialist hegemonic paradigm and historical revisionism was unbreakable. Legacy of the anti-fascist struggle in WWII was sometimes, indeed, overemphasized in the socialist era. However, this struggle was purposefully forgotten or turned upside down by the official power holders in the 1990s. The rule over meaning of these historical events fell into the hands of nationalists. Their rule nonetheless, never became absolute. Parts of the unconquered social fabric have persisted. Many present-day activists come from these, unconquered "corners":

"In 2014, when the police was beating up the generation of my students, I couldn't be anywhere else but in the first rows. I was shaped, in that real sense, by the narrative from Kragujevac and the behavior of the teachers whose pupils were taken to be shot by the Nazis[89]. I still remember very well, the partisan movies and Yugoslav post-war cinematography, although I later developed a critical standpoint with that respect. Despite some exaggerations

[87] Kozara battle was held in Jun 1942, in northwestern Bosnia. It was one of the greatest battles between Yugoslav Partisans on one side and German and Croatian Nazi troops (Ustaše) on the other.

[88] See more about the nationalist narratives on Kozara battle in: Zulumović D. and Šahović Dž. 2015; in: Sorensen M. and Viejo-Rose D. 2015, 223.

[89] As a revenge for the organized resistance (launched officially in July 1941), the Nazi occupation troops undertook a mass scale killing of civilians in the two Serbian cities, Kragujevac and Kraljevo. Around 2300 people were massacred, among them pupils of the gymnasium in Kragujevac. The most striking story from this tragic event, being retold repeatedly in history books in Serbia, is about the teacher who hugged one of his pupils just before the shooting and said: "Shoot, I'm still holding my lecture here".

in those movies, no one can deny that, for instance, nurses in Sutjeska[90] stayed with their wounded comrades, despite knowing they are most probably going to die there." (*ibid.*)

Among activists in Sarajevo (and partially Belgrade), there were people whose experience of socialism was based on more direct, "live" memories, rather than tales from childhood. This allowed them to compare the two periods of life, one they experienced in their youth (and childhood) in socialism and the other in their mature years, under post-socialism. An activist from Sarajevo:

"Some fifteen years ago I finally shaped my clear and strong standpoint – by that time, I didn't have one. Then I started to feel this big injustice within the society. People did not have the same possibilities in this newly constructed system. I started comparing the two systems I lived in and realized that the older one was much more just. Social differences also existed in socialism, of course – but they did not affect social dynamics, friendships and social interaction to the extent they do today." (Interviewee no. 18)

Apart from the experience of socialism, the experience of belonging to the impoverished working class (or underclass) in post-socialism also played a significant role. It came as an upgrade of belonging to the working class and exposure to the progressive narratives beforehand. Tangible consequences of the new post-socialist reality were, at first, more visible in smaller towns and former industrial centers. This is where they were observable better than in highly urbanized areas such as Belgrade. The effects were both symbolic and discursive on the one hand and quite material on the other. Serbian industry was collapsing under the weight of its government's engagement in wars in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo, as well as the economic sanctions and later, privatizations of the late 1990s and (especially) 2000s. Therefore, the industry collapsed because the paradigm changed from above. It came almost as a price that had to be paid for "national liberation".[91] The micro level of social relations started changing alongside, and to a certain extent, as a consequence of disintegrated economy. New social rules were about to be established and new class configurations set. An activist from Belgrade:

"The city of Šabac was the best mirror image of the collapse of socialism. The chemical plant that was feeding the whole city collapsed and the narrative behind its collapse was that it was the fault of the incompetent communists. Communists, with Milošević as their leader, were also accused of the failure to safeguard Yugoslavia. In the 1990s, the big bourgeoisie was rising and that rise was happening on the ruins of socialism. This was visible through the example of the class structure among pupils. Children from villages became different from city children. Everything related to the partisan movement and socialism was brutally erased and Šabac

[90] The battle on Sutjeska is another well know battle in WWII (May-Jun 1943).
[91] See more on the conceptual paradox of "national liberation" in: Balunović 2014.

became one of the most radical examples of erasing the socialist past. Not a single Partisan street name remained. The city got a new identity. That identity wasn't close either to the spirit of my elementary social habitus of "healthy rural intelligence" or to the subculture I was slowly becoming part of." (Interviewee no. 30)

Similar trend is detected among activists in Zagreb. This pattern appears to be somewhat correlated to the process of disappearance of the working class from the social and political radar – especially in industrialized areas. Some activists coming from industrial cities witnessed the process of privatization and (consequent) disappearance of workplaces, destruction of factories and extinguishment of entire industrial branches. Consequences of transition appeared more tangible and discernible in such places, making their inhabitants live witnesses of their own pauperization, material and social degradation of an entire class, including their families. The city of Sinj, situated in the mainland of Croatian region Dalmatia, is one of such areas. An activist from Zagreb:

"In the city of Sinj where I come from, there was a factory called "Dalmatinka", where most of my family members were employed. This is why I was so attached to it. The employees were mostly women and they were the ones who contributed the most to the development of that region. This was very important to me. Dissolution of the system happened along with the privatization process and this is why the breakdown of Yugoslavia in my eyes, was more important as an economic, than an identity-related moment. This is, I think, the difference between older activists and our generation. They were paying more attention to human rights in the context of war, whereas our generation takes off from the perspective of economy where most injustices happened (…) Generally speaking, I think that our early worldview background is marked by the economic dissolution of Yugoslavia." (Interviewee no. 3)

Social image was, generally speaking, worsened by the increase of unemployment and loss of many social benefits for the majority. The perceived exposure to the consequences of transition in industrial areas could have not affected activists as isolated from the wider context that, among other features, includes the experience of war. A topic that became extremely sensitive was the issue of socio-economic conditions of the former fighters in war. Again, this is highly symptomatic when it comes to the position of the former working class that also served as "cannon fodder" during warfare. An activist from Zagreb:

"I come from Sisak, a town that used to be one of the biggest industrial centers in former Yugoslavia, with strong iron and steel industry, petrochemical plant and chemical industry in general. I witnessed the mass scale disappearance of workplaces in my town. I also witnessed the situation with the war veterans, like my old man, who was retired at the age of

40 and never got reemployed. He suffered from PTSD[92] and was never socially reintegrated again, nor did he benefit from any social help, whatsoever." (Interviewee no. 11)

Being socialized as a working-class member eventually turned out to be (almost) a necessary but not a sufficient condition when it comes to a critical direction of cognitive mapping. As history proved many times before, working class does not always choose the progressive side in periods of political/economic crises. This tendency (or empirical evidence from history) goes against the two most important theoreticians of class – Marx and Weber – who thought that big transformations increase chances for reaching, what Weber called, "naked class situation."[93] To the contrary, "naked class situation" proved to be "kept at bay" after the big transformation from socialism to post-socialism. Anyhow, while Marx and Weber theorized about the relationship between class belonging and social action, my intention here is to assess the relevance of class with respect to development of certain cognitive capacity for critical perception of, concretely, post-socialist condition.

In sum, the social class does not necessarily determine the direction of cognitive development *per se*. It certainly has an influence, given the shared material and social characteristics among its members. Class, nonetheless, needs a political or other sort of "push", in order to become a factor (or an actor) in this process. When I say "other", I mostly refer to narratives that shape the perception of an experience or a memory. Certain progressive narratives and "frames" of memories and experiences are, on the other hand, undoubtedly more likely to be attached to the working class – more so than any other. Narratives cannot simply compensate real experience, while the experience itself (or memory of it) based on material condition typical for a given social class, may be used as an object of numerous interpretations. This tight nexus between material conditions and "the story behind them" seems to be crucial for taking the issue of class as a factor in the formation of counter-hegemonic cognitive map. For instance, combination between belonging to the working class in material terms, and middle class in intellectual terms could have formed an appropriate illustration of this nexus between material and ideational dimension. An activist from Belgrade:

"I come from a working-class neighborhood. Families of my friends were also working-class families. My father was working for Serbian National Television and my mom was a

[92] PTSD is short from "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder"

[93] "Naked class situation" in Weber stands for the situation in which other indicators such as social status matter less than class, in the analysis of social stratification. Weber: "When the bases of the acquisition and distribution of goods are relatively stable, stratification by status is favored. Every technological repercussion and economic transformation threatens stratification by status and pushes the class situation into the foreground. Epochs and countries in which the naked class situation is of predominant significance are regularly the periods of technical and economic transformations." *(*Weber 1978, 938*;* In: Wright 2015, 40)

teacher in school. There were lots of books in the house, so the atmosphere was a bit more intellectual. At some point my parents' jobs became less paid than physical jobs (…) I remember, nonetheless, a situation in which my father managed to earn a bit more money. It was my birthday and he bought me a bit more expensive present. A friend of mine, who was with me when my father gave me that present, had that class-driven sigh, as if I'm leaving the flock. Anyway, my class origin is therefore proletarian in economic and middle class in intellectual sense." (Interviewee no. 33)

(Family) narratives could have "objectified" the experience (of socialism or material conditions of living), meaning that personal experience could have been taken as representative for building a general image about the world from it. This path of perceiving reality in accordance with the subjective, personal experience is, nonetheless, not detectable in all cases. Other activists, who shared the same material conditions of living, gained more tangible interpretations of class belonging through specific subcultural milieus, or factors typical for social habitus with exceptional characteristics. One sort of "upgrade", of course, does not exclude the other. In some cases, they intersect. For instance, the factor of social class could be intersected with the issue of "ethnic otherness" and the feeling of double subordination, the one being related to class and the other to ethnicity or religion. The early experience of marginality, disadvantige and discrimination in such cases could lead to later politicization of the feeling of subordination. The roots of that resistance are often found in subcultural or other (narational) influences which helped out in the process of interpretation of the early life discriminatory experiences. An interviewee from Zagreb who grew up under conditions typical for Yugoslav gastarbeiter[94] diaspora:

"I experienced the hierarchical structure of the society (...) in a small town in Bavaria. I knew that my position was at the bottom of this hierarchy. Throughout early childhood, mimicry and hiding prevailed, but during adolescence this strategy transformed into a sort of rebellion and pride, readiness to get into conflict (…) I was a foreigner and as such, one has to feel a sort of harassment which is happening every day (…)" (Interviewee no. 12)

Undoubtedly, early experiences of subordination, harassment and feeling of "otherness", may possibly lead to more than one direction in the adolescence and the adult life. Same as belonging to the poorest and the most disadvantaged social class, this factor's insightfulness depends on its combination with other factors. In most cases, the combination has to do with both social class and subcultural factors. Sometimes these two, or one of these two, were

[94] "The concept of *Gastarbeiter* (Guest-worker, *Gastarbajter* in Serbo-Croatian, pl. *Gastarbajteri*) arose first in the discourse of political economy (in Federal Republic of Germany during the 1950s) and later it entered other disciplines of social sciences and popular culture. It refers to temporary work migrants coming to West Germany (F.R.G., and later to other booming countries) as a "reserve army of labour" (K. Marx) supposed to return in the home country after accomplishing their purpose." Daniel 2007, 293.

combined with (ethnic/national/religious) "otherness". In the following subchapter I am elaborating the significance of this factor in the formation of counter-hegemonic cognitive maps.

5.2. The Issue of Identity and Feeling of "Otherness"

The end of the "short 20th century" as Eric Hobsbawm (1994) labeled the period between 1914 and 1989, announced not only the defeat of "old ideological divisions", and the end of the "Cold War", but also the triumph of identity over class,[95] capitalism over socialism and, consequently, neoliberalism over (welfare) social democracy. The winning amalgam of xenophobia and identity politics (Hobsbawm 1994, 567) and proliferation of the number of states came about as byproduct of this tendency. Ethnic, national and religious identities prevailed and practically swamped other dimensions of political and social life. Simultaneously, while identity became the focal point of political and social division, neoliberal economy was presented as *"*the solution*"* for the upcoming or newly developed identity-based discontents. Nonetheless, neoliberalism sneaked into the post-socialist space, almost "like a thief in broad daylight*"* (Žižek 2018)*,* alongside with ethno-nationalist and *"ur-fascist" (Eco 1995)* tendencies*.* These tendencies in the former Yugoslavia gave rise to the creation of national/ethnic identity-driven "prototypes", which should have provided a clear-cut division between ethno-national and religious identities along which the former state had dissolved. A slight conceptual problem was the fact that people who could/should have been labeled as "Orthodox Serbs" or "Catholic Croats", for instance, shared not only the same neighborhoods and cities/villages, but also family houses, rooms and, indeed, beds. *Ethnic/national/religious "otherness"* under given circumstances, became a latent reservoir for opposite, or counter-hegemonic ideational tendencies. For instance, children from "mixed" families (nine out of thirty nine interviewed in all three countries) could not fit any of the newly established (ethnic/national/religious) identities and were excluded from the dominant distribution of identity-based "roles". An activist from Sarajevo testifies how such "alien" position looked like in practice:

[95] Under "identity politics" I mean "political beliefs and systems that place a lot of importance on the group to which people see themselves as belonging to, especially according to their race, gender (whether they are male or female), or sexual orientation (whether they prefer to have sexual relationships with people of the same or a different gender" (Cambridge dictionary); as well as ethnicity, nation or religion (see more also in Hobsbawm 1994).

"I lived in Mostar, in the Western side, as a child from a mixed marriage. From today's perspective growing up during the war, in the western side of town, felt like I was growing up in Warsaw's ghetto. I was wounded by a Muslim grenade and at the same time, my father was captured and spent a year and a half in the Croatian concentration camp [fighting on the side of Bosnian Muslims]. My sister found herself in Sarajevo when the war started. She had been studying there before, and she couldn't get out afterward. In a way, these circumstances determined my worldview and caused my refusal to get along with any of the three versions of the dominant ethno-nationalist narrative." (Interviewee no. 16)

Mixed marriages indeed represented a sort of conceptual puzzle for ethno-nationalism. Division between "us" and "them" would have been much clearer if there were not for those who could have been both, "ours" and "theirs", but neither "ours" nor "theirs". Mixed marriages stayed in the middle of the ethno-nationalist conceptual gap. Bosnia and Herzegovina was always famous for the biggest number of mixed marriages in former Yugoslavia, due to its remarkable degree of ethnic and religious diversity. This fact did not do much to prevent four years of bloodshed in the early 1990s, but it eventually reappeared as relevant in the post-war context in which divisions along ethnic and religious lines should have been reproduced or - contested:

"Certainly, an important role in what I've become politically was due to a "mixed marriage" of my parents. This background caused a lack of possibility of having accentuated national identity. I'm coming from a Muslim-Croatian marriage, but majority of my friends were, as it turned out, Serbs." (Interviewee no. 18)

Mixed marriages represented a "pebble in the shoe" for the new nationalist project which was conducted in different states, following a similar scenario. By the same token, mixed marriages were one of the cornerstones of possibility to resist and safeguard at least minimum capacity to remain human, under inhumane conditions. In some cases, initial identity confusion and sense of non-belonging was often replaced by rejection of the new national/ethnic identities because these identities were by definition exclusive. Belonging to the Serbian, Croatian or other group was, in other words, formulated in positive and negative terms. Derridian notion of "constitutive outside"[96] allowed this "outside" to persist in the newly established identities as a point of differentiation. Hence, definition of who are "we" always includes the reference to "them", who serve us to define "ourselves" better. It was conceptual, but also a practical problem one could find itself in, when "Croatianism" and "Serbism", for instance, stood side by side within one's family. Conceptual gap thereby could have opened a

[96] "The outside bears with the inside a relationship that is, as usual, anything but simple exteriority. The meaning of the outside was always present within the inside (…)" Derrida 1988, 35.

possibility for alternative perception of reality and formation of counter-hegemonic cognitive map in the future. An interviewee from Belgrade:

"I come from a mixed marriage. I was born in the city of Subotica[97], in a working-class community, to which my parents also belonged. They were both Yugoslavs and my first identification was Yugoslav as well (…) my father is half-Hungarian and half-Croat. My mom is of Czech, German and Serbian origin. I remember dissolution of Yugoslavia through an anecdote – a man on the street asked me who I was and I replied "I'm Yugoslav". Then he replied: "It doesn't exist anymore" (…) I grew up like a little kid from "La vita e bella". I knew we were ethnically mixed, and I knew we were Yugoslavs (…) after the war I accepted this new identity of being "mixed". In my class majority was also coming from mixed marriages, so all those who were ethnically "clean" thought of this "cleanliness" as something odd." (Interviewee no. 36)

Belgrade, as the former capital of Yugoslavia, always had an image of an "open city". Not so much for its cosmopolitanism, as much for its size – one could "survive" as an "ethnic other" much easier in Belgrade than in most other places in former Yugoslavia (apart from cities such as Rijeka or Tuzla that always nurtured cosmopolitan spirit). Nonetheless, it was always exceptionally difficult, much more than being a Muslim or a Croat, to be an Albanian in Belgrade. Harshness of the relationship between Serbs and (Kosovo) Albanians often produced very tangible and frequent experiences of discrimination and feeling of subordination. Here is a testimony of one of the activists from Belgrade, illustrating such experience:

"I was born in a "mixed" family of a Serbian mother and a Kosovo Albanian father. From early childhood I was taught not to give importance to ethnic divisions. The second important fact coming from my mixed ethnic origin was that, as a family, we were exposed to discrimination as long as I can remember. You could feel it everywhere – in the neighborhood, in school, at work, in medical institutions (…) When my father died in 1992, these ethnic differences started dividing the family. I remember the 1990s as a period when I didn't have a sense of belonging, I felt alienated and unable to establish any kind of contact. Many people around me found even my presence problematic. At the time I didn't see myself as a victim. I thought it was my fault because I internalized the "guilt" that was externally projected upon me." (Interviewee no. 28)

Croatian case shows similar patterns. Unlike Serbia where the "ethnic other" could have been Muslim, Croatian or Albanian – in Croatia the main "constitutive outsider" was the "Serb".[98] In some cases, Serbian identity in Croatia, in a rather strange manner, appeared not

[97] Subotica is the city on the Serbo-Hungarian border, in the north of Vojvodina, a Serbian autonomous region. This entire region was always ethnically diverse.

[98] Potentially, this place could have also been occupied by the "Yugoslav", but this signifier was in a direct connection to the Serbian "threat" – hence understood as euphemism for "grater Serbian project". For a while, the

only as the antipode of xenophobic Croatian nationalism – but also of xenophobic nationalism in general (including Serbian as portrayed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia). This "identity" position is formed under specific circumstances and could have led to the formation of later (progressive) cognitive development only under these circumstances and in combination with other social factors. Among the most important ones was the fact that Serbian national identity in Croatia often included a strong reference to the anti-fascist heritage of Yugoslavia.[99] An interviewee from Zagreb:

"My mom was Serbian and my father was insisting on his Croatianism. That was the situation in which you could have become a nationalist or not, since my mom was strongly opposing nationalism (...) by saying that I'm a Serb I sought to build a position of resistance in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This meant anti-nationalist resistance, anti-HDZ[100], and anti-establishment." (Interviewee no 11)

A similar phenomenon was detected in Sarajevo. The essence of Serbian nationalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina was "outsourced" from the Bosnian capital to other parts of the country (that today fall under territorial unit/entity of Republika Srpska). When talking about Serbs who stayed in Sarajevo during the whole war period, one should mention that their position became very complex during and after it. The longest siege[101] in modern history was held by the forces of Bosnian Serbs. Numerous Sarajevo Serbs fled the city. Some took arms and joined the army of Bosnian Serbs and some (though not so many) joined the official Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This army was assembled mostly of Bosnian Muslims (and a certain number of Serbs and Croats) and its chief commander was the first Bosnian president and the leader of Bosnian Muslims Alija Izetbegović. Under such circumstances, the narrative of united and multiethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina, for all its nations, promoted by president Izetbegović, made Serbs who stayed in Sarajevo also the victims of (the army of) Bosnian Serbs who held the city under siege. The "ethnic otherness" in Sarajevo was thereby, at least in theory, resolved. Those who stayed in Sarajevo, regardless of their ethnicity, should have been the victims. Nonetheless, at the level of everyday social relations, things did not function as well. An activist from Sarajevo:

"Before the war started, I considered Yugoslavia my country and we lived as Yugoslavs, even though the family was ethnically Serbian. I was therefore raised as a little Yugoslav. When

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Bosnian Muslims were also targeted as enemies, but mainly outside Croatia (while Bosnian Croats were in conflict with Bosnian Muslims in Bosnia from Jun 1992 until February 1994).

[99] The fact that the Serbian National Council (SNV) in Croatia keeps insisting on anti-fascism as the most important value in post-socialism, confirms this statement. Probably the most progressive weekly magazine in the entire region, "Novosti" (issued by the Council), talk in favor of this judgment.

[100] HDZ is short from 'Croatian Democratic Community", the political party being the main carrier of Croatian political nationalism since the 1990s until nowadays.

[101] The siege lasted for 45 months or 1450 days, from the 6th of April 1992 until the 19th of March 1996.

the war began we found ourselves in Sarajevo which was bombed every single day. Two months after, my brother got killed by a grenade from Trebević.[102] All of a sudden, kids in school started calling me a Serb and Četnik.[103] This was a very dramatic experience for me. I was constantly wondering, why was being a Serb more important that the fact that my brother got killed the day before and that my father was "on the first lines" [fighting for the army of Bosnia and Herzegovina]?" (Interviewee no. 17)

This activist was, moreover, forced to identify himself as a Serb against his will and against the way he was raised. "I was never told to consider myself a Serb, I only knew about my country called Yugoslavia and us being Yugoslavs. I've never felt any connection to the identity they have imposed upon me", he testifies. This forced identification had initially confused him with respect to his self-perception (during the war). After the war, it imposed an uncomfortable obligation of belonging to the group he never identified with. According to his own testimony, the experience of what ethnic division in Bosnia meant in practice, made him reject not only the imposed Serbian identity, but the whole logic of "counting and classifying" along ethnic lines. Under such circumstances, "ethnic otherness" could have indeed motivated nationalist reaction (meaning developing Serbian/Croatian/Bosniak nationalist sentiment, making one ethnic group subordinated to other(s)). However, in this case it was anti-nationalism (being against every nationalism) that prevailed. Why? In addition to the one detected in Croatia (which is anti-fascist affiliation), there are two more important intervening factors in Bosnia. First, the interviewee's family decision to stay in Sarajevo during and after the war was important (instead of fleeing to Serbia or other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina controlled by the Serbian Army). Second, family's atheist background played an important role. Even in the absence of explicit family narratives, new circumstances of war and post-war Bosnian society made atheism to be among decisive factors of counter-hegemonic cognitive development:

"My family is not religious, even though Christmas, Easter and the Patron Saint Day (Serbian: "slava") are respected as traditional heritage. The holy icon was also always present. Yet, as a kid I never went to church. No member of my family was baptized. The explicit socialist narrative was not present either. My family habitus was comfortable, without emphasized communist-socialist dimension, without clearer normative stances. The war brings novelty in the way we see ourselves. The whole set of social relations was changed" (*ibid*.).

[102] Trebević is a mountain nearby Sarajevo and was a stronghold of the (Bosnian) Serb's forces.

[103] The members of the army of Bosnian Serbs (and paramilitary groups) were colloquially called "Četniks" (In Serbian "Četnici"). Originialy, the Četniks were members of the Serbian monarhist, royal army who faught against the Yugoslav partisans by collaborating with the nazi-fascist occupators in the WWII (with the exception of the very beggining of the war). Thereby, the Serbs as an ethnic group shoul have been protected from discrimination because of what other Serbs were doing in their name.

The issue of religion in Bosnia during and after the war unquestionably occupied an important place as a determinant of social dynamics and positioning. Hence, it played a certain role in counter-hegemonic positioning of the activists as well. When I use the word "religion", I mean a certain relationship one developed with it. The reason why this relationship appears as important for my research is the fact that Bosnia is by its constitution compound of three (constitutive) ethnic groups which, almost exclusively (in practice) correspond to the three different religious identities. Therefore, the importance of atheism was also confirmed by several other interviewees. Some emphasized the importance of their ancestors, who "broke off with religion", whereas others found their atheist heritage to be among the key factors for rejecting religiously based ethnic divisions. "When they say, "us Muslims" or "us Bosniaks", in spite of the fact I share the same trench with them, I do not unite with them along those lines", said an interviewee (no. 18) from Sarajevo.

Potential emancipatory role of ethnic/national/religious "otherness" was more likely to develop in less "contaminated" areas of former Yugoslavia. The city of Rijeka, for instance, as the biggest city in the Kvarner region of Croatia, never embraced nationalist narrative, which was the case in most Dalmatian and other Croatian cities. Activists coming from such places could have expressed their ethnic "otherness" more openly and thereby frame it as a sign of resistance, rather than counter-nationalism (this time Serbian). Interviewee from Zagreb, originally coming from Rijeka, testifies:

"(…) my parents are communists, the working class. They have never been official members of the Communist party, but they were always a part of socialist and workers' organizations. When the war began, the fact that they were both ethnic Serbs became important. At that time, I was already "the other". They were very proud Serbs and they asked me to keep on saying to everyone that I'm a Serb. They told me, "Please, you have to". That was maybe the moment of impudence (…)" (Interviewee no. 2)

Among crucial factors for developing and/or tracing a solid path of counter-hegemonic perception of the post-socialist reality were progressive subcultural and/or social influences. As mentioned above, some activists happened to grow up in social environments that were never "infected" by strong ethno-nationalism. Still, some of them became parts of a specific subcultural milieu which significantly influenced development of critical "cognitive mapping". This is the focus of the following subchapter.

5.3. Progressive social/subcultural habitus

The concept of (social) habitus is, so far, most accurately developed by Pierre Bourdieu. In Bourdieu's words, habitus represents "the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produced practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus" (Bourdieu 1977, 78). In his understanding therefore, habitus has to do with the process of internalization of beliefs, perceptions and consequently, behaviors "that individuals carry with them and which, in part, are translated into the practices they transfer to and from the social spaces in which they interact" (Costa and Murphy 2015, 3). Often, the concept of habitus is used as a (central) reference to sociological studies that seek to cover deviances in social perceptions and behavior. Criminology, for instance, uses this concept in order to explain "individual motivations that underpinned the actions of the "juvenile delinquent" (France 2015, 74; in: Costa and Murphy 2015). What is deviant and what is not, however, is often perceived as a dichotomy between the "ruling commonsense" on one side, and the non-commonsense, on the other. As I already elaborated in the theoretical chapter, hegemonic discourses almost by definition see counter-hegemonic tendencies as deviant. If this is so, the endeavor of tracing the origins of such "deviances", meaning the acquisition of counter-hegemonic "cognitive inputs" which happen to be on the "other side" of the dominant paradigm, could be conveniently assessed through the notion of (Bourdieu's) habitus.

Considering three case studies, what appears as relevant for the activists' worldview formation, are two kinds of cultural/subcultural milieus: punk and wider social (urban) habitus. In addition, one should emphasize the influence of subversive periodic press, which happened to create less "observable" but very relevant and specific habitus for developing attitudes among its audience. In Croatia, for instance, during the war and after, two main critical and anti-nationalist publications were magazines "Feral Tribune" and "Arkzin". More than a few interviewees stressed the importance of these two magazines for their pre-theoretical formative period. The very practice of reading these magazines was described by the activists as the *moment of rebellion,* in which one was consciously excluding itself from the community. Some of them came from families whose older members were friends with the "Feral" journalists, whereas others described these magazines as "witty and critical literature". Their importance was even greater for the counter-hegemonic discourse because the city of Split, where "Tribune Feral" was published, was the location of one of the most disreputable concentration camps for Serbs during the war ("Lora"). This enabled some very conservative

towns in Dalmatia (the region to which Split belongs) to have an access to anti-Tuđman critical press.

Sarajevo had its own specific "war-story" and its specific context. The most popular and most progressive weekly publication was called "Dani" ("Days"). However, none of the activists emphasized the role of this magazine for their early worldview formation. Instead, one of the interviewees stressed the role that the daily newspapers "Oslobođenje" ("Liberation") had for her cognitive development. In her case, it was not about the content itself, but the inner organization of the collective that functioned (in Yugoslav times) as a typical self-managing company:

"The atmosphere within the editorial staff of daily newspaper "Liberation", where my mom was working, probably had an effect on me. In the 1980s, the employees were quite free and liberal. "Liberation" was the first newspaper in former Yugoslavia where journalists could vote and choose their editor-in-chief. As a kid I was spending a lot of time with the editorial staff of "Liberation", absorbing the way those people were thinking and doing things." (Interviewee no. 23)

In Serbia, the headstone of the progressive social habitus was not developed around any newspaper or magazine. There were, especially in the late 1990s, some anti-war and anti-Milošević magazines (such as "Nedeljni Telegraf[104]), but these were not as influential and effective as Arkzin or Feral Tribune in Croatia. Belgrade yet, had a culturally specific urban life inherited from the 1980s Yugoslav punk-rock and the "New Wave" scene. Even though the post-conflict developments left counter-hegemonic sections of social and cultural life in Serbia in traces, these traces could partially be found in public life of urban centers such as Belgrade, and partially in rare everyday social bonds which could have offered a different set of cultural and political value systems:

"As teenagers we had a friend in our neighborhood that had a punk band. In his room you could find huge posters of the punk rock groups such as "Disciplina kičme". Whenever we would bump into a group of older punk rockers, they would ask us what kind of music we listen to. Then someone among us would name a band and punkers would slap them and say: "You cannot listen to this music, they are Nazis". These guys helped us learn about punk music. In the late 1990s and early 2000s I was into Clash and Joe Strummer, Stiff Little Fingers, etc. This music unequivocally inclined to the left, but I became aware of this during my later years" (Interviewee no. 35).

[104] Editor-in-chief of this magazine, Slavko Ćuruvija, was assassinated in front of his house in April 1999 (so, before the fall of Milošević which took place in October 2000).

Period between 2000 and the beginning of the global economic crisis (2007/2008) was the least inspiring for subcultural and other counter-hegemonic content in Serbia. The public discourse was divided between nationalists and "civic" reformers. The latter group was led by then Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić, who was the leader of one of the biggest oppositional party in the 1990s (Democratic Party) and was commonly called the "first democratically elected prime minister". The Serbian "post-socialism" discursively started only with Đinđić, since Milošević was percieved by the civic and the nationalist opposition to be the sucsessor of socialism. Furthermore, Milošević did his best to show himself as a socialist, in spite of his obvious and well-known nationalism. The first two years of Đinđić's mandate were spent on total dominance of the two sides of the post-socialist medal: the nationalist and the "civic" reformist side – meaning the two sides of the "transitional medal" (as explained in the subchapter on post-socialist condition in the chapter one)[105]. No space for any kind of alternative was in sight. After March 11, 2003, when Zoran Đinđić was tragically assassinated,[106] the country fell in a state of emergency (and chaos). Public debates were continually and exclusively led between two sides of the (same) post-socialist coin: one being more conservative and nationalist and the other more civic and liberal.[107]

For those who spent their teenage years in Serbia at the beginning of 2000s, most alternative subcultural and social practices were out of sight. Belgrade was the biggest city (not only in Serbia but also in former Yugoslavia) and it was the place where the counter-hegemonic subcultural and social space was still "reproducible", despite unfavorable social and economic conditions. This is to say that other towns, among which some had remarkable anti-fascist tradition and subcultural scene, struggled to find space for alternative cultural content and alternative visions of reality. By the late 1990s the alternative scene was already destroyed. Some "isolated islands" remained within urban centers, but even those islands of, specifically punk subculture, were at risk to shift "rightwards". Activists who spent their formative years during the late 1990s still had the chance to catch the wave of then existing punk scene which was still fraught with anarchist ideas. For some activists, this represented the cornerstone for future interest in anarchist and other critical literature. One of the most prolific punk scenes in Serbia of the 1990s was in the city of Šabac:

[105] See the graph 5.1. bellow.

[106] The assassination was planned and organized by mafia and former members of the state founded secret service military unit called "Unit for special operations" (JSO). The executor, Zvezdan Jovanović (JSO), was sentenced to maximum 40 years in prison. The same sentence was imposed on the former JSO commander chief Milorad Ulemek. The leaders of the mafia group that were also involved in this assassination were killed by the police while resisting arrest.

[107] The final binding of these two sides of the post-socialist medal happened in 2012, when former extreme nationalists ruled over the moderate ideological center. The former nationalists came closer to the ideological center and established the rule which is still active today. They are embodied in one person – President Aleksandar Vučić. Under his rule, the notion of "modern European Serbia" on one hand and the "great Serbian nation" on the other were able to converge and stop being perceived as mutually exclusive notions.

"I got interested in politics through the punk scene of the 1990s. I was finishing my elementary school. For me, this was all about anarchism and fanzine brochures. It was this newly emerging alternative left scene because Milošević and JUL[108] were back then perceived as left. In the brochures one could find classics of anarchism, from Kropotkin and Bakunin to Guerin and his history of anarchism. When I started high school, Šabac was already engulfed in punk –one of the most famous punk bands from Šabac is "Goblini"[109], but at that point, there were some 25, 30 bands in town. Nonetheless, this scene soon collapsed and evaporated." (Interviewee no. 30)

Interestingly enough, during the late 1990s activists from Zagreb experienced both Serbian and Croatian punk scene. In some cases, these two punk scenes overlapped with strong effects of progressive narratives from home. In others, they retroactively interpreted (social) class position or feeling of subordination and/or "otherness". Internationalization of worldview typical for the punk scene (of Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslav states), could have counter-balanced the post-war situation in which all the sides in conflicts claimed to be (at least) partially victorious and, by the same token, victims of crimes committed by other side(s). Moreover, punk was building cross-national ties by removing barriers which were built in order to prevent inter-ethnic and international collaboration. On the other hand, it was precisely this sort of collaboration that appeared as necessary precondition for any sort of progressive and anti-hegemonic venture, be it discursive or practical (activist). Under such circumstances, counter-hegemonic tendencies indeed had to occur cross-nationally. Otherwise, they would not have high chances to develop at all. An activist from Zagreb:

"I grew up surrounded by explicitly anti-nationalistic, anti-fascist, socialist narratives. This is what made militant radical ideas of the hardcore punk scene much easier for me to swallow. As we were growing up in the 1990s, worldview of the scene was in direct confrontation with the dominant worldview in Croatia. We were part of this scene and as such, we engaged in squatting activities, we were voluntarily helping homeless people, etc. That was the underground hardcore scene in Croatia that also had its equivalent in Serbia – in music bands such as "Hoću? – neću!", "Totalni promašaj", "Debeli samuraj", "Unutrašnji bunt", "Diktator" etc. We were in contact with the Serbian scene during the 1990s, at a time when anti-war campaign was led. Throughout the early 2000s, these were the channels used to establish new [international] networks after the war." (Interviewee no. 7)

Punk mediated between factors such as social class and/or feeling of otherness on one hand, and the exposure to alternative counter-hegemonic media contents (such as "Arkzin" or

[108] JUL is short from Jugoslovenska levica (eng: The Yugoslav Left).

[109] "Goblini" is still among the most popular alternative bands in Serbia and the region of former Yugoslavia. For the lyrics of their most famous song from 1996 see the following link: https://lyricstranslate.com/en/ima-nas-we-are-here.html

"Feral") on the other. Punk could have linked the position of structurally imposed subordination and/or the feeling of "otherness", with the point of politicization and resistance. In many cases, alternative media and punk went hand in hand and jointly influenced cognitive formation of future activists. Another activist from Zagreb:

"For me, the whole journey started with music, with local punk culture. There were some music bands you wouldn't expect to have punk worldviews. Band "Zabranjeno pušenje", for instance, had a different connotation in Croatia than in Serbia.[110] Through "KUD Idijoti" and other bands, one would find their way to "Arkzin" and other magazines." (Interviewee no. 5)

Punk subculture also played an important role in the early cognitive formation of activists in Sarajevo. Bosnian capital was the headquarters of the Yugoslav punk-rock scene in the 1980s. It represented the place of authentic innovation in the field of cultural production. Its most famous cultural "wave" became famous under name "New Primitivism", which appeared as "a sort of socio-cultural avant-garde" in the mid-1980s (Mišina 2013, 164).[111] Interestingly enough, one of the main features of this, at first subcultural and later popular cultural movement, was "profound anti-intellectualism and distrust of people who relish empty rhetoric (…)" (*ibid.*, 166).[112] The punk-rock scene in Sarajevo was very rich and influential locally, but also with respect to the wider Yugoslav cultural trend called the "New Wave". This cultural movement preceded "New Primitivism" and appeared as an entry point into the world of punk, especially for activists who were teenagers during the late 1980s. An interviewee from Sarajevo:

"I think it was important that I grew up on the "punk" scene. I got into this milieu through EKV and Azra[113]. The scene gave me a sort of framework in life, one which always pushes you to rebel. This is why I'm, in general terms, closer to practical anarchism than theory of socialism." (Interviewee no. 15)

Sarajevo of the 1980s was a cultural laboratory of a sort. For centuries, this city frequently found itself at the crossroad of "civilizations". During the last decade of socialism, it became an intersection of Yugoslav cultural and subcultural life. This was of tremendous importance for Sarajevo's social habitus, which was previously left out from the epicenter of Yugoslav cultural

[110] Among the most prominent members of "Zabranjeno pušenje" were Sarajevo born movie director Emir Kusturica and the front man "dr. Nele Karajlić", both of which became Serbian nationalists after the war (arguebly, even during the war).

[111] "New Primitivism did not limit itself to the role of reshaping the rock culture in former Yugoslavia. The movement also took hold in the realms of poetry, painting, theater, and film (…) its influence is clearly recognizable in the early works of Emir Kusturica". Levi 2007, 63; See more about Sarajevo "New primitivism" also on pp, 62-67

[112] Anti-intellectualism has remained an acute characteristic of Bosnian society until today and may possibly help us explaining, in cultural terms, some tendencies within the 2014 social movement and its collective identity. More will be said in the next chapter on "Theoretical Dimension of New Critical Thought."

[113] "EKV" from Belgrade and "Azra" from Zagreb were among the most prominent music bends in the 1980s. Both were perceived as leading representatives of the "New Wave".

life led in Belgrade and Zagreb (and Ljubljana, to some extent). The social image and climate of the city based on "New Primitivism" from the 1980s, significantly changed during and after the war. Its traces, however, kept living through the unfortunate generation of youngsters whose significant formative (teenage) years of life were marked by the decade that preceded the warfare. Another interviewee from Sarajevo:

"Punk taught me to question everything and observe things critically. I'm always looking for another angle of perception. As teenagers, we would spend hours talking about various topics, discussing endlessly and criticizing each other's standpoints. My early phase of thinking about the world is unquestionably related to what was going on in the 1980s, on Sarajevo's music scene. I was in the epicenter of the punk-rock scene." (Interviewee no. 23)

The influence of the 1980s to the generation that grew up in culturally avant-garde environment turned out to be especially important in the period after the war. This might partly explain the fact that most activists born and raised in Sarajevo come from a bit older generation. Those who knew Sarajevo of the 1980s and experienced war in their late teenage years were "better off" than the generation growing up in the post-war Sarajevo, at least in terms of likeliness of forming counter-hegemonic mindset. Some of the activists I interviewed were wounded in war. Others lost siblings or directly fought in war. Still, all these factors turned out to be "weaker" in terms of influence upon individual cognitive formation than subcultural influence of the period when Sarajevo was the cultural capital of former Yugoslavia in the 1980s.

Insights form the punk subcultural scene, nonetheless, were not so coherently articulated. This subcultural milieu was indeed colored by certain values and readings but abounded in pamphlet-type literature, rather than substantial anarchist and left-wing literature. Anarchist, socialist and left-wing ideas were circulating through fanzines and other "easier" readings. The punk scene was not theoretically deep, but even pamphlets in which one could bump into authors such as Kropotkin, Bakunin or John Zerzan, could have signified a transition from the already acquired value systems in the non-theoretical phase, towards their systematization, politicization and (systematic) theorization in later phases of cognitive development. An interviewee from Zagreb:

"I was listening to hardcore music which is, by definition, oriented left. I was reading fanzines (...) music scene had its common sense, but this common sense could not lead you towards more specific [theoretical] directions – you would hear about Kropotkin and you would read fanzines – this was all constitutive of the alternative scene's habitus." (Interviewee no. 12)

In Serbia, punk subculture was in a significant decline in the period following the fall of Milošević in 2000. In most parts of the country, as already indicated, early 2000s were marked

by the evaporation of progressive punk from the 1990s. For a moment, it seemed that society did not need rebellion anymore. Milošević was gone, wars were over and the new "pro-European" political elite took over. Nonetheless, the situation started changing in the twilight of global economic crisis, along with rise of various movements, both globally and in the region (primarily in Croatia). The influence of punk was reemerging as the narrative about the "European" Serbia started losing ground due to rapid precarization of work, deindustrialization and indeed, impoverishment. By the same token, the other, conservative (nationalist) side of the transitional medal slightly weakened. The influence of the newly emerging punk subculture reached the city of Užice (called Tito's Užice, under socialism), a town in south-western part of Serbia. The "new breath" was enriched by an additional ideational ingredient, apart from anarchism or more traditional socialism. An interviewee from "Don't let Belgrade D(r)own":

"From 2007 to 2009 we would gather in "Krš" (eng: "Mess"). It was a punk "dump" where we had feminist tea parties. We would usually talk among ourselves or with guests. I remember an instance where we had punkers from Sweden and Russia. It was the first time I got exposed to the radically left pamphlets and fanzines, which provided us with digested overview of left- wing ideas." (Interviewee no. 34)

Furthermore, cultural influence of punk in Croatia was sometimes combined with or supplemented by the effects of living in towns which also represented "isolated islands" of progressive social dynamics (for given circumstances). Cities such as Rijeka or entire regions such as Istria never strayed "right" (or at least "as right") in their dominant social (and partially political) discourse. Some activists coming from Rijeka which is still a bastion of critical and anti-nationalist (above all) cultural production got in touch with counter-hegemonic incentives through theater.

"In high school I was dealing with Brecht and other alternative stuff. By that time, I already became a punker. I was listening socially conscious bands such as "Cacadou Look". We also had an alternative theater that focused mostly on Sartre. We were performing behind closed doors. I guess I was lucky to be a part of that group. I think it was about being in Rijeka, where we already had some literature, magazines and the subversive cultural scene. For a young member of the alternative scene, exposure to such cultural contents was quite important." (Interviewee no. 2)

Apart from limited reach of progressive magazines with quite restricted audience on one hand and progressive subcultural habitus on the other, whole cities could have taken over the role of progressive habitus, as well. The influence of Croatian city of Rijeka, reached the activists' scene in Sarajevo.

"I went to high school in Rijeka, which is a particular place to live. I was surrounded by people who inherited partisan tradition and always voted for SDP.[114] My (wider) family was no exception. During that period, I was constantly listening to stories against nationalism and clericalism." (Interviewee no. 16)

In this case, the chain is created between belonging to the working class, progressive family narratives and progressive social habitus. Interestingly enough, this activist later studied at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, which turned out to be very important for diffusion of the method of direct democracy from Zagreb to Sarajevo.

On the other hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina has its own "counterpart of Rijeka". The industrial city of Tuzla also inherited the anti-fascist and anti-nationalist tradition that persisted in this great industrial center of former Yugoslavia for more than twenty years after the war.[115] It is not by chance that the 2014 uprising in Bosnia started in Tuzla, as a rebellion of the working class which was declassed and, in a meanwhile, became underclass. Once upon a time populated by the working class, pegging away in industrial giants "Dita" or "Polihem", the city of Tuzla became a place where social unrest was most likely to occur due to privatizations and transitional robbery. Anti-nationalism and anti-fascism played a decisive role in shaping anti-hegemonic minds of the youth who grew up under poor economic, but much "richer" social conditions (in comparison to the rest of Bosnia). An activist from Sarajevo:

"I became aware of what Tuzla meant to me, in formative sense, only after I moved to Sarajevo. I was never conscious of my friends being Serbs, Croats or Bosnian Muslims. I hadn't been aware of the significance of these ethnic signifiers before I moved to Sarajevo. In high school, I was lucky enough to be a part of a wonderful collective, socially sane and ethnically mixed." (Interviewee no. 20)

Unlike Rijeka, Tuzla suffered quite a lot during the war period. A striking fact about Tuzla is that it hosted refugees who were running away from the bloodiest war crimes, including the genocide in Srebrenica. Refugees who carried brutal and terrifying stories with them found shelter in houses of Serbs and Croats who fled Tuzla during the war. Despite such newly established social context, Tuzla resisted ethno-nationalism to a much greater extent than the rest of the country.

"I moved to Sarajevo after high school, in 2002. I was really bothered by people perceiving me as a Muslim, because of my name. I never felt I belonged to this group and then I

[114] SDP is short from "Social Democratic Party" which grew out of the Croatian branch of the Yugoslav Communist Party. To a significant extent, the party abandoned the left-wing tradition, similarly like it happened throughout Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall.
[115] Nationalist parties never managed to come to power in the city of Tuzla since the war onward.

started revising my own identity. I was thinking about pros and cons – could I identify myself as a Muslim or not. The more people pushed me into that box, the stronger I resisted. I didn't want others to tell me who I am. That is why Tuzla is so important – there was no way I could've been a Muslim in the context where I grew up. By identifying myself in such way, I would've detached myself from my social basis, from my friends. Our grandmas' were praying and going to mosques and churches, but us… We were an independent entity." (*ibid.*)

I observed an additionally interesting twist related to the social habitus of Tuzla, especially in comparison to Sarajevo. Younger generation of activists found their version of "punk" in the post-war Tuzla, even though punk was already "dead". The subversion under given social circumstances (described above) was found in the "forbidden fruit" – turbo-folk music that symbolized Serbian nationalism. Subversion was found in a daring move. They enjoyed music performed by one of the most prominent Serbian nationalist singers, wife of a (war) criminal, in spite (or precisely because) of her symbolic role during and after the war:

"In the early 2000s when I was in high school, listening to Ceca[116] was unacceptable – it was common sense. She was Arkan's wife[117] who was singing for the Serbian army during the war and had war-provoking statements. Still, we were youth that considered themselves progressive and we could listen to Ceca's music while considering it as a sort of rebellion" (*ibid*.)

This rebellion represented, more than anything else, a refusal to comply with emerging social climate resting upon taboos, (ethno-national and religious) divisions and "tribalization" of society. This refusal did not have a purpose of breaking any specific taboos such as Ceca and her music. The refusal was much more categorical and fundamental. Its significance became clearer only ten or fifteen years later, when boldness to listen (and enjoy) Ceca's music was replaced by participation in the anti-hegemonic social movement, aiming to overthrow political elites who (perhaps) did not listen Serbian turbo-folk, but did bring the country to the edge of destruction.

Serbia did not have bastions similar to Rijeka or Tuzla. There were no bigger anti-hegemonic and unconquered fortresses of alternative social (and political) reality in the post-socialist period. Instead, activists from Belgrade were usually coming from various "isolated islands" of progressive thought and subcultures (including punk, but not only). Spaces which could have offered a sort of basis for such social developments were not numerous. One gymnasium in

[116] "Ceca" is a nickname of a singer whose real name is Svetlana Ražnatović.

[117] "Arkan" was Željko Ražnatović's nickname. He was one of the most notorious (war) criminals from Belgrade's criminal milieu. He was the chief commander of a paramilitary unit called "The Tigers". After his death in 2000 (he was killed by a rival criminal gang in Belgrade), the public learned that he was accused of war crimes before the International Criminal Court in the Haag. Many consider the massacre in the Bosnian city of Bijeljina, where Arkan's unit entered in March 1992, to be the unofficial beginning of war in Bosnia.

Belgrade, for instance, played this role of "free space" for unconstrained debate and development of alternative visions of social reality in the late 1990s:

"The Ninth Gymnasium looked like a home for all the "exiles". All the "geeks" found their place there. The community of people was created. These four years were a sort of a renaissance for me. R. was my classmate (…) we fostered the culture of discussion, of thought and exchange of opinions. I have the impression that both of us were shaped by being together in this environment. We had a professor of sociology, Milica Vuković, with whom R. and I had numerous discussions. During her lectures, we would engage in discussions with each other. She was the first professor who I perceived as an authority figure, whom I respected. She encouraged us to talk and express our opinion out loud." (Interviewee no. 28)

As discussed above, family is another type of progressive environment for acquisition of parallel value systems. Being anti-nationalist and cosmopolitan in the 1990s was often a consequence of specific features of one's primary social habitus, even if direct and explicit interpretation (narration) behind it was absent. In this specific case, I am referring to peculiar family lifestyles that could replace explicit manifestation of progressive narratives. Peculiarity could lay in the absence of traditional family gatherings at dinners and lunches and having a more relaxed but joyful moments of living a "rock 'n' roll" life alongside one's "hippie parents" (Interviewee no. 37). Alternatively, the story could develop as in the testimony of another interviewee from Belgrade:

"My mother was going through divorce, and she wanted to die. We recorded a mixtape with music for her funeral. It had The Beatles, Janis Joplin, the Stones… In the end, she survived and we still have that mixtape. This was our starting point. During the war, my mom's sister was living in the city of Prijedor [Bosnia and Herzegovina] and she asked us if she could send her 18-year-old son to Belgrade because he was about to be mobilized in the army. We managed to bring him to Belgrade, and he started living with us. At some point my mom couldn't take care of all of us because she had to work. She found an ad by a 21-year-old girl from Sarajevo who could take care of us. Her name was Tanja and she ended up in Belgrade because she took a wrong train. Instead of Moscow, she found herself in Belgrade. They were all running (from war in Bosnia) and her parents took the train to Moscow, her sister to Frankfurt. For a long time, they didn't know where the rest of the family was. This is how Tanja came to live with us. After some time, Tanja wanted to find her boyfriend who stayed in Sarajevo. We all started looking for him, found him through some connections we had and brought him to Belgrade. He moved in with us as well. My mom was still making the mixtape. During my elementary school, I lived in a small commune where all of us learned how to sing and play instruments. We also painted a lot in order escape reality that surrounded us." (Interviewee no. 29)

The importance of subcultural or wider social habitus for the cognitive formation of individuals is also evident from stories of activists who grew up abroad. The subchapter on *social class* showed how feeling of subordination and borderline racial discrimination in a small Bavarian town prompted activist no. 12 from Zagreb, to take a certain direction in thought. Instead of discrimination, an activist from the Bosnian popular movement went through rather different experience - in Libya.

"My first encounter with the notion of revolution happened when I started elementary school. As a child, I didn't really know what it meant, but I knew we were supposed to be a part of something much bigger, which again came out from the struggle of Libyan society. We were opposing something. I remember this documentary about Omar Mukhtar, a revolutionary who fought against Italian occupation. Throughout my childhood, I was constantly exposed to narratives of Libyan liberation and the necessity of struggle for your own freedom." (Interviewee no. 24)

This sort of experience, memories of "singing anti-imperialist songs as pupils" and watching the only TV channel broadcasting anti-American TV shows, did not play a role in individual cognitive formation *per se.* Moreover, its specific direction was set only when this early experience and exposure to certain characteristics of Libyan social habitus got mixed with the Bosnian context. There is a clear parallel between this case and the case of the activist number 20, whose awareness about the progressiveness of social habitus in Tuzla emerged only after moving to (less or non-progressive, postwar) Sarajevo. In this case, Libyan experience starts interacting with the one of the postwar Bosnia, since the entire family came back to Bosnia after the war. Despite coming from a religious, Muslim family, my interviewee fell into the zone of discomfort when she came back:

"They wanted to put me in a box of Bosniak ethnic group, because of my name or religion. I felt a sort of organic disgust and hostility towards it. That construction was unacceptable for me. Reasons for "breakup" with "my" group were probably subconscious and had to do with my early socialization outside this country. After coming back, I expected something better – even though at the beginning, as a teenager, I would have gotten myself in such traps, from time to time." (*ibid.*)

An interesting ingredient in this case was the inflow of refugees from Bosnia to Libya during the second half of the armed conflict in Bosnia. Libyan social habitus remained intact, but at the micro level (of family and neighborhood), things gradually changed with the inflow of refugees. A small Yugoslav community in Libya dissolved along with ethnic conflict in Bosnia and dissolution of Yugoslavia. Even while living there, the interviewee was at one point faced with "us" and "them" construct. However, when she came back to Bosnia, her initially acquired worldview overruled the picture of a broken "Yugoslav dream". It was, in other words, the

macro level of her social habitus (Libya), rather than micro or meso (broken Yugoslav community within Libyan) that her cognitive mapping was eventually built upon. Through documentary and socially engaged fiction movies at Sarajevo Film Festival, feminist workshops and later, her studies, she capitalized on anti-imperialism, internationalism and, finally, socialism from her experience in Libya in the early period of life. Thereby, social habitus won over the picture of broken Yugoslav community in Libya and the specific ethno-centric social habitus of her later life in Sarajevo. However, there was an additional element in this equation, a rather peculiar one. Reference to this specific case is the beginning of the following subchapter in which I discuss "peculiar" tendencies within (non-theoretical) counter-hegemonic cognitive development.

5.4. The Role of Religion and Other "Peculiarities"

In the subchapter on "identity", it was shown that atheism was important for developing counter-hegemonic cognitive maps. This is not to say that, essentially, religiousness cannot go hand in hand with emancipation. As a matter of fact, many progressive, left leaning thinkers argued in favor of the essential closeness between, for instance, branches of Christianity and socialism. Authors such as Badiou (2003) often spoke about ideas of St. Paul in the context of socialism, whereas the whole branch of "theology of liberation" established a more general link between Christianity and emancipation. In the context of Yugoslav post-socialism, however, the ever-strong tie between religion and exclusivist, regressive and violent ethno-nationalism, was established from the very beginning of "transition". Therefore, there is nothing more intuitive than to say that religion should have been excluded from any attempt of counter-hegemonic cognitive "positioning". Still, my data shows that linkage between religion and emancipation is a matter of *function* that religion has, rather than essential overlapping between the two, religion and emancipation. I found out that *non-politicized religious sentiment*[118], accompanied with other factors listed above, could have opposite function from the one prescribed to it by the dominant paradigm (based on divisions and hatred). Instead, it could serve as a model for moral basis, upon which a certain mixture of other factors would build up a counter-hegemonic direction of reasoning. I proceed here with the last quoted interviewee from Sarajevo:

[118] When I say "non-politicized" I refer to the misuse of religious sentiment for the sake of everyday politics and feeding up ethnic and national divisions.

"In Libya we lived in a district for foreigners, in a residential area. The guard of this neighborhood once complimented my father's old jacket. On the following day, my father bought the same one, but new and gave the old one to the guard as a present. That same day his new jacket was stolen. I remember him telling us this story at lunch, regretting for not giving a new one to the guard. He is religious and he thought this was a warning from God." (Interviewee no. 24)

The non-politicized religious sentiment has to do with the rejection of using it to deepen social and political divisions that were built into the systemic framework imposed on Bosnian people by the annex four of Dayton peace agreement (Bosnian constitution). Bosnian ethnic and religious diversity is misused in order to divide the entire society along ethnic and religious lines. Misusing religious sentiment thus, served for strengthening a sense of ethnic belonging (and hatred) and, consequently, legitimizing the *status quo*. Those who managed to keep their religious sentiment, without allowing it to be misused for political purposes, actually strengthened the possibility of counter-hegemonic reasoning. It is indicative that the interviewee no. 24 grew up in Libya. So, if one wonders about factors which could have "protected" religious sentiment from political manipulation and misuse, a possible answer could be physical absence from the epicenter (Bosnia) in the period when this endeavor was reaching its peak. At the same time, not allowing one's own religious beliefs to get instrumentalized for the sake of empowering ethno-nationalist discourse, could have also meant using it as a sort of moral basis for progressive upgrades. Another interviewee from Sarajevo:

"I attended medresa, a religious high school and I assume this is what makes me unique. We had a student magazine and in the second grade, I had to write an article about March 8. This was my first politically engaged article about women and their position within society. The upgrade came later, at the university – not through curriculum, but through friends and a couple of professors." (Interviewee no. 19)

Religion in Bosnia, same as ethnicity, cannot be bypassed if one analyzes political and social processes in this country. In the context of acquisition of non-theoretical, early life counter-hegemonic knowledge, religion may be therefore represented either negatively (by not being present) or as exempted from the burden of ethno-nationalism (meaning as being autonomous with respect to political instrumentalization). In both cases, religion (its absence or presence) appears as an influential factor for later progressive upgrades. Regardless of whether we are talking about religious sentiment exempted from ethno-nationalism, or non-religious (atheist or agnostic) family backgrounds, both scenarios strongly affected cognitive development of the activists in Bosnia.

Croatia followed a similar pattern. The persistency of tight linkage between Croatian nationalism and Christianity (Roman Catholicism) made a linkage between religion and any progressive endeavor almost impossible. As stated by an interviewee from Zagreb, "one goes through religious experience in the public space and media exclusively through nationalism". Nonetheless, social sensitivity might initially come from Christianity, and thereby come closer to the domain of "theology of liberation". An activist from Zagreb:

"I come from a conservative family. When I first joined the student movement my worldviews were still pretty conservative. As a child I attended religious ceremonies and went to church. My old man was a nationalist and this stuff also composed my early life "cognitive map". What was going on at the Faculty of Philosophy, I thought, had some things in common with Christian postulates of social justice. The demand formulated as "free education for all" didn't sound as something foreign to me. This logic, according to which everyone should take care and be "responsible" for themselves, was never close to my reasoning. I always thought that people should be given the right and equal access to education and healthcare." (Interviewee no. 9)

In combination with other factors (for example, being directly exposed to side-effects of transition while growing up in an industrial city and witnessing destruction of production in the post-socialist era), some activists managed to choose unconsciously (or semi-consciously) a progressive social habitus for their higher education and study at the Faculty of Philosophy, for instance. Social sensibility typical for Christianity could have been re-contextualized and seen from a different angle – this time without nationalist ingredients. That is why some of them ended up involved in the student movement. Social habitus of the Faculty managed to pick up on certain elements of Christianity, rearticulate meanings that are prescribed to direct experiences (such as facing parents' unemployment and downfall of entire sectors of production and industry across Croatia), as well as add new insights and open new areas of interest. Second phase of cognitive development in such cases neutralized the nationalist framework of religious (prior) socialization. Another interviewee from Zagreb:

"I come from a distinctively right-wing family. I didn't become a left-winger under its influence. Moreover, I inhabited some right-wing attitudes from my old man. However, the family was never right-wing in economic, but in a political sense of nationalist rhetoric. "Most right" elements of my early worldview were not articulated in a serious manner or through serious literature. All the things I inherited were a result of passive internalization of different sets of meanings and signifiers in my childhood." (Interviewee no. 8)

Here one can clearly observe something that was already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter and had to do with "activist biographies". In general, I am dealing with the cognitive sources of developing critical mindsets before activism – rather than cognitive

consequences of activism. In this particular case, one could observe how activism transforms or reconciles conservative values (such as religious sentiment) to progressive value systems – through activism. This is important to be stressed because of the third case study which appears the most peculiar out of the three cases in question.

In Serbia, this pattern of conversion of conservative values inherited from home has to be more carefully explained due to the phenomenon I visited above – "Serbian (ideological) paradox". Let me briefly elaborate. In the early 1990s the president of Republic of Serbia (and from 1997, of SR Yugoslavia) and the ruling Socialist Party of Serbia Slobodan Milošević, was, by the same token seen as a "guardian" and a destructor of the socialist Yugoslavia. As mentioned above, he was a (self) declared socialist who insisted that his politics seek to defend socialism from nationalist tendencies coming from other republics (especially Croatia). Similar perception of Milošević was shared among the Serbian nationalist opposition. The leaders were either self-declared Četniks (the term is explained above), or right-wing liberals, or conservatives. Very few of them were siding with left (social) liberalism. The irony was that Milošević's "Yugoslavism" was just a disguise for his (ethnic) nationalism, whereas the opposition's anti-Miloševićism was both anti-Yugoslav (hence anti-communist) and (ethno) nationalist. Milošević was seen by the West (or what is later to be often called the "international community"), as the "factor of stability" in the region. A perfect illustration of this confusing situation comes from the British "The Guardian", which published an article with a headline: "Nationalists challenge Milošević". Even more surprising, from today's standpoint, is the fact that the article in which "The Guardian" wrote about Milošević's relation to his "extreme nationalist opposition", was published on October 7, 1993, in the midst of wars in Croatia and Bosnia (Billig 1995, 48).[119] This schizophrenic situation constructed what I label as "Serbian ideological paradox". On one side there were Milošević and "his" nationalists, and on the other were anti-Milošević nationalists. The remaining (and very narrow) political space was reserved for the right wing liberals (liberals in economic and right wingers in political sense), (very few) social liberals, and (classical) conservatives. Anti-war and anti-nationalist campaigns were almost exclusively reserved for the social sphere and the anti-war movement.

This context appeared as peculiar not only conceptually, but also when compared with both Bosnian and Croatian contexts. In Croatia and Bosnia the main protagonists of war were openly

[119] Michel Billig uses this example in order to back the main thesis exposed in his "Banal Nationalism", that state nationalism expressed through various practices of reproduction of national state is usually neglected as opposed to nationalism which comes from other actors (other than the state) and mostly in more explicit and violent forms. Even violent state nationalism, such as Milošević's, was not properly perceived for almost a decade (before the war in Kosovo started in the late 1990s).

anti-communist clericals, especially Slobodan Milošević's biggest enemies – Franjo Tuđman[120] and Alija Izetbegović[121]. Milošević's nationalism was, apart from being disguised by the narrative about Yugoslavianism – quite secular. He never played the card of (Orthodox) religion. On the other hand, it was the nationalist opposition that attempted to "clericalize" the discourse. This sort of confusion certainly made worldview choices of younger generations more difficult to build, since the lines of social and political divisions were not clear. An interviewee from Belgrade:

"My mom was a pro-Četnik right winger, but at the same time she was against war. At the same time she participated in the trade union's struggle for public sector. This was all completely confusing. My father was a local councilor of DEPOS[122] who served two terms. This is where I first saw how village community gathers in order to solve a common issue. My parents supported Vuk Drašković.[123] During the late 1980s I was exposed to nationalist narratives that questioned socialism. Yugoslavia was perceived as "the biggest mistake Serbian people made". Before the war started, my parents were against it. However, I was raised in the spirit of the old Yugoslavia. It was a strange, right-wing but anti-war narrative, mixed with clerical literature that found its place in our house, even though my parents were atheists. I think this kind of literature was there only because the Yugoslav socialism was being questioned. Demonization of Marxism and socialism prompted me to be even more radical. This is why I started critically looking at Milošević's "leftism" and oppositional right-wing narratives (present at home) – from the anarchist perspective." (Interviewee no. 30)

Being against Milošević as a teenager or being a child from a family that supported opposition during the 1990s did not guarantee much, when it comes to capability to take a counter-hegemonic stance. What did it mean to be a Yugoslav, a communist, a Serbian nationalist, a "Serbo-Communist", a right winger or a left-wing liberal and what was the role of religion in the construction of all these categories, was much more blurry in Serbia than in Croatia or Bosnia and Herzegovina. To commit to a counter-hegemonic cognitive "direction" in Croatia and Bosnia, one had to have atheist or *non-politicized* religious background. In Croatia, if you were against the ruling HDZ, you probably held a more progressive position than the one represented by HDZ and the unity of "God", "motherland" and "nation". In Bosnia, if you were

[120] Even though Franjo Tuđman was a member of the Communist Party, he was convicted as a Croatian (nationalist) dissident twice – once during the early 1970s after the so-called "Croatian spring" and then again in the early 1980s.

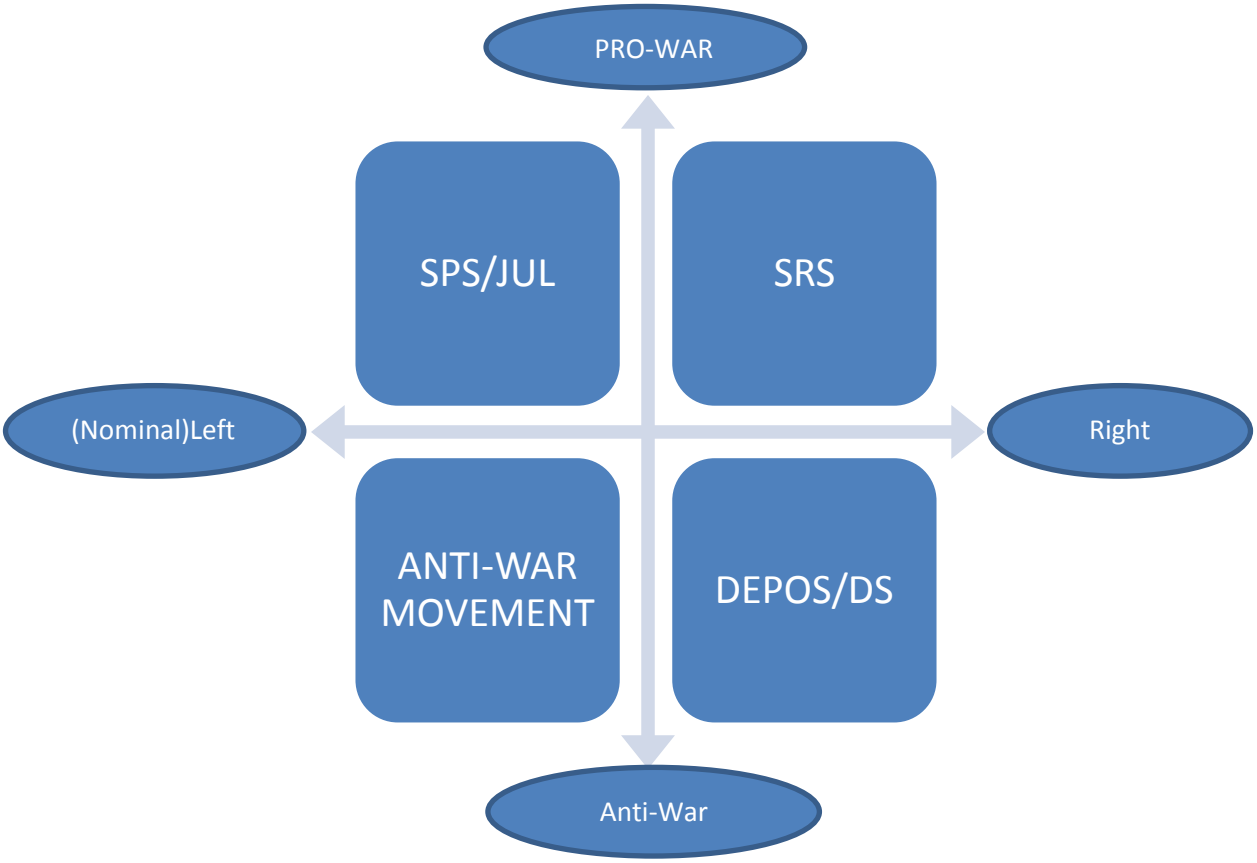
[121] Alija Izetbegović was the author of the "Islamist declaration" (1970) and convicted twice as a Muslim nationalist – once in 1946 under occupation, for being a member of the "Young Muslims" who fought against the Partisans (together with the occupation forces) and again in 1983, when he was accused for Muslim nationalism.

[122] DEPOS is short from "Democratic movement of Serbia", and it was a right center coalition of several political parties.

[123] Vuk Drašković was the leader of SPO (Serbian Renewal Movement). He was agitating for the renewal of the monarchy and was a nationalist and anti-communist.

against the three ethno-national ruling parties (Croatian HDZ, Bosniak SDA and Serbian SDS), you were more likely to be more progressive than them. In Serbia, if you were against Milošević you could have been more progressive, but also more regressive than him, and vice versa: if you were in favor of Milošević you could have been as regressive as him, or, simply deceived in the perception of Milošević as a guardian of socialist Yugoslavia which was threatened by all other nationalisms, but Serbian.

Graph 5.1: The Serbian (Ideological) Paradox[124]



[124]SPS is short for Socialist Party of Serbia, which was founded as a legal successor of the Communist Party of Serbia, from the socialist times. JUL is short from the Yugoslav Left, the sister party to the SPS, founded by Mirjana Marković, Slobodan Milošević's wife. SRS is short for Serbian Radical Party, founded by Vojislav Šešelj, later convicted by the International Tribunal for war crimes in The Hague. DS is short from Democratic Party." DEPOS" is short from "Democratic Movement of Serbia", the first oppositional coalition against Milošević. It was composed of four center-right political parties, including the most serious opposition to Milošević at the time, Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) which was led by the monarchist and a right-wing writer and politician Vuk Drašković. The coalition contested Milošević in 1992 and 1993 elections.

Misconceptions inherited from this paradoxical political climate in the early phase of cognitive development could have been compensated either by other factors which I elaborated above, or through the second phase of cognitive development which included theoretical influences. Through exposure to generic type of knowledge, one's value systems and worldviews could have been upgraded or clarified, on one hand, or disregarded, dismissed or transformed, on the other. In the following chapter I am discussing the second phase of counter-hegemonic cognitive development, which is reserved for (potential) theoretical influences and cognitive inputs of activists.

5.2. Acquisition of Theoretical Knowledge

So far, it has been shown how early political socialization and the counter-hegemonic cognitive basis was set in place. In this chapter, I am digging into the origins and channels of diffusion of theoretical knowledge which, as shown in the fourth chapter, played a significant role in creation of the comprehensive critique of the post-socialist condition. The focus is on the most influential literature when it comes to cognitive development of activists. By the same token, this chapter is grasping specific authors and particular pieces of literature perceived by the activists as (most) important for their individual cognitive development. I define this category as "cognitive click" which is triggered by an author or a book that initially illuminated the path of cognitive upgrade which the activists followed from that point on. Equally important are the channels of diffusion of theoretical inputs which shaped (individual) activists' cognitive maps.

As indicated in the chapter on theoretical framework, the work of Thomas Rochon concerning the role of critical communities in conducting social change is taken as a general theoretical framework for assessing the relationship between theory and activism. The role of critical communities and critical ideas is, hence, logically linked to the role of progressive social movements, because both actors preform, think and act from the standpoint of the "weakest pillar of the bridge". Ideas that occur within the circles of critical communities almost naturally get employed, reworked and contextualized by social movements whose mission is to put certain ideas into practice. Ideas hence, play an important role in what Gramsci calls "war of position". What remains to be done is to explore the way in which this interaction takes place. This is precisely what is this chapter seeking to achieve, in the context of the post-socialist Yugoslavia.

5.2.1. Cognitive Clique and main Theoretical Influences

Testimonies regarding theoretical dimension of individual cognitive development of my interviewees showed a significant degree of diversity of theoretical influence. This was the case even within single case studies, where members of the same social movement had different theoretical affiliations. The most diversified is the municipal movement from Belgrade. If one had to emphasize a single field of movement's "expertise", it would be, of course, the field of urban development and "commons". However, the "theoretical image" of NDB is much more heterogeneous than it might appear. Apart from urban developmental studies and the fact that many activists are architects by training, other spheres of theoretical interest include political

theory, feminist studies, (political) philosophy, political economy, etc. Nonetheless, studies of urbanism and urban development appear as the cornerstone of theoretical equipment for many Belgrade's activists. It is precisely within this field of study that some managed to experience the "cognitive click", understood as a "window opener" for further readings, as well as personal inspiration for engagement in social and political activism:

"Even though Lefebvre and Margit Mayer were important to me, I consider Jane Jacobs as the "click". She wrote "The Death and Life of Great American Cities". After that, I read an incredible story about her opposition to Robert Moses and the whole project of construction of New York. On the margins of what she wrote about what New York should look like, I found an article about her and her sister who were on the brink of poverty. Jacobs lost the possibility to earn for a living and both of them were forced to eat baby food for two years. Here, one recognizes the amount willpower needed to endure something for the right cause. Later, she inspired millions of people." (Interviewee no. 29)

Here we learn that activists pay attention to what is written, but also to the author of the writing and the context. Side stories make even the most abstract writings more comprehendible. They provide narrative but also provide incentives for both (further) readings and (social/political) action. If the "story behind" matters, if it is inspiring or dramatic, one may easily become inspired to read abstract literature and to fight one's way through a challenging text. This effort appears as worthy, given the back story. These stories are usually personal, as the case of Jane Jacobs illustrates. It seems like a "perfect case scenario" that would include a high quality, comprehensible text and an astonishing back story, is everything but a myth. Another testimony shows that good style of writing may go hand in hand with high quality content and an astonishing (personal) story behind.

"Authors who somewhat paved my theoretical path were, firstly, Hannah Arendt and later, when I discovered him, David Harvey. They are not so similar, except for the fact that they both have exceptionally enticing style of writing. You feel excitement when reading authors who are brilliant in polemics, whose writing is simultaneously insightful when it comes to theory, and superbly styled, like a small literary masterpiece. This is where my interest in political theory comes from. I found Arendt's discussion "On Revolution" highly interesting, and her associative approach to politics appealing – as opposed to the Schmittian dissociative approach (…) an active life as the foundation for political community is something I inherited from there – the perception of community as active unit…" (Interviewee no. 33)

David Harvey is highly important for the activists of NDB. He opened a whole new intellectual horizon for many of them. Their interest in urban development emerged through "discovering" Harvey. His declaration "Right to the City" was translated into Croatian and prompted some activists from Belgrade to start thinking in a similar direction. The issue of *right*

to the city was, moreover, the converging point, or the point of gathering of activists. Harvey is credited as appealing and important due to his ability to "put complex things in understandable terms". His book on neoliberalism or his tutorials on Marx's "Capital" and the concept of "right to the city" were seen as understandable and applicable due to receptiveness, persuasive power and argumentative strength of his work.

A similar pattern was detected in Sarajevo and Zagreb. Sarajevo's popular movement though, has an additional ingredient. Apart from the importance of writing style and lucid reflections of reality, it was heritage of the last Yugoslav war that posed questions for which one could not find answers in everyday life or politics, but often in literature or theory. Things in reality seemed clear. It was something else that puzzled some of my Sarajevo interviewees. They wondered about the emotional side of personality, the possibility or impossibility to resist events that were structurally predetermined. Literature they found relevant ranged from psychoanalysis to classical political theory: from feminism to more orthodox Marxism. Quite expectedly, as in Zagreb and Belgrade, Hannah Arendt occupies an important place in cognitive development of some interviewed activists in Sarajevo.

"After finishing studies in literature, I took post-graduate studies of nationalism at the CEU. This was an attempt to understand what happened here. At the CEU I got closer to social constructivism in the context of international politics. This seemed too one-dimensional for me, somewhat lukewarm and this is why I kept on looking. At some point I found myself between Friedrich Nietzsche, Carl Schmitt and Hannah Arendt. By the way, I've always been drawn to authors who write innovatively and intervene differently in terms of ideas and style of writing. Towards the end of my CEU studies, I got interested in what Arendt had to say about political action, where it came from and how one should resist the automatism of events." (Interviewee no. 25)

For this interviewee, Hannah Arendt provoked a "cognitive click", but in combination with Machiavelli's "Prince". She continued using theory as an instrument for activism. For her, a logical step after Arendt and Machiavelli was Lenin who, besides Gramsci, represents the greatest synthesizer of theory and practice of the 20th century. The emphasis on the attractiveness of style of writing is crucial if an author aims to resonate with curious minds. Lucidity, innovation, boldness and vividness are always appreciated by the activists, even in the most abstract theory. Activists in Sarajevo (and Belgrade) say that regardless of whether one agrees with Arendt and her philosophical and/or political work, her style of writing (especially in books like "Eichmann in Jerusalem" or "On Revolution") catches their attention. "Catchiness" of theory is something that can make it closer to political practice and (especially) to the minds of those who look for cognitive inputs and sources of a new imagery in order to act.

Student movement from Zagreb, as the most vanguard activist group in terms of theoretical equipment, included individuals whose political and theoretical views corresponded with the most radical left wing theory (and practice). Considering the issue of "cognitive click", however, even those who belonged to the most radical wing of the movement did not refer that much to the "usual suspects" of the radical progressive theory. When asked about the most influential thinker responsible for his cognitive development, an activist from the student movement (again) emphasized the style of writing and polemical power of an author who managed to scale down complex philosophical discussion, without losing on depth of thought.

"This is definitely Bourdieu. Of course, it wasn't just him that I was reading, but he managed to articulate the critique of rigid ahistorical philosophical discourse. This critique was polemically intonated, clear, and applicable at once. In this instance, I'm talking about "Ce Que Parler Veut Dire" (eng: Language and Symbolic Power). Here you can find a critique of Althusser and Heidegger, of this rigid, highly philosophical discourse." (Interviewee no. 10)

Yet another author appears among those whose work enabled a "cognitive click" for activists in Zagreb. His opus of work made some major disturbances within critical thought. Many perceive him as the main "culprit" for the post-modern gelatinization of classical materialism while others have no trouble accommodating him within the wider spectrum of critical thought which has overall, done more good than damage to modern critical thinking. An activist from Zagreb:

"The author who had the greatest influence on me was Foucault. He "knocked me off my feet". Discussions on sex and sexuality – that was extremely important to me. Production of knowledge and the relationship with institutions, reasons why we shouldn't look at them in the Althusserian way… I soon realized, through Marx, the extent of Foucault's scope and limitations. I finally managed to put all these insights under the same framework." (Interviewee no. 2)

Interestingly enough, other interviewees from Zagreb positioned Althusser and his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus" quite high on the scale of influential theory. By the same token, Althusser was used even as a negative reference, where the critique of his work contributed to the counter-hegemonic tendencies in the region more than Althusser himself. Žižek's "Sublime Object of Ideology", was also influential in Zagreb, but mostly as an entering point for other sources referenced in it. Žižek also appears as a point of reference in Sarajevo, both as an entry point for other references and, more directly, as a "cognitive click".

"I enrolled the psychology department. Under influence of Professor Ugo Vlaisavljević I got interested in human relationships and emotional structures. For me, that was the first wave of politicization through theory, in a scope provided by the discipline of psychoanalysis. All my

intellectual attention was directed there. In Freud I found insights on ethics and soon realized that these corresponded to my ethical structures. "I consider nothing human (to be) alien to me".[125] The left critical thought came later, and the entering point for me was Žižek. The moment I started reading him, I was already a semi-conscious Lacanian. In Žižek I found more complex interpretation of Lacan and a mix with Marx in the "Sublime Object of Ideology". I remember there was a book presentation, by Renata Salecl and I picked up Žižek there, from a friend. He definitely made things more complex to me. He made Lacan clearer, but then puzzled me with this other field integrated with Lacan. In order to resolve this puzzle I started reading Lenin, Marx etc…" (Interviewee no. 17)

There are two aspects of this testimony that should be analyzed further. An interesting insight may be detected if we look at the relationship between Freud and Lacan on one side, and Bosnian "trauma" on the other. The field of psychoanalysis reveals the very nature, the ontology and the function of trauma in human lives. In his "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" Freud writes about trauma, while dedicating special attention to what he called "traumatic neurosis". Of course, here we will not dig deeply in Freud's work, but it is worth mentioning that he writes about traumatic neurosis two years after the end of "the terrible war which has just ended (and) gave rise to a great number of illnesses of this kind" (Freud 1920, 6). After the war in Bosnia, there was also a tendency to choose literature that may be applied to the post-war condition. Similarly, Lacanian approach used trauma in order to define *the real* itself. Going back to the style of writing, Žižek's "The Sublime Object of Ideology" not only manages to explain Lacan (and defend him from the accusations for "post-structuralism"), but also links psychoanalysis to Marx, Hegel's dialectics, post-Marxism, essentialism and anti-essentialism, Mouffe and Laclau, etc.

Strong material and psychological repercussions of the early 1990s had an effect on theoretical directions chosen by activists (especially in Sarajevo). Relevant theoretical sources often appeared as answer providers to various questions that popped up during and after the war. Starting from very personal issues such as identity, to structural or ideological background of ethno-nationalism, chauvinism and genocide, the activists sought to resolve multilevel puzzle of the unfortunate events and their social, economic and material consequences. This is why, in some cases, theory served as a "safe zone" where one could find, at least, abstract answers to the real-life questions. Even in the times of war, many escaped reality by reading books. It was fiction and less abstract non-fiction which dominated over more abstract theory *during* the war. Some activists started their reading "journey" with books about concentration camps because, as one of them testifies, "it had a calming effect on her during the war". Others were studying

[125] This statement was first proclaimed by the Roman play writer Terence, and Freud's work on human subconscious was often linked to it.

literature and sometimes spending long hours indoors, reading and engaging in discussions while waiting for shooting to stop.

"I started studying literature in 1992, when the war begun. I was wounded and had to pause my studies, but I continued in 1994. These conditions in which we were studying literature were crazy. We were reading everything – from James Joyce to Iliad and Odyssey. Sometimes, when there was shooting outside, we were forced to stay in (either in the classroom or professors' apartments) where we were acquainted with critical thought and conducted critical discussions." (Interviewee no. 23)

The list of authors who managed to convey a clear but complex message and inspire activists is certainly longer than what was spotted thus far. Similar role to that of Harvey, for the students in Zagreb, was played by Joseph Choonara and his peace „Unraveling Capitalism", in which he managed to „explain Marx in a simple way but without underestimating the audience" (Interviewee no. 14). The influence of the Frankfurt School was also detected. Other authors such as Simone Weil, Eric Hobsbawm, Ellen Meiksis Wood, Noam Chomsky, Perry Anderson, Naomi Klein, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Karl Marx, Silvia Federici, Jacques Ranciere, and Fredric Jameson appear as relevant in the process of "cognitive accumulation" or "cognitive maturation" (not necessarily "cognitive click") – especially in Zagreb.

For some activists, this sort of critical literature represented an entry point, and for others, an upgrade of what they had previously been exposed to. Here I refer to those who were influenced by punk subculture and accompanying literature. For some activists, "entry point" materials included mainly the anarchist fanzines and pamphlet type of literature. Here, we have the case of an activist from Belgrade who got in touch with critical literature quite early in his youth - through punk:

"I started seeing myself as an anarchist quite early in life, during first few years of high school. I gladly read literature about anarcho-communism, Kropotkin the most. One of the most important books for me was Kropotkin's "Anarchism and Moral". Interestingly enough, it was Zoran Đinđić who wrote the preface of that book."[126] (Interviewee no. 30)

Socio-political context and the convincing style of writing are not the only factors that had an impact on the choice of literature. External events or living / studying abroad also influenced the choice of literature one could get in touch with. The reasoning is twofold. Firstly, those activists whose formative years overlapped with war and the first decade (and a half) after the

[126]Tragically assassinated prime minister of Serbia (2001-2003) Zoran Đinđić was famous for his critique of the socialist Yugoslavia both academically and politically. In his youth, this critique was coming from the left anarchist positions, whereas in later years the critique shifted perspective and was coming from the (right) liberal standpoint. According to his own testimony, his PhD studies at the University of Konstanz in Germany, under supervision of Jurgen Habermas, affected this ideological shift.

war had a very limited access to critical literature in general. Those were the years when the hegemonic discourse was manifesting itself offensively (because it was in the early phase of imposition of the new ruling paradigm). Secondly, the events outside former Yugoslavia which have, somewhat in parallel dictated new trends in thought and social/political action, were almost invisible for the region which got itself preoccupied with the 19th century trends, such as nation state building. An activist from Zagreb who spent a period of studying at Humboldt University in Berlin:

"My long March", a book compound of Rudi Dutschke's speeches and writings was very inspiring to me. Long after the blockade [of the Faculty of Philosophy], I got back again to this book and realized how many similarities one may track between their struggle and ours. At the same time, it came as a bit of a depressing insight, since you figure out the cyclical nature of certain struggles. Some things have, practically, never moved progressively forward." (Interviewee no. 4)

This statement also shows that social movements and their experiences do resonate with activists to come. Social and political movements may serve as a form of inspiration and/or motivation, especially when the insights come from the very actors involved in struggles. Rudi Dutschke and literature dealing with his speeches and writings hence resonate with today's activists. Most of inspiration for social action, in terms of cognitive processing and perceiving certain phenomena as socially and/or politically problematic, yet comes from the kind of literature that is not dealing directly with social movements. Bearing that in mind, it seems like Marx's 11th Thesis on Feuerbach[127] poses too sharp division between philosophers and social change. Philosophers do not directly change the world but inspire and shape cognitive maps of those who seek to do so. After (political) philosophy, the most influential branches of literature include sociology and (critique of) political economy. Side by side with other branches of critical theory, the region of former Yugoslavia witnessed the revival of feminism, as well. This branch was influential across the region and inspired many activists who took part in the progressive and counter-hegemonic social movements. An activist from Belgrade:

"It was the afro-feminist literature that opened a whole universe to me – authors such as Audre Lorde or Kate Millett. I was into radical feminism of the mid-1960s and 1970s. I was interested in questioning power relations within patriarchal society, but also within movements for emancipation – the way in which women's movements perpetuate patriarchal models of power relations. My belief in the necessity of participation, deliberation and perception of personal as political comes from this literature." (Interviewee no. 34)

[127] "Philosophers have hitherto only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it."

The problem with former Yugoslavia was, again, a fact that some topics or branches of literature had to be reinvented or rediscovered, for example feminism. After 1978 and the first feminist conference (in Southeast and Eastern Europe) held in Belgrade,[128] the Yugoslav contribution to (the second wave of) feminism was sidelined in the light of the upcoming events (of war and transition). The socialist Yugoslavia received international attention due to its specificity (both in its internal autonomous socialist organization and international non-aligned orientation). Its intellectual production has yet, evaporated with the dissolution of the country and the warfare. The attention was, both internally and internationally, shifted towards ethno-national, religious and conflict-related issues. From "the most important role model for democratic socialism and a leading role in safeguarding international peace" as Erich Fromm wrote in the preface of the Yugoslav edition of "The Sane Society" (1963, 24), this dissolved political space became one after which scholars named hotspots worldwide. This is how we got "Balkanization" as a "hot" term that describes ethnic tension, social and political fragmentation and instability.

What is important here is that identity-based literature could not have shaped anti-hegemonic mindsets in the post-Yugoslav context. On the other hand, it could have shaped either hegemonic or reformist cognitive coordinates. Therefore, the interrupted process of (critical) intellectual production in and about Yugoslav socialism had to be somewhat reinvented. This reinvention included revival of the memory about intellectual production in Yugoslavia. "Going forward, by remembering" as once put by the contemporary Croatian philosopher Boris Buden,[129] became for many *conditio sine qua non* of a counter-hegemonic cognitive development. In other words, without bearing Yugoslav experience in mind no tangible social change could be imagined. An interviewee from Sarajevo:

„The first topics I got interested in were related to feminism. These topics were in line with self-discovering and wondering why you can't be a feminist if you're wearing a hijab. I discovered some articles from the history of feminism. I soon realized that all those topics with cultural and identity-based background do not have serious conceptual foundation. I found way more serious foundation in feminism from the socialist era, which stemmed from Yugoslavia and AFŽ [Women's Antifascist Front]. This guided me into fields where I'm currently at." (Interviewee no. 19)

The range of critical theory that managed to reach, affect and shape cognitive maps of activists in the former Yugoslav region is hence quite wide: from the Critical theory, to feminism, classical Marxism, anarchism, post-Marxism, classical and modern political theory,

[128] See more about this conference in Bonfiglioli 2008

[129] From the endorsement of the book: Suvin, Darko. 2014. *Samo jednom se ljubi: Radiografija SFR Jugoslavije*. Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung.

political economy etc. Schematically, this is how the influence of theory upon the activists looks like when observed for each case:

Table 5.1: *Cognitive Clique*

Cases	Sarajevo's Popular Movement	Zagreb' s Student Movement	Belgrade's Municipal Movement (NDB)
Literature	Psychoanalysis; Classical political Theory, Feminism; (on) social movements;	Critical Theory, Marxism, post-Marxism, sociology, (political) economy, feminism; (on) social movements; anarchism	Urban studies; Political Theory; feminism; anarchism; architecture; "commons"
Authors	Arendt; Žižek; Lacan; de Beauvoir; etc.	Bourdieu; Foucault; Marx; Harvey; Fromm; etc.	Harvey; Arendt; Mayer; Millet; etc.
Specific Tittles	"Sublime Object of Ideology" (Žižek); "The Second Sex" (de Beauvoir); etc.	"Language and Symbolic Power" (Bourdieu); "My long March" (Dutchke); "Unraveling Capitalism" (Choonara); etc.	"On Revolution" (Arendt); "Right to the City" (Harvey); "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" (Mayer); etc.

It is beyond any doubt that the space of former Yugoslavia inherited much more critical (theoretical) knowledge than it produced in the post-socialist era. The strongest influence is nowadays coming either from the socialist past or from abroad because new ideas and practices did not stop appearing in different places and corners of the planet, in the meanwhile. The following subchapter talks about further theoretical insights that affected the occurrence of counter-hegemonic tendencies in three countries, as well as the specific institutional and non-institutional channels of their diffusion – both internal (within the ex-Yugoslav region) and external (from elsewhere).

5.2.2. Diffusion of Theory

As indicated in the theoretical chapter, I am dealing with diffusion of value systems and theoretical knowledge understood as "cognitive inputs", that serve for the formation of individual and collective "cognitive maps", rather than practical "now-how's" or "ready-made" frames, tactics and repertoires. An important role, when talking about diffusion, is reserved for brokers that can be individuals, as well as entire subcultures, or various types of institutions. In classical social movement terms, as argued before, the focus is on interpersonal contacts, organizational linkages, or associational networks (Tarrow 2005). For the purpose of my work I am, in the first place, introducing a distinction between *institutional* and *non-institutional* channels of diffusion. By the institutional channels, I refer mainly to the universities and research centers and institutes, which are entitled to diffusion, as well as the promotion and production of knowledge in every country in the world. On the institutional side, I make further distinction between domestic (internal) and foreign (external) channels, meaning that they could be either within or outside the borders of the three countries in question. Considering that after dissolution of Yugoslavia, most of the internal institutional channels of diffusion of critical thought were closed or, to a large extent, congested so that the new "transitional" paradigm could be set in place without major obstacles, it sounds intuitive that external institutional channels prevailed over the internal ones. By non-institutional channels of diffusion, I mean NGO's, alterative cultural centers, individual brokers and alike.

While the whole region was dreaming about modernization through privatization and economic growth through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), what actually occurred was (further) social and economic stratification and capital accumulation. This typical transitional narrative was, nonetheless, already challenged outside the borders of former Yugoslavia, in both academic and wider social and intellectual circles. This means that the very system, towards which the whole region was heading, had been challenged abroad even before the transition was in full swing. The chance to get in touch with critical theory was given to one of the activists from Belgrade who did his MA at the Central European University in Budapest:

*"*Dorothee Bohle was the head of my department at the CEU. When I first met her and the people in her circle, I said to myself: "Where have you been all this time". The range of authors we were reading spread from left liberals to democratic socialists like [Perry, aut.rem] Anderson or Wolfgang Streeck. It was the first time I found out about the concept of "commons". I attended two courses on political economy, and one of them was "Capitalism in crisis". This was astonishing for someone who's coming from the Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade where we were studying macro-economy. Suddenly, at the CEU I was reading about "commons" or Karl Polanyi. I remember some chapters of his work that we were required to

read, his critique of the notion of "rational man" led by interest (…) "Why are we defending competition in capitalism in which the stronger wins – let the race be held until the end…"…This is what I liked most in Polanyi." (Interviewee no. 36)

The field of political economy was quite developed in former Yugoslavia (it is enough to look at the corpus of works of Branko Horvat[130] for instance). However, during the last thirty years, it almost evaporated as a field of study. Political economy could have been enlightening and precious in revealing the very essence of the new economic logic that affected the whole region. Apart from the economic degradation that destroyed social fabric of entire societies, what made social image degradation possible was a sudden interruption of intellectual and cultural life. All the achievements and seeds of emancipation from the socialist times were either erased or sidelined. New wave, "Praxis" philosophy, self-management – that was all gone and replaced by the mass "culture", free market economy, intellectual passivity and, hence, assimilation to new conditions of life.

According to the testimonies of my interviewees, the new conceptual understanding of "where we stand" and "where we are going" did not manage to reflect the real-life effects of transition. The whole narrative of "development", "democratization", "Europeanization", "liberalization" and (thereby) "modernization", simply did not correspond to the real-life experience of the great majority of population. All these buzzwords embodied nothing else but the process of legitimation of (peripheral) capitalism. On the other side, there were almost no people left who would be both willing and able to deconstruct the essence of the new economic and social reality. Therefore, one had to look for ideational indications that could tell what went wrong elsewhere. With aid of economic sociologists such as Streeck or sociologists such as P. Anderson, one could better understand the phenomena that shaped both social and economic reality on the (post-socialist) capitalist periphery. The importance of external channels of diffusion, mainly universities and particular professors (the last case, for example, showed the importance of Dorothee Bohle), was evident when domestic institutional channels were partially or totally closed. Another, similar experience comes from an activist from Zagreb:

"A year and a half before the blockade of Faculty of Philosophy, I spent some time at Humboldt University in Berlin – at the sociology department. This was an exchange program and, as luck would have it, people talked a lot about RAF due to the 30-year anniversary of the

[130] "Horvat became widely known for his scientific contribution, early on (Benjamin Ward introduced a coinage Marxism-Horvatism into theory of economics). That is why he was invited as a visiting professor to over eighty universities and scientific institutes in the world (…): University of Michigan (1968), University of Florida (1970), American University, Washington (1970, 1972, 1974), Catholic University of Chile (1972), University of Stockholm (1973/4), University of Dar Es Salaam (1975), University of Notre Dame (1978), University of Paris (1978), Yale University (1984-5), Cambridge University (1986), University of Southern California (1987), University of California at Berkley (1993)." Stipetić 2003, 8

“German autumn”. While reading some stuff on the German student movement and RAF, I was thinking about how one can easily resort to terrorism if a society does not react to the obvious examples of injustice and if mechanisms of resistance are nonexistent. This was 2007/8. At the same time, it was the anniversary of the 1968 and suddenly, I found myself surrounded by literature on student movements. I remember attending lectures on urban sociology and gentrification held by Andrej Holm. At that time, he was organizing protests due to gentrification in Prenzlauenberg and shortly after he was accused of terrorist conspiracy and arrested. I did a small research and realized that he was accused because of the law passed after RAF. This law allowed pressing charges for conspiracy if a person was simply suspicious. I remember some parts of the official indictment, such as “he did not use mobile phone” or “he was using code words for communication such as “gentrification”. This case had a strong influence on me and my future interest in RAF and radical movements, both theoretically and practically.” (Interviewee no. 4)

In the previous subchapter, I mentioned the influence of social movement literature on shaping counter-hegemonic mindsets of the activists in former Yugoslavia. Even though the most influential theory was usually more abstract – from philosophy to political economy and more general type of sociology, it was social movements’ practice, direct experience or engagement in social movements abroad that could have become an entering point to the social movement literature. In Sarajevo, we could detect a similar trend of (external) institutional diffusion of (activist) practice, which this time opened doors for (further) theoretical upgrades concerning social movement literature. One activist testified how the activities of the M15 movement prompted her to search for social movement literature which then served as a theoretical upgrade of practical experience.

“In 2012 I went to Barcelona to conduct a research. My former supervisor invited me. In Spain I became aware of mobilization. I could observe what was going on and talk to people from the “M15” directly. Under their influence I started reading about social movements. When I came back to Bosnia, I gathered some people and we started working on the edition where we focused on social justice. Seven days after we presented our work, the protests in Sarajevo started.” (Interviewee no. 25)

The reason why this case is relevant for the social uprising in February 2014 in Sarajevo is because it was precisely this activist who gathered the “core” group of the popular movement. Here, we can practically trace the source and the channel (broker) of diffusion of ideas from one social movement to another. The wave of European uprisings, especially the one in Spain with the “M15” movement got diffused through an (external) institutional channel – the University of Barcelona.

Another case of external institutional diffusion through particular brokerage for theory was detected in Zagreb. This activist did not go abroad to study: he grew up in Germany and came back to Zagreb as an adult. His broker for critical theory was no one else but the school principal. An interesting event "activated" the brokerage:

"I was wearing the "Nazi punks fuck off" T-shirt with a broken swastika. This was in late 1993 or early 1994. At some point, I was sent to the principal's office because some professors reported me and asked for her intervention. She invited me for a meeting and told me that some professors and pupils found my T-shirt insulting. "Insulting for whom?" I asked (…) the principal looked kindly at my grumpiness and stubbornness and gave me Fromm's "The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness". This is how I got introduced to his work. At the time, I was not fully able to understand it linguistically, but I found it interesting. Then I found another Fromm's book in my aunt's house. This was a starting point and my interests turned towards literature, and later towards Camus, *Nietzsche* etc." (Interviewee no. 12)

Not everyone had a chance to study or at least spend some time studying abroad. Internal institutional channels were to a large extent cut off but, in some cases, critical ideas managed to bypass structural and other obstacles and reach the (future) activists. Syllabuses of humanist and social studies were significantly changed after dissolution of Yugoslavia. The greatest changes were made in history books, on all levels of education. However, some disciplines such as architecture or literature remained mostly unchanged, at least when it comes to more classical literature. An interviewee from Belgrade:

"More serious engagement with reading and reaching the level of a solid political consciousness came with my studies of literature which were a gateway to critical theory. You had to read Foucault, which was close to the anarchist narrative. Other French authors such as Derrida and Barthes were there as well (…) when you explore certain genres, such as tragedy, you need to go through Hegel or sociological theories of family, political philosophy and the theory of state, etc." (Interviewee no. 30)

The updated critical literature which could have accurately resonated with the then present state of affairs was lacking, but "the classics" could have served as a solid starting point for further theoretical upgrade. If disciplines such as political science or sociology were "erased" from most references to critical literature, a "careful eye" could have caught more up-to-date references in some less "straightforward", or "suspicious" disciplines. An activist from Zagreb:

"For me and many other people, cultural studies played the role of substitute, in absence of Marxian and other critical theory, which was almost eradicated from the Faculty of Philosophy. These studies were quite important, especially their British "branch" with its critical component. Through the analysis of contemporary consumption within capitalist society, we

actually got a chance to analyze what was happening around us in Croatia – with opening of new shopping centers and other changes. Things we were reading about in cultural studies were actually happening around us." (Interviewee no. 10)

Roughly, here can be identified three types of institutional channels of diffusion in former Yugoslavia: *unchanged syllabuses*; *individual professors (brokers)*; and finally – *newly established (educational) institutions* with a pinch *of* criticalness. The last term mentioned was not discussed so far, but there is one institution of such kind in Sarajevo which played an important role as a channel of diffusion of critical theoretical knowledge. Apart from the earlier mentioned Sarajevo's professors such as Ugo Vlaisavljević (in the context of psychoanalysis) or Gajo Sekulić[131] who could transmit counter-hegemonic theoretical knowledge from the past, an important role was played by the institution called ACIPS, the alumni network of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies. An interviewee from Sarajevo:

"During my first year of studies, ACIPS was quite committed and proactive in terms of organizing public lectures and workshops. I went to the feminist workshop with my sister. I remember some lecturers… During their talk, I found myself silently repeating – "yes", "of course", "sure"... What I felt or gone through before without placing these feelings and experiences in a specific context, they articulated for me. This is how my theoretical path was set and I started reading on my own. That same year, during summer, I got a present from a friend – "The Second Sex" by Simone de Beauvoir. I spent the whole summer reading that book." (Interviewee no. 24)

This testimony somewhat sublimates the entire logic of what I have already talked about in the theoretical chapter. The role of generic knowledge is hereby presented as a systemizer of previously acquired value systems. It establishes links between fragments of value systems by abstracting the level of thinking which, eventually, upgrades and improves reasoning and makes it more plausible to undertake a social/political action.

While new institutional channels of diffusion were, nonetheless, rare, the new internal non-institutional channels played an important role in systematizing and abstracting non-theoretical knowledge. Diffusion of critical knowledge through non-institutional channels was slowly happening since the 1990s. Alternative publishing houses, social centers of alternative culture or festivals of critical theory, activism and art (such as "Subversive Film Festival" in Zagreb or "Open University" in Sarajevo), significantly contributed to the diffusion of critical literature and art on the one hand, and interaction between activists and thinkers, on the other. Under circumstances of institutional closeness and rigidity, as well as the offensive nature of the dominant paradigm, this trend is not surprising. An interviewee from Zagreb:

[131] Gajo Sekulić is a philosopher, translator (from German) of philosophical books, including Hannah Arendt.

"In 2005/6 I got the password for New Left Review (NLR) from the guys from Multimedia institute "MaMa". The following two years I was randomly choosing authors. Every night I read a different author. NLR was important to me because they covered many different fields – from culture to cinema, art, literature, political economy… Before that, I dedicated some time to the "Frankfurt school" and existentialists – which corresponded to my teenage affinities. When I discovered the "Frankfurt school", I became equipped with a critical weapon that stemmed from a certain type of pessimism. At least, that is what I thought while reading Adorno, the "Dialectics of Enlightenment", etc. Fromm was important to me as one of the first authors trying to synthesize Marx and Freud. Right at that time, Žižek's "Sublime Object of Ideology" was translated. This piece echoed quite strongly, and it was widely read." (Interviewee no. 12)

Non-institutional internal channels of diffusion did not develop only in Zagreb. However, the alternative theoretical scene in Zagreb had a very strong impact on the rest of the region. This is why the first big scale anti-hegemonic activist endeavor (the occupation of the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb), played a role of a diffusion channel. Occupation thus affected activists in Belgrade and Sarajevo, but also many among the activists of the student movement itself. Many of them found their first, or first convincing theoretical articulation, precisely during or due to the blockade. An interviewee from Zagreb:

"After the blockade I learned where my frustration was coming from. The main problem was that there were no answers to questions and phenomena happening around me. My thoughts were my only source of explanation. At the Faculty of Philosophy (before that I was studying law), I got in touch with Alex Callinicos and his essay on theory of education. As a result, I got more interested in the issue of higher education. After that, S. gave me some books, and I started reading Athussere, Marx, Lebowitz, Harvey…" (Interviewee no. 1)

As already stressed in the fourth chapter, student movement indeed represented the critical vanguard for the entire region and thereby emitted critical discourses and transmitted knowledge, inwards and outwards. Some activists who took part in Sarajevo uprising and organized plenums in 2014, also participated in Zagreb student movement in 2009. Originally coming from the Herzegovinian part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this interviewee got herself equipped with theoretical apparatus in Zagreb. She came back to Bosnia, to Sarajevo, only couple of months before the protests started:

"I start realizing who I am, politically, only when I came to the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. This was a very specific environment, where people had similar worldviews to those I previously acquired. This is where I equipped myself with clearer articulation of different issues – from social justice, to anti-nationalism, equality, anti-homophobia… Everything I had already known, I started understanding as a part of a wider context. The key period for my theoretical formation happened at the time of the blockade. This was the first time I heard about the

concept called neoliberal capitalism. I already read some Marx and I knew about the Marxist reading groups but the moment I really became aware of my social environment was when the occupation started. You realize that there are many people around you whose knowledge of certain issues is so deep and comprehensive. You just feel like a kid next to people like Ž, or K… Step by step, you gain self-confidence and you start reading more and articulating things in a clearer and more convenient way, on your own…" (Interviewee no. 16)

When talking about diffusion of ideas from Croatia to the rest of the region, one should mention that the student movement was not the only source/channel through which critical ideas spread outside Croatia. Before the student movement, there was a group of urban development and green activists and theorists whose work eventually overlapped with what NDB movement from Belgrade started doing couple of years later. It was the so called "Pula group"[132] that produced ideas which soon got diffused eastwards, towards the Serbian capital city. The brokering role was, among others, played by the group gathered around the movement for "Varšavska Street" in Zagreb[133] whose activities took place between 2006 and 2013. Even though green and urban development activists were not directly involved in the student movement in Zagreb (but were highly supportive, providing the student movement with infrastructural and logistical support), they were more directly involved in the occurrence of similar activist scene in Serbia and acted as true brokers for diffusion of ideas from the "Pula group" to the NDB activists in Belgrade. An interviewee from Belgrade:

"I found the publication issued by the "Pula group" called "The City of Postcapitalism and the Operation City: Handbook for Neoliberal Reality". There you could find the articles written by Lefebre, Harvey, Smith… "Pula group" was the first who started dealing with issues such as city development, its alternatives and pushed forward the concept of right to the city." (Interviewee no. 29)

It is not by chance that the activists from Belgrade got influenced by Zagreb (and Pula). By the time of 2008/9 global economic crisis, Serbia still did not develop an independent, larger scale, substantially critical activist scene. No relevant social actor had gone out of the box designed by coordinates imposed by the transitologist paradigm.[134] Situation in Croatia was somewhat different. By 2008/9, conditions for the occurrence of the student movement were already set in place. It is not by chance that many other universities across Croatia supported

[132] See more about "Pula group" on the following link: http://praksa.hr/zadruga/

[133] "Varšavska Street" is euphemism for series of actions conducted by two organizations: "Green action" and "Right to the City" from Zagreb from 2006 until 2013. The main goal was, at first, prevention of building a shopping mall and a garage in the city center (in Varšavska Street and downtown Zagreb, including the square called "Cvjetni Trg"). Actions included direct actions, protests, petitions and other.

[134] The exception was the student movement which occupied the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade in 2006. Even though it was this group which had a certain degree of influence upon the student movement in Zagreb three years later, it never reached either public visibility or political credibility in Serbia.

their colleagues from Zagreb and occupied their universities as well. This means that the critical consciousness and the activist network were already developed. Apart from the activists gathered around "Varšavska Street", the role of brokers for diffusion of critical ideas was also played by events. The occupation of the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb was certainly the most significant one. An interviewee from Belgrade:

"You couldn't find Harvey at the Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade, of course. In 2009 I went to Zagreb and found the edited volume of "Right to the City". This is how I got interested in spatial aspect of social justice. This aspect seemed very appropriate for politicization because it's the most visible (…) For May Day holiday I went to Zagreb just to see what is going on over there. This is where I found these books. I witnessed to endless discussions at plenums and saw how emotional they were. At the same time, nonetheless, discussions were functional and tactical. I have never seen something like that before, not even in movies. I saw enthusiasm, alternative lectures… That was a festival of events. They literally made a small political community which was way more important, even for education itself - than the shitty university they were occupying. They made a space of active socialization." (Interviewee no. 33)

The reason why this activist went to Zagreb was the already built network of friends and acquaintances between activists (and future activists), from Belgrade and Zagreb. Their friendships were formed during the above-mentioned workshops and seminars organized by various NGOs which sought to teach the youngsters about "liberal and civic values". Internalization of those values was supposed to create a new generation of carriers of transition and consequentially, the new liberal ("open") society. Anti-nationalism, tolerance, cosmopolitanism and openness of mind were compounding elements of such workshops and seminars. Their attendees were usually anti-nationalist by primary socialization. However, their critical minds (according to the testimonies) simply found the new NGO driven discourse of tolerance and liberal values either as "not showing the full picture" or often misleading. NGOs, hence, ended up having the unintended effect of gathering more radical minds than they could possibly comprehend and control. Both general reality and personal (family) social and economic conditions of those youngsters simply did not correspond with their discourse. That is why some sessions also served, according to the testimonies, to make fun of the (imposed) narratives.

The activists (mainly from Zagreb and Belgrade) who attended these "schools of peace and tolerance", as they claim, were fully aware that most of the economic and appropriate political (institutional) reforms which caused social and economic degradation were underpinned by these same NGOs and their donors. Most of the international and domestic NGOs played an essential role in promoting what is usually called "European values". This was how the narrative

of modernization, democratization and Europeanization was pushed forward. The final consequence was the establishment of the binary opposition between the pro-European, moderate reformers and the anti-European, nationalist camp (especially in Serbia). The "radical wing" of the attendees took what was useful from such gatherings (personal contacts) and discarded what was useless for tangible social change (basically, everything else).

"My interest in politics began at summer camps where some Americans aimed to gather us (from the region of former Yugoslavia) and talk about reconciliation. These gatherings played an important role in my decision to study political sciences and raised my general interest in politics – but not in a direct way. There was usually "peace, peace, peace, no one is guilty"[135] kind of atmosphere and we would go there and make fun of it. They first wanted us to get into fight with each other and then to reconcile. This was my entry point to politics. At the first year of my studies I got tired of all these nationalism related topics and started being more interested in social justice." (*ibid*.)

The attendees of such seminars often felt treated as the pioneers, not to say kids, who needed to learn about what they are supposed to build, and how. This treatment of the post-socialist societies as "schools", in which its constituency is infantilized and perceived as pupils, is known in the literature on post-socialist transition as well.[136] Clearly detectable and visible misconceptions of the new civil society were often justified as necessary or "natural", as painful but in the end – just. Layoffs after privatizations were not the focus – the accent was on the "rationalization of economy" instead. Certain perspectives of the economic endeavors were either ignored or purposefully sidelined. Both mainstream institutional and non-institutional channels of diffusion of ideas and thought were swamped with transitional narrative.

Another goal of counter-hegemonic tendencies in the post-socialism was to shed light on the fact that the beginning of transition after dissolution of Yugoslavia was not the "ground zero" of social, political and economic development of this region. When talking about diffusion of critical (theoretical) knowledge, one should emphasize that some activists lived, learned, read and overall, experienced the Yugoslav era that became the biggest "enemy" of the post-Yugoslav hegemonic discourse. Sarajevo's popular movement was mostly compound of activists older (on average) than those in Zagreb and Belgrade. Some of them were born during the late sixties and seventies. This difference had also certain effects to the theoretical sources and channels of diffusion of critical knowledge. Here we can observe an increased possibility of theoretical stagnation among those who were in their early 20s when the war in former Yugoslavia (1991-1995) begun. Deprivation of the possibility to read and possibly, get affected

[135] This is a song that is usually sung among kids after fights, during which they clutch each other's pinky fingers and sing the chant as a sign of reconciliation. "Mir, mir, mir, niko nije kriv" (Serbian version).
[136] See: Buden 2012

by critical theory especially applies to those activists who were either participants in the war or had to run and hide in fear of being mobilized and sent to war or, got wounded during the war as civilians. Their early theoretical inputs were not deep or systematic, but they were in some ways more powerful, in comparison to what the next couple of generations were exposed to, during their teenage years. Historical moment was different. The role of Yugoslavia in international affairs and its internal organization were different as well. An interviewee from Sarajevo:

"I was getting theoretical information sporadically – mainly through real experiences, documentary movies and conversations. I was fascinated by Bader-Meinhof, Brigate Rosse, ETA, IRA. I found these topics in newspapers' articles during high school. I looked at those people as if they were heroes from the Greek tragedy… No matter how powerful their rivals were, and in spite of numerous deadlocks, they still had the courage and strength to fight. I wasn't sure whether they should've killed Aldo Moro, but the very fact that there are people who do not "go with the flow" seemed appealing. I remember that Slobodan Drakulić held a presentation of the book called "Terrorists" in Zagreb. Those people really came! You could see them, with their beards, yellow fingers and sunglasses. Those were the channels of my theoretical impulses." (Interviewee no. 26)

The last channel of diffusion worth mentioning has to do with internet which had already been in common use for couple of years before the rise of the student movement in Croatia in 2008/2009. This channel might be thus prescribed to the *external events* which affected the counter-hegemonic reasoning in the former Yugoslav region via internet. Considering that the student movement started occurring alongside with the global economic crisis, this factor undoubtedly appears as relevant for both collective endeavors and individual interest in certain political issues. As indicated by one of the interviewees, "the dynamics would have been way different had we been the same age in 2002" (Interviewee no. 10). Nonetheless, the crisis with its global consequences triggered individual interest for certain branches of literature and streams of theory. This interest, yet, would have never been triggered had there not been for internet and online platforms through which knowledge was acquired. An interviewee from Zagreb:

"Before the blockade we had a reading group that talked about Marx's "Capital". People from various universities participated, not only those from the Faculty of Philosophy. We were reading other texts as well – for instance, I remember reading Laclau. This was by no means a simple endeavor, since there was no conventional institutional framework, and no one previously held lectures about it. I think the catalyst was the 2007/8 economic crisis. There were different web portals (Guardian, Monthly Review) where you could find articles and

references to books tackling this issue. The moment of crisis was therefore important because the system turned out not to be as good as we thought." (Interviewee no. 10)

The factor of crisis inspired future activists to start reading literature relevant for the historical moment they found themselves in. We have already mentioned that some of them found the "New Left Review" quite appealing and perceived it as a relevant source in those times. Crisis, thus, appeared as an external factor contributing to the choice of topics, literature and authors. Theoretical insights and the acquisition of more abstract knowledge (on topics related to the crisis, among others) helped systematize their worldview value/knowledge systems before, during and after the practical endeavors undertaken by the student movement.

The external factors for literature choices at the level of (theoretical) systematization of previously adopted worldviews are not limited only to the global economic crisis. Considering the generation of activists involved in the student movement in Zagreb, these pre-crisis events played a role in the period between the non-theoretical (worldview) and the theoretical phase of individual cognitive development. One could label this period as the phase of experimentation in the transitional period between worldviews and more serious conceptual apparatus:

"I remember when the situation with movements and [anti-G8 protests in] Genoa was acute. At that time, I was dabbling with research on "Black Block" and similar topics. Simultaneously, the issue of Islamic fundamentalism was omnipresent and I considered it as an identity of resistance, something similar to being a Serb in Croatia. This is why I started reading Said and other literature related to political Islam. This prompted me to start studying Turkish language at the University." (Interviewee no.11)

The wave of social movements' confrontation with the globalized capitalism was much more than a marginal political phenomenon, and it was already reaching a significant level of strength during the late 1990s. Nonetheless, echoes of events such as anti-WTO protest (also called "Battle for Seattle") in 1999 or anti-G8 protest in Genoa in 2001, did not reach societies of former Yugoslavia (at the time of happening) in a form of direct incentive for social action, or indirect channel of diffusion of critical theory. A radical critique of the *status quo* was at the time still absent from this region. The hegemony of the post-socialist condition was still too strong. However, such echoes did reach some members of the former Yugoslav youth later, when they were in their early formative phase. The time for operationalization of the acquired knowledge was, again, about to appear only several years later. What remains important is that critical knowledge managed to find a way through and launch the wave of counter-hegemonic thought and action in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before the concluding remarks of this part, here is the scheme of channels of diffusion:

Table 5.2: *Channels of Diffusion*

Cases	**Sarajevo's Popular Movement**	**Zagreb's Student Movement**	**Belgrade's Municipal Movement (NDB)**
Institutional Channels of Diffusion	CEU (external); University of Barcelona (external); ACIPS (internal);	Faculty of Philosophy – cultural studies (internal); Humboldt University (external);	CEU (external); Faculty of Philology – studies of Literature (internal);
Non-Institutional Channels of Diffusion	Faculty of Philosophy – event of occupation (informal seminars); book presentations and other informal gatherings of activists;	Multimedia institute "MaMa"; Internet (NLR, Guardian etc.); Faculty Philosophy – event of occupation (informal seminars); NGO seminars	Faculty of Philosophy – event of occupation (informal seminars); "Pula group"; Faculty of Philosophy – event of occupation (internal);

5.3. Conclusion

Theory undoubtedly influences counter-hegemonic construction of reality. Critical theory, to be more precise, "challenge the existing social order" (Keucheyan 2013, 2) by challenging the dominant paradigm along its three pillars expressed through narratives about the past, present, and the future. The hegemonic interpretation of reality along these three time references stands for the process of reproduction of the existing power relations in the present moment and as an "investment" for the unchanged power relations in the future. Hegemonic perception of the past is nonetheless, very important for the hegemonic forces and usually the hardest to deconstruct for the counter-hegemonic forces.

In the given context of post-socialism, the struggle over meaning of the socialist (recent) past has become central on the "battlefield" where hegemony and counter-hegemony compete. In this chapter, one could notice how challenging became, for the activists who went through the experience of socialism, to distinguish between their personal experiences and collectivized dominant memory of socialism. Even personal memory (which is personal experience encapsulated as memory) tends to show all its susceptibility to externally imposed revisionism and easily "assimilate" the newly established official (collective) memory.

On the other hand, the youth has grown up without any previous experience or memory of the socialist times. They were socialized and educated in the post-socialist zeitgeist. Knowledge that seeks to counter-balance such tendencies of historical revisionism comes both from theoretical and non-theoretical camp. On the non-theoretical side, it is the knowledge based on the "non-contaminated" memory of socialism, usually conveyed through family habitus. The cases of Belgrade and Zagreb especially show this pattern, whereas the case of Sarajevo also includes activists who had their own memory ("non-contaminated" by the post-socialist interpretation of it) based on personal experience (they did not need family mediators).

At the side of theoretical knowledge, the dominance of post-socialist perception of the socialist past could be contested under condition of that early socialization predisposed further development of a critique (though some exceptions are also traced). Alternatively, though in rare cases, theory could have played the role of the "corrector" of conservative worldviews inherited from the family habitus. An instance where generic (theoretical) knowledge plays a more significant role is the counter-hegemonic perception of the further, hence pre-socialist past. Narratives of the "glorious past" of specifically "just" inclinations of a certain nation throughout centuries are usually constructed through the means of historical revisionism. Picking some elements of heritage and neglecting others, as well as pure falsification or exaggeration of historical events were constitutive of that endeavor. Serbian "Kosovo battle" or Croatian "1000-year dream about a nation" fall under such narratives. The task of critical

theories is, nonetheless, not only to combat these narratives and illuminate their falseness. Their task is primarily embodied in building and supporting a critical stance with respect to the *function* these narratives have in legitimization of contemporary state of affairs in post-socialism.

Domination over the past is the basis for domination over the present and the future. The battlefield of the present is, nonetheless, different due to a single feature: direct experience is not missing because everyone lives in present times. Intuitively, no one would expect that socially disadvantaged and economically deprived are doubtful about their social and economic condition, regardless of the dominant narrative behind it. If this was so, resistance would not be exceptional, and researchers would not study it. The situation is reverse precisely because narratives about the past and the future interfere with the perception of the present. Illumination of the present condition is inseparable from demystification of the past and the future, but it also has its own autonomous misconceptions. Theoretical insights about these misconceptions, from the domain of the Critical theory (Frankfurt School) or critical urban and municipal studies have very much to say about consumerism, gentrification and many other phenomena which have been shaping individual lives in post-socialism. In Zagreb, theoretical influences leaned to the side of Critical theory and Marxism of a more classical type and to a certain extent, post-Marxism. In Belgrade, it was municipalism and critical urban studies that prompted many individual activists to reassess the dominant vision of the "development" of Belgrade in present time. In Sarajevo, there was more psychoanalysis and classical political theory (among other branches of literature). This is why generic knowledge could have played an important role in revealing the logic behind contemporary processes within the post-socialist time and space.

The non-theoretical knowledge, on the other hand, could cover the side of direct experience that managed to avoid being encapsulated by the greater transitional narrative. If someone's parents lost their job in an industrial town, if factories were destroyed through privatization, one needed no special glasses to perceive that, objectively, life became more difficult and insecure. Seemingly, no generic knowledge was needed for such endeavor. Yet, the narrative about "painful but necessary transformation of the economy" stayed at the very center of the post-socialist legitimation machinery. Knowledge extracted from direct experience needed either theoretical supplement (as argued above) or some sort of additional non-theoretical insights which could come from the counter-hegemonic journalism, subversive art contents or similar sources. Together, these two types of knowledge, theoretical and non-theoretical, could form a counter-hegemonic set of knowledge which was then to be acquired through certain channels, and under certain (social) circumstances.

Consequently, it was not only the past and the present, but also the projection of future that had to be deconstructed. There is a saying in Serbia: "Our future is very predictable, unlike our past". This means that uncertainty stays in the past, since the historical events constantly get reset, reframed, forgotten or falsified under the weight of historical revisionism. On the contrary, the future is very certain and bright since the transition will inevitably end up "successful". In a nutshell, this is how the transitional narrative goes. Due to lack of any possible experience from the future, the role of non-theoretical knowledge in deconstruction of such hegemonic projections is reduced. Possibly, this role may be played by certain literature, such as dystopian descriptions of future society whose traces in form of signs or "poetry from the future" (Horvat 2019) could also be detected in present times. The narrative about "brighter future" is, nonetheless, to be more powerfully deconstructed by the means of logic and critical theory.

"The light at the end of transitional tunnel" and its brightness is induced by means of transitional narrative about the past and the present. This light at the end of transitional tunnel, as argued by Žižek, could also be portrayed as "another train approaching from the opposite direction" (Žižek 2014, 248). The most efficient theoretical apparatus through which the projected "transitional" future could be challenged is probably the one of political economy. Analyses that can cover the relationship between the economic center, semi-periphery and periphery, usually show either limited or no chances of having any sort of "brighter future" under given unequal economic relations.

Table 5.3: *The role of Theory and Non-Theory expressed through Time References*

Type of counter-hegemonic knowledge	**Dominant Narrative about the Past**	**Dominant Narrative about the Present**	**Dominant Narrative about the Future**
Deconstruction through Theory	Desirable, but not necessary upgrade of the progressive non-theoretical basis	Crucial for understanding the wider image of transitional reality (abstracting experience)	Crucial for understanding and following the logical trace of events (stages) of transitional journey (thus anticipating the future)
Deconstruction through Non-Theory	Fundamentally important influence of "uncontaminated" memory (conveyed or lived)	Significant, to an extent; Direct experience/ socially engaged art / critical journalism	Small or non-significant role, except maybe in cases of dystopian literature which could send "letters from the future"

Even though these inputs come from individual activists, the final shape of movements' discourses and their conceptual content is the product of specific dynamics of collective identity formation. In this part, we discussed the origins and channels of diffusion of critical knowledge acquired by individual activists. In the following, final part, we are dealing with the dynamics of collective identity creation that allowed the above-mapped concepts and individual cognitive contributions to find their place within discourses of the three social movements in question.

Chapter 6: Consolidation of Discourses through Collective Cognition

In the chapter four, "Mapping Concepts", the three epistemic discourses were decomposed. From the analysis, it became clear that all of them rest upon counter-hegemonic epistemic content. In order to trace the origins of conceptual apparatuses employed by the three movements, I started digging deep into the origins of the acquired counter-hegemonic knowledge, on the level of individual activists. After elaborating the role of theoretical and non-theoretical knowledge in the process of what McAdam calls "cognitive liberation" (and formation of critical cognitive maps), the research circle can be closed by analyzing the dynamics of conceptual/epistemic discursive consolidation.

In order to do this, one should look at the specific niche of the process of collective identity formation which is, to remind the readers, presented in this work as "a process of integrating different sources of cognitive influences into a movement identity" (Eyerman and Jameson 1991, 70). This specific niche has to do with conceptual positioning within collective identity building. In the "discursive part", I tackled the theme of structural and contextual factors, as well as factors related to the type of a given social movement that played a role in this positioning. All these factors could partially explain epistemic contents of the three types of discourse from the macro perspective. In this part, focus is shifting from macro to meso level and addresses internal/organizational characteristics of social movements. Primarily, the aim is to assess internal organizational and other advantages and/or disadvantages, which affected the way in which epistemic discourses of the three activist collectives have been constructed. Thereby, I seek to illuminate the way in which individual cognitive inputs were subjected to the forces typical for collective identity building (in the wider sense of meaning) and, consequently, the way in which these cognitive inputs ended up organized in epistemic discourses as detected in the chapter four. In addition, I am looking at the way in which internal organizational factors affected conceptual choices and coherency of conceptual edifices, overall.

To remind the readers, the main front-running master-frame in Zagreb was constructed around the issue of "free education", causes of its degradation (neoliberalism, interest of capital, etc.) and a set of supportive master-frames compound of concepts such as (social) justice or social and economic rights. In Belgrade, the main focus was on the commons, public goods and "right to the city", whereas the set of supportive master-frames included reinvention of the concept of self-management, the rule of law and alike. Finally, Sarajevo's "front-running" master-frames were social justice and (human) dignity, supported by concepts such as "transitional theft", nepotism, corruption, etc. Obviously, Belgrade and Zagreb had narrower "frontrunners" and more general supportive master-frames. Sarajevo, on the other hand, had more general frontrunners, and more specific supportive master-frames. One should wonder

why these epistemic discourses, apart from the above analyzed structural and contextual factors, ended up having such shapes. Considering that activists, individually, carried more than a few theoretical (and non-theoretical) streams of thought, the research showed that the process of collective conceptual identification was determined by several (internal/organizational) factors. Among others, the identified factors are:

1. Activist networks;
2. Level of interpersonal trust;
3. Organizational forms: deliberation and hegemony;
4. Social base and external factors[137]

These four factors are detected throughout the empirical research which included both discourse analysis and qualitative in-depth interviews. Additional epistemic tools of mine were firsthand insights on the dynamics of collective identity building, especially in cases of Sarajevo and Belgrade. In the context of the main research focus, the four factors through which the discursive consolidation is to be assessed and analyzed are derived from various formal and informal social and scientific activities undertaken before and throughout the research process.

6.1. Genesis of the Development of Activist Networks

The role of social networks in social movement studies has been widely researched. Within cultural approach, "social ties have been treated as consisting of processes of meaning attribution" *(*Diani 2003, 5; in Diani and McAdam 2013). This approach is, as argued in the theoretical chapter, only partially applied in this thesis. Nonetheless, what concerns me specifically is not the question of how different collective actors get to form alliances (networks) once they are already established as separate actors. Instead, the question of *how networks matter* is about to be addressed in "relation to inter-organizational dynamics, while wondering what can the shape of inter-organizational links tell us about the main orientations of specific movements" (*ibid.*, 4). The focus is, in other words, the interaction between individuals and smaller groups whose intercommunication eventually ended up as a single activist entity. Furthermore, network analysis is suitable when dealing with internal dynamics of various segments of collective identity formation, including discursive consolidation. This perspective, namely, "prompts a reflection on the relationship between social networks and the cognitive maps through which [collective] actors make sense of, and categorize their social environment, locating themselves within broader webs of ties and

[137] Under "external factors" I mean both transnational influences and effects that eventually came from another city or region within the same national state.

interactions" (*ibid.*, 5). Before final consolidation, the three social movements in question undertook three different "networking" pathways.

Firstly, the Croatian activist scene was quite fragmented prior to the blockade (of the Faculty of Philosophy) in 2009. Green, anarchist and anti-war groups were present, but not very connected. None of them (except for the anti-war campaigns and activities) received any serious public visibility. In 2007/8 the discussion over Croatian membership in NATO provoked activists and groups to organize and agitate against joining this military alliance. The anti-NATO protests became the first point of serious convergence between activists of various interests and profiles in the post-socialist Croatia.

Simultaneously, a group of students started organizing joined reading sessions on Marx and other critical thinkers. Central reading group was the one focused on reading "Das Capital". In parallel, the internet forum with students of the Faculty of Philosophy was gathering people who discussed different social and political issues. Most of the ideological and other divergences typical for processes of collective identity building actually took place online, before the occurrence of the well-organized student movement in 2008/2009. This is why deal-braking conflicts among the core members had already been resolved (with or without agreement on certain points) by the time discursive consolidation and joined activities reached their peak. This does not mean that no divisions existed within the student movement. Most generally, the most important division that the core group inherited from the past was the one between more theory-oriented people and those who were more into practical action.

Those who were more theory-oriented had previously discussed major conceptual issues in a sort of, "intellectual isolation". Those involved in previous actions such as anti-NATO or anti-Bologna (higher education reform) campaign (carried out mainly by the group gathered in the so called "Bologna section") came out of these actions more united. On one side, there were people from the internet forum and the reading/debating group, whereas on the other were anti-NATO activists, the Greens, members of the student parliament and members of the newly established "Bologna section", in charge of analyzing documents related to the (Bologna higher education) reform. Even though the "theorists" participated in the big protest against joining NATO (2008), the crucial question remained – how to bring the two groups closer to one another. The "practitioners" were successful in mobilization and this is what made them relevant. The "theorists" were, nonetheless, equipped and seemingly capable of articulating a more radical critique:

"We [the "Bologna section"] organized the first protest in spring 2008 and it was framed as "let the institutions do their job". The "Bologna reform" was not questioned as such, but the inability of the reformers to implement it. This protest was organized by the so called "Bologna section" and 5000 people showed up. This was the first time in 20 years that so many students

participated in a protest. Everyone was worried about their studies. At that moment, it was clear that students were willing to do something and become active." (Interviewee no. 14)

The "theorists" were more radical in their views than the "practitioners". Discrepancy between radical nature of the theorist group and reformism of the majority in the practice-oriented group showed two opposite tendencies within the movement that was about to occur. Reconciling these two groups, yet, became the *conditio sine qua non* for the establishment of a solid collective and consolidation of the collective's discourse. At the same time, one could see what bridging theory with practice actually looked like. The theoretical branch wanted, after almost two years of discussions via forum and reading groups, to politicize the student issue. Others from the "practice-oriented" branch were (mostly) concerned with finding the way to challenge much narrower problems – such as the "Bologna reform".

More importantly, these two fractions came together before the blockade and this is why the group of people working on the strategy for occupation grew to a couple of dozens. They managed to come together mainly due to personal contacts which, again, they owe largely to the specificity of the social habitus within which the movement was occurring. Things were not however arranged smoothly, precisely because of the divergences between more and less radical activists coming from the two groups:

"The first serious conflict within the group happened between those who perceived the student issue as something to be kept as strictly technical and those who thought of politicizing the whole thing. The first group [of "practitioners"] was thinking in terms of redistribution, wanting to address the "inefficacy of the state apparatus". However, when the main agitators and supporters of the blockade came closer to those from the student parliament, the number of people founding the initial group grew to 40-50." (Interviewee no. 12)

The biggest event that these two groups organized together was the student protest in November 2008. That was the first protest "for free education". By that time, a higher level of synchronization between theory and practice oriented groups was yet to be achieved. This protest was among those activities that brought people together and helped them to get to know each other better. Undoubtedly, this familiarity preconditioned the very possibility of the two fractions to come together[138] in the dawn of the act of occupation. They became one "body" that expressed itself through "initial committee". This committee became the core of

[138]The "practitioners" and "theoreticians" are formulated here on the basis of previous collective activities. Some people were (almost) exclusively concerned with reading groups (Marx's "Capital" for instance), others (almost) exclusively with practical actions (anti-NATO campaign, "Bologna reform" protest). This does not mean that people from one group did not participate in the activities of another. There were two focuses, practical and theoretical, and this analytical division seeks to capture these two "specializations".

the student movement, with its more theoretical group on one side and more practice-oriented branch on the other.

The municipal movement in Belgrade (NDB) had several years of developmental genesis and network building before it took the final (discursive) shape. Tracing this genesis mostly means following the two processes: one being the occurrence of the activist scene in Belgrade in general; and the other process of gathering and formation of what will later become the core group of NDB. The movement itself is, as we have already seen, comprised of individuals with various interests: from urban development and architecture to political theory and philosophy, literature, cultural politics, art etc. "Right to the city" appears as conceptual "glue" that nonetheless had to find its way through a dense network of interpersonal linkages and interactions.

First contacts between the (future) activists were established in several different ways. Some of them went to school together, others knew each other from the (re)emerging subcultural (punk) scene, or they knew each other from the neighborhood but started hanging out more intensely later. Seminars, workshops and "reconciliation programs" also enabled people to meet each other. "George Soros connected us", one of the activists jokingly declared.

"They would gather us and start talking about "open society". We would then sigh every time they said something foolish. I remember when two guys - one from Zagreb's initiative "Right to the city" and one member of today's NDB, started singing "Bandiera Rossa" (…) then the organizers would usually start blackmailing you, saying that you won't get a scholarship if you don't listen. But you'd turn around and you see many familiar faces from the subcultural scene. You'd locate them and you'd hang out with them – otherwise you could go crazy listening to all those fantasies about "open society"." *(Interviewee no. 30)*

Importantly, initial networking and consolidation of the future NDB activists was happening within a wider process of (re)emergence of the alternative activist scene. Croatian actions for Varšavska Street and the student movement, as well as the ideas such as David Harvey's "right to the city" spread to Serbia. Diffusion of ideas pushed forward marginal activist scene in Belgrade and resulted in several smaller and bigger scale actions in the years to come. Belgrade's activist scene has not inherited any sort of previously assumed or constructed habitus within which it could have matured (like it was the case with the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb). Instead, its development went hand in hand with various smaller scale activities that were supposed to build a more serious activist scene.

NDB's "journey" started when several partially interlinked or simply parallel small-scale activities converged and started "communicating" with each other. One of the decisive moments was when the two activists who had a radio show called "The Ministry of Space"

(streamed at the "New Radio Belgrade") and those who organized street galleries – came together. The linkage between them was partially made through punk subculture and partially as acquaintances from "the city".[139] This was when the core organization of (future) NDB called "The Ministry of Space" was created.

Apart from NGO workshops, (punk) concerts and house parties, the forerunning activities to the NDB included two bigger scale actions. The first one was the occupation of the building of "Inex Film" in 2011.[140] From then on, the process of consolidation of the alternative activist scene got accelerated. What followed were smaller scale activities and gatherings and, consequentially, the occupation of the cinema "Zvezda"[141] in 2014. Only in retrospect did "Inex Film" and "Zvezda" become constitutive elements of the genesis and consolidation of this movement. In parallel, the (future) NDB kept pushing the activist scene forward, as the (still underdeveloped) activist scene pushed the NDB. Consequentially, this municipal movement became the most influential new actor of Serbian alternative activist scene.

The importance of previous activist experience, including the above mentioned two bigger scale and several smaller scale actions, was confirmed in 2015. The "core" group gathered around "The Ministry of Space" was enriched by individual activists and other smaller organizations that were joining along the way – from the occupation of "Inex Film" (2011) to cinema "Zvezda" (2014). Both "Inex Film" and "Zvezda" were actions in which different actors tried to claim hegemony over meaning. In "Inex Film" the anarchists finally prevailed, even though the "Ministry of space" was best organized. In spite, or precisely because of that, they decided to leave and let the space "take on a life of its own".

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[139] Here lies an interesting specificity of Belgrade as the biggest center of urban life in former Yugoslavia. Several interviewees indicated Belgrade party life as important for connections, acquaintances and finally, friendship. One of the core activists of NDB was famous for his house parties. One of his closest activist "colleagues" today - explained how she met him in person only after she had been attending his parties several times. The reason she had not met him at the parties before, was that they were always so crowded that she never managed to get further from the stairs. She never actually managed to enter the house. The "urban" momentum of Belgrade has persisted until nowadays, but the subversive character of its party life has been either significantly weakened or lost.

[140] "Inex Film" was a social cinematographic company dealing with movie production and distribution. It was a part of former Yugoslav mega company "Inex" that was among the biggest exporters in the socialist Yugoslavia. The estimated value of this company was couple of hundreds of millions of euros. Today, the building of "Inex Film" in Višnjička Street is devastated and abandoned. Inside there are no traces of its history. Hence, it may be seen through the paradigm of brutal capitalist transition and privatization we have been witnessing in the last twenty years (…) Due to symbolic value that this space had in the context of Yugoslav cultural production and its heritage, and due to the fact that it was created as a space of social property belonging to then socialist society, we found its usage a legitimate act of using common infrastructure for the needs of contemporary collective production, knowledge exchange and development of cultural and activist contents." This description is taken from the second call for collective action in the occupied building of "Inex Film" on the 14.5.2011. Available online: https://kontekstprostor.wordpress.com/tag/inex-film/

[141] See more about the occupation of "Zvezda" on the following link: http://tourdescinemas.com/zvezda-cinema-beograd/?lang=en

Meanwhile, the future "core" of NDB partially flowed into the NGO sphere (roundtables, public debates, publications etc.) and partially continued thinking about possible spaces and methods of a more systemic contestation of the *status quo*. Occupation of the privatized and practically dysfunctional cinemas in Belgrade was in their thoughts ever since they left "Inex Film". Finally, in 2014, together with students of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts and culture workers (most of them pertaining to film and theater industry), they occupied cinema "Zvezda" in the very center of Belgrade. At first, it looked like the cinema could have become a perfect symbol of the transitional theft and a suitable niche of politicization.

"The whole thing became more politicized with "Zvezda". The guy who bought the cinema didn't buy it because he wanted to run it but because he wanted to extract profit. He could do it because someone close to the day's government allowed him. His name is Nikola Živanović and he is the best man of Mlađan Dinkić."[142] (Interviewee no. 27)

It turned out, however, that the majority focused exclusively on issues concerning workers in the film industry. Another attempt of politicization thereby failed. The importance of both "Inex" and "Zvezda" was, nonetheless, confirmed later. The years of 2014/15 were significant because the "Ministry of Space", together with some ten people from other fields, formed the cornerstone of the NDB movement.

Finally, epistemic discourse of the popular movement in Sarajevo developed through events that happened prior to consolidation of the "core" activists. In other words, the protest events in Tuzla and later in Sarajevo simply forestalled collective identity formation, including discursive consolidation of the popular movement. This process took place along the way. The order of events, whereby the unarticulated and (quite) violent protests preceded the formation of more or less formalized group of activists with some vision, imposed a serious organizational limitation and prevented the group from taking more serious control over discourse.

Since the core group came together after the beginning of protests, their gathering could be perceived as a reaction to the protests. The collective "cognitive map" was, hence, yet to be set in an *ad-hoc* manner, retroactively. What the activists could try was channeling the energy from the streets into the plenary session and organizing discourse around the demands coming from the street itself. This was, nonetheless, not an easy endeavor:

"Look, there was complete chaos on the streets, an uncontrolled madness. There were just crowds without any compass (…) I went out to protest on the fifth day and the only thing I

[142] Mlađan Dinkić was the Governor of the National Bank of Serbia from 2000 to 2003. After that he participated in all governments until 2013 either as the finance minister or the minister of economy. After 2013 he was engaged in businesses between Serbia and United Arab Emirates, as a vice president of the committee for cooperation between these two countries.

knew was that we're protesting in support of the people in Tuzla. I recognized many people from the "Bebolution"[143]. After setting the institutional buildings on fire, the whole thing could've gone in many directions. Someone had to channel all that anger, to articulate it somehow. We were at high risk. They [the police] could've easily started shooting at us had the protests taken a certain direction. It could've happened easily, had all of this been limited to setting buildings on fire, without articulating a more specific goal." (Interviewee no. 15)

Channeling popular discontent, heterogeneous in expression but caused by the same systemic failure of the post-socialist transitional Bosnia to meet the needs of its own people, would have probably been less difficult had there been a ready-made activist network with organizational (infra)structure. When the protests began, the activists could rely only on superficial acquaintanceships with people involved in other smaller scale protests before 2014 (like the protests after Denis Mrnjavac's death in 2008[144] or the "JMBG" ("Bebolution") protests in 2013). These superficial acquaintanceships, nonetheless, initiated the process of more tangible interaction between activists that, in most cases, rested on theoretical debates and cooperation. In the months preceding the protests, namely, a group of people applied to the public call, wanting to participate in the working group for "social justice". Those who got accepted came together to read, debate and in the end, write a publication together. The work of this group was initiated by an activist who came back from a working (research) visit to Barcelona and secured funding for this project. A week before the protests started, the publication was presented in Sarajevo. At the time of presentation, no one thought this joint work could become, although weak, a sort of social (and conceptual) base for the foundation of the popular movement's "core" group. This core managed to write a couple of proclamations during the early days of street protests which, somewhat, universalized demands coming from the street. Oftentimes, people were not ready to give in and abstain from further particularization of demands. The sense of caring for others was truncated, which initially decreased the likeliness of forming a solid political entity.

"There was a man who said that all war veterans who spent 18 years in the bureau for the unemployed should get compensated, and he indicated the exact amount of compensation. Then we asked him why he is singling out only those who spent 18 years in the bureau, he responded: "Because I've been unemployed for 18 years"." (Interviewee no.25)

At the beginning, listening and transmitting "signals" from the street protests was the main preoccupation of the "core". This is why, when talking about the "core", we are in fact talking

[143] "Bebolution" is a colloquial name for the protests which took place in 2013 in Sarajevo. The protesters gathered after a sick baby died due to the complex administration. They could not issue her birth number on time, in which case the baby could have been sent abroad for treatment and possibly, save her life.

[144] Denis is a boy who got killed in the tram by a group of teenagers who stabbed him to death because he "looked at them".

about the organizers (of plenums) whose initial role was to convey the sentiment from bellow, rather than to shape meaning and provide directions for political articulation.

"Our role was to channel, rather than to organize and control the discourse of messages we're sending. We simply couldn't do more, even if we wanted. People were coming in with demands, and if you didn't take them into account you could immediately leave. This was our social base, all these people. We had to take into account everyone's demands: from those coming from Alipašino polje[145] whose electricity bills kept coming even though the electricity was shot down; to the former workers of "Hidrogradnja" who complained about their destroyed factory which was once constructing airports. The substance of what we tried to communicate in the coming weeks stemmed from what those people said in the streets and later, plenums." (Interviewee no 17)

Evidently, established or semi established activist networks are better capable of "constructing an issue" and "politicize" certain social economic problems, as well as pointing at their importance and emphasizing their "weight" for social and political community. By the same token, well established activist networks are more capable of reacting adequately to external events, sudden uprisings and protests, as well as channeling collective outrage, anger and dissatisfaction. Consequently, gradual mobilization as detected in Zagreb and Belgrade is more suitable for development of solid cognitive edifice, whereby each concept employed through discursive performance has, at least, a roughly assigned discursive role. *Ad hoc* processes of collective identity construction and discursive consolidation, as detected in Sarajevo, have initial limitations that are very difficult to be compensated afterwards. In situations of sudden outbursts of accumulated discontent, when even well-established social or political networks/actors have problems with managing complex situations, *ad hoc* attempts of articulation are most likely condemned to failure. Moreover, gradual evolution of collective identification and discursive consolidation brings about a certain level of trust. Primarily, trust is to be established among the "core" activists, and consequently, between the "core" and the wider group of activists and supporters. The following subchapter talks about the role of trust, as well as the issue of leadership in the process of discursive consolidation.

[145] Alipašino polje is a neighborhood in Sarajevo.

6.2. The Role of Trust

Talking about networks is not only important due to overall coherency of meaning attached to collective actions. It is also important because certain types of networks or, better said certain characteristics of networks fuel or discourage the establishment of trust among the activists. In theory, the linkage between networks and trust is discussed in studies which emphasize the relevance of networks' density. In late 1980s, James Coleman (1988; 1990) was already talking about dense networks as cultivators of trust. His approach was leaning towards the rational choice theory which assumes that dense networks encourage trustworthy relations because individual actors rationally assess that trust pays off. The logic is that dense networks, in which everyone knows each other well, make the reputation of an individual highly dependent on their behavior. Every non-solidary or damageable behavior, according to this approach, puts an individual to risk of being ostracized from the group. This is, however, not the approach I am applying here. Other conceptualizations, which instead suggest that "dense networks can cultivate a sense of duty amongst their members and/or a sense of solidarity" (Blumer 1969; Mead 1967), are more appropriate. Such understanding tells us a lot about the linkage between networks and inter-personal trust, but observe cooperation from a more "organic" perspective, rather than the perspective of strategic advantages and rational choice theory (see: Crossley, Bellotti, Edwards, Everett, Koskinen, Tranmer 2015, 33). I will address trust for each case.

The process of discursive consolidation within collective identity formation of the municipal movement in Belgrade, functioned in the best spirit of the formation of "general will", understood in the sense in which Rousseau developed it, as an aggregate of differences.[146] Rather than leveling them out, differences were initially accepted. People involved included those coming from the independent cultural scene, NGO's and other subcultural circles. While sharing substantial ideals and more general aims of their common struggle, even the narrow "core" group was heterogeneous with respect to specific interests and means for accomplishing the shared ideals:

"D. has always been more into topics with a stronger political message. A. has been interested in housing and housing policies, evictions and social justice. He insisted on including as many people as possible. M.'s interest has always been oriented towards culture and cultural policies. Mine is a similar story." (Interviewee no. 29)

[146] For further philosophical explication of the "general will" and the application to contemporary 21st century world, see: Azuma 2014.

Composition of the core group was non-hierarchical and at the moments fuzzy (according to the testimonies of some members and former members who specifically emphasized this characteristic), but the general horizon of what was commonly desired as the field of action was quite clear. The image of where the struggle is supposed to lead was, nonetheless, clearer in the heads of those who had been there from the beginning, since the "Inex Film". The decisive role in discursive consolidation and meaning attribution was, therefore, played by the "Ministry of space" whose members "unlike others, always had a clear vision about where to go" (Interviewee no. 28). As this interviewee testifies, this does not mean that their ideas were always better, but they were often better articulated. According to him, this is what determined the general direction of the Initiative "Don Let Belgrade D(r)own".

Trust among the core members was built in a long process and many years of network building and activism from "Inex Film" onwards. The basis for trust between those who "jumped in" during and after the occupation of "Zvezda", and those who had already been involved in the struggle for common spaces since "Inex Film", rested upon respect (and maybe appreciation) of mutual differences and consolidation of (more substantial) similarities among activists. When I asked one of them how come they remained together in spite of tangible differences, he replied: "Because we didn't put labels on each other's foreheads."

The main line of division was between more liberal (civic) and more radically democratic (left) streams. These kinds of divisions are, of course, much longer-lasting. Reconciling "the citizen" and "the man" (or the "people") persisted in theoretical debates ever since the early phases of Enlightenment. This dispute is still cutting across lines of ideological and conceptual differences between the liberals and the socialists/communists, as it has been for centuries. Such conceptual clash found its place within NDB as well.

"I remember that we had internal disagreement about an article written by I. in the daily newspaper "Danas". V. thought that he criticized the concept of "citizenship" too much. I find these kinds of debates fruitful, as a matter of fact – especially for the people who hadn't dealt with concepts before. It was a good occasion for them to start thinking about concepts. We have created a friendly environment, we trusted each other and under such circumstances, people can learn from each other." (Interviewee no. 36)

There were two factors which decisively affected the final result of these internal disputes. Firstly, the "core" had more leverage because its members were there from the beginning of the process and they built the strongest network (between each other and with others).[147] Secondly, they were, on average, more theoretically equipped and, hence, more trustworthy when it came to discursive profiling of the movement. The "core" eventually succeeded to

[147] A sort of "exclusivity" of the core members was specially emphasized by the activists who are not in the core.

reconcile different streams within the movement, where the “citizens” met the “people” and the leftists met the liberals.

The core was capable of this due to its internal cohesion based on trust, on the one hand, and, to some extent, the trust they received by the rest of the movement, on the other. Here, one can observe the major difference in the level of trust within the “core” and between the “core” and the rest of the movement. In the prior case the network was very closed and dense, but the (“external”) relationship with other activists/actors was never as dense. Closeness among the “core” members was based on long lasting friendships and gradual building of mutual trust through formal actions and informal meetings. Others, who were joining along the way, never managed to pierce to the “core”. In most cases, they stayed external to the dense network developed within it. In a way, this allowed the “core” to manage and decisively shape (epistemic) discourse. At the same time, this is what caused limitations with final consolidation of the movement.

The case of Zagreb showed similar tendencies with a slight, but significant difference. As already explicated previously, the foundations for the key endeavor in 2009 had been already set. Like Belgrade, the “core” group, as well as a wider circle of activists, got to know each other beforehand which, in a way, launched the process of building trust between them “on time”.

“We should definitely stress the fact that a great number of people knew each other years before the blockade and did many things together. This led to the establishment of trust between them. Even when we differed in views and opinions, it never led to divisions.” (Interviewee no. 5)

Soon, trust became crucial, primarily for the “core” group, and later for conceptual consolidation of discourse and collective identity (overall) which was, same as in Belgrade, to a significant extent dictated by the “core”. Furthermore, trust represented the cornerstone for the establishment of a solid *organization* of the entire movement. This means that trust spilled over from the “core” to the rest of the group, thus securing a sort of hegemony of the “core” within the wider scope of the student movement. This hegemony became evident at plenary sessions (plenums) that soon became the central decision-making body of the movement.

How was that possible? Even though the movement was inclusive and open for everyone (not just students), the only group that acted as an organized entity was the “core” group which established an envious level of trust among each other before the blockade. Solid organization, of course, did not come out of nowhere. The “core” group members had experience in organizational activist issues (from the “practitioners”) and theoretical grounding (from the “theorists”). Both qualities were inherited. Previously existing social networks thus supplied the newly established entity (the student movement) with certain organizational skills carried out

by the activists who, furthermore, created a dense network of trustworthy activists. We already elaborated how this dense network was created. Now, the question is how they managed to convey trust and portray themselves as trustworthy in the eyes of wider student movement and, consequently, how they established their discourse to be hegemonic? The first answer is good organization:

Wherever you could trace some sort of organized activities at the Faculty, you could also trace left-leaning tendencies. There were, of course, many students who were leaning to the right, but they were not well-organized. (Interviewee no. 5)

The second answer points at the habitus of the Faculty of Philosophy which reproduces by itself a sort of dense and specific environment which structurally encourages trust. This happens both due to its legacy (of being "rebellious faculty in the past decades) and the very nature of a University which is inevitably producing dense and trustworthy relationships more than most of other environments where competition often prevails over trust.

Despite the lack of previously established activist network, trust among the "core" members of Sarajevo's popular movement was reached almost automatically, the very day protests started. The process of trust building was not gradual, but automatic – because it was created under the pressure of an external event. Under conditions of semi-chaos on the streets and the necessity of an *ad-hoc* reaction, a "blank" trust among the "core" group members was the least they could have given to one another. The real problem with trust, nonetheless, appears in relation to the wider movement. According to the testimonies, the tendency was to search for a new master, rather than to build mutual trust and create a new political subjectivity from the bottom-up. It comes as no surprise that a "Lacanian" among the activists describes the situation in the following way:

"When you analyze our situation, it turns out that the convergence between workers, students and others meant nothing else but a hysterical demand for someone powerful to protect us, to embrace us and say "everything is going to be alright"." (Interviewee no. 17)

Of course, a famous proclamation of Lacan in the context of the French 1968, whose activists this psychoanalyst perceived as "searchers for a new master" (Schroeder 2008, 56), resonates with the case of popular uprising in Sarajevo as well. The fundamental problem, and there was no dispute about this among my interviewees, occurred between the two conflicting tendencies: the one of the "core group" to launch the bottom-up process of "building *People* through the process of political becoming" (Bosteels 2013, 5) by insisting on horizontal processes (such as plenums); and the popular demand for a "new master" who can save the (yet non-constituted) *people* from the "transitional misery". The "core group" was not, however, willing to give in to such general sentiment. They insisted on the horizontal process

despite possible obstacles, because they found it crucial to create something radically new in terms of (new) social and political subjectivity. These tensions within the same movement – the inability of the rank-and-file to go through the process of "political becoming" without being fatally damaged on one hand; and the "core's" perception that it is necessary to go through this process which included building trust (in order to accomplish desperately needed tangible social and political change), on the other; turned out to be unresolvable deadlock under given circumstances. While the rank-and-file sought leadership, the leaders refused to take the lead.

"The organizers almost never spoke at plenums. We were doing it on purpose. This turned out to be a mistake because we allowed others to shape discussions. We faced the side-effect of our decision not to have leaders, and that is why we hit a wall. The public was persistent in its attempts to identify who's standing behind the plenum. People needed someone who's going to lead them, who could be glorified or blamed for a potential defeat. They wanted someone to take responsibility for what was going on. No one among us was ready to take this responsibility." (Interviewee no. 16)

The side-effects of horizontality created a great amount of *mistrust* among the participants. All of a sudden, everyone was suspicious and considered a potential "infiltrator".[148] Of course, the mistrust was not without justification. Indeed, there were many people infiltrated by the police, security services and political parties who participated at plenums, trying to jeopardize the whole process. However, the line between "us" and "them" was too fluid because most people did not know each other beforehand and no one knew if a person sitting next to them is reliable or not. "Conspiracy theory spreads where people don't know each other and where there is no hierarchy." (Interviewee no. 18)

An additional dimension of mistrust was created between the plenum and "the street". The first couple of plenums served as collective psychotherapeutic sessions rather than constructive and powerful (additional) weapon in hands of the protestors, suddenly the image of plenum got another meaning. Apart from seen as "agora" and the "temple of direct democracy", it was perceived by some as a pacifier of the street protests, as something that weakened the "impeding" power of "the street". According to this interpretation, "the street" heated up the atmosphere and somewhat managed to hinder the routine of everyday life – whereas the plenum cooled it down and deadened the blade of the street protests.

[148] Infiltration and externally driven provocation are, of course, not typical only for "horizontal" social groups. What often appears as specific in their case with this respect – is that there is no ready-made (hierarchical) mechanism of resolving eventual externally driven provocation and/or infiltration. It is, moreover, especially troublesome if the external sabotage through infiltration takes place from the very beginning of collective identity formation.

"Protests become a virus that attacked a rotten society. The political structure could feel it. People were in the streets, the trams didn't run, and the everyday life was disturbed. The very moment people from the street retreated to a big plenary room, they stopped causing problems for the structure. The protest was watered down by the plenum. In my opinion, a major goal should've been to increase the number of people in the street, not to decrease it. Actually, we eliminated ourselves as a problem for the political elite because the basic purpose of the protest was to block or at least disturb everyday life." (Interviewee no. 20)

Trust is hence, supposed to be the cornerstone of every well-organized collective. Chaotic atmosphere from the street got diffused to the plenum which only partially managed to tame the cacophony of deprived and dissatisfied voices. One may rightfully wonder how the plenum managed to articulate a meaningful discourse under such unfavorable social, structural and organizational conditions.

Firstly, the network developed within the "core" could be considered (almost) dense, although it was built *ad hoc*. Within the "core", density and trustworthiness were accomplished by pure necessity to react quickly. On the other side, the rest of the movement was yet to be constituted as such (dense and trustworthy) through plenums. The above described mistrust among the participants of plenums, as well as tensions between the plenum and "the street", made the mistrust spill over towards the "core" as well. We could see that some documents had been produced before the plenum was established and the idea of the "core" was to move public attention away from ethno-nationalism and towards social justice. This was the first step which was, to an extent, successful. The idea to push this agenda more straightforwardly, though, was jeopardized by many factors, among which overall lack of trust was crucial. Thereby, the "second step", meaning a solid organization and smoother collective identity creation – was more difficult to achieve.

Both trust and the degree of development of the activist network had a tangible effect upon the discursive consolidation in all three cases. Another angle of observing this process, understood as the process of prescription of meaning through discourse, can be concerned with issues of social base and external influences. Following subchapter is explaining why these two factors play a significant role.

6.3. Social Base and External Influences

External factors that affect discourse consolidation and diffusion of ideas from one social movement to another have been widely researched. While the focus of this work is on the diffusion of ideas from critical communities to movements and (individual) activists, I consider here however the diffusion of some organizational principles, such as direct democracy. This means that, in some cases, ideas that were already diffused from critical communities to social movements became familiar to similar social movements through inter-movement cooperation. It was also stated before that ideas get diffused, but also reshaped and accommodated to a given context with aid of social movements. What makes imported ideas useful rather than counter-productive, within a given context? When talking about appropriateness of diffused ideas, one should pay specific attention to whether this "receiving context" has a solid and firm social base[149] for implementation of ideas – keeping in mind that these diffused ideas were initially developed for or applied in other contexts. Given that the social base, even if existing might be passive in times without contentious social and political activities, its relevancy could be best assessed in times when ideas and incentives for action occur. I shall thus start exploring the importance of the social base by mapping external influences in the three case studies and look at the capacities for reception, accommodation and practical (political/social) usage of these influences in domestic contexts of the three movements in question.

In Zagreb, the most important external influence affecting the student movement came from the overall global climate and the period in which various global initiatives and movements started inspiring each other, on the wings of rebellion against neoliberal policies in higher education and other fields. Within such climate, some movements, events or indeed – literature, affected the student movement in Croatia as well. Apart from student struggles in Belgrade and Ljubljana, examples of positive and negative practices in higher education policies were important external signs on how things could, should, or should not be organized.

"S. made a pamphlet for the first protest in November 2008. In the following six months many things happened internationally and this helped us as well (…) We were familiar with examples of commercialization of higher education from countries like the UK and the opposite tendencies in countries like Finland. Because some people were theoretically equipped to understand and formulate clearly our demands, we opened up the possibility of taking these examples into account and accommodating them to domestic context." (Interviewee no. 1)

[149] See the footnote number 66.

Previously acquired theoretical references and conceptual apparatus was therefore important (also) for understanding how external experiences are accommodated. Several interviewees mentioned Alex Callinicos and his "Universities in a Neoliberal World". The relevance of this author overcomes the level of individual cognitive incentive and reaches the level of influencing discursive performance and articulation of that identity. When talking about the external factors furthermore, we are talking about insights from practical experiences getting diffused and serving as inspiration for the movement.

"I think that global movements, the world economic crisis and occurrence of the translated literature which had not been available in the region hitherto, are among the main factors contributing to the occurrence of similar tendencies here in Croatia." (Interviewee no. 3)

Global trends of resistance, the economic crisis, commercialization and commodification of education hence, did have a spillover effect. Both theoretical and practical knowledge got diffused across space, but also across time. The inflow of critical literature, ideas and practical experiences did have an effect on the way in which the activists were interpreting and addressing certain social and political phenomena. Inspiration for the form of action (occupation) and method of decision – making (direct democracy through plenums) also came from the outside.

The critical discourses and the first well-articulated critique of the transitional paradigm in the post-Yugoslav context reemerged, nonetheless, as a consequence of interaction between external incentives and specific domestic condition, as well as domestic actors and cognitive influences. The student movement in Zagreb was therefore, an authentic entity despite external influences it was exposed to. The movement managed to develop an ever more serious critique of the post-socialist reality, by pointing at the specific niche of higher education and addressing it through lenses of the local context. Even though its occurrence is related to certain global trends of contestation of the neoliberal paradigm, as well as the rise of student movements around the globe, these trends represented an additional tail wind, rather than a direct trigger or a role model.

"At the moment in which we acted, the crisis still had not eaten the national budget, the tuition fees at the Faculty of Philosophy were still way lower than in other faculties. We chose the moment, not vice versa, and it was us who made a big deal out of the whole situation in higher education." (Interviewee no. 14)

A solid social base is of course, pervading all the previously indicated factors within discursive consolidation. It has an especially important role in dealing with the way in which external influences will be accommodated. The student movement was carried out by students, even though all the citizens could have participated at the plenary sessions. A solid social base

was embodied in a more or less defined profile of activists and clearly defined social habitus within which the movement arose. The high level of trust both among the "core" members and later between the "core" and the rest of the movement comes from the fact that the social base was clear and social habitus open, but at the same time well-defined and structured. Consequentially, the role of the "external factor" in was assessed by the activists as inspirational, supportive and overall positive, because its potential "side effects" were neutralized. Under "side effects", I mainly consider imported ideas and practical experiences which simply do not fit a given domestic context or, cannot be carried out successfully because there is no actor who could do it. The possibility of critical assessment of external influences, contextualization and adaptation, as well as conversion or rejection of certain aspects of external influences, lies in the level of consolidation of a given social movement and a clear social base. While the student movement managed to filter certain external influences, the popular movement in Sarajevo had more difficulties with accommodation of such impulses.

Sarajevo's popular movement was exposed to the external influences from Zagreb on the one hand, and from the city of Tuzla, on the other. In both cases, we are talking about different types of movements *vis a vis* the popular movement in Sarajevo. Unlike the student movement from Zagreb which was influenced (but not determined) by similar tendencies on the (student) activist scene worldwide, the popular movement in Sarajevo was strongly affected by the labor movement in Tuzla, and less strongly by the student movement from Zagreb. In combination with the absence of a clear social base, these divergences made the popular movement more vulnerable.

The link between Tuzla and Sarajevo, where Tuzla represented a direct trigger for the uprising in the capital, has already been mentioned several times. What appears as crucial in this context is a degree to which the external influence enabled or disabled the local movement to fulfill its aims. And what was the aim of the popular movement in Sarajevo? This could probably be the creation of a popular subject which could/should have addressed the ever wider set of compounding elements of the problem called "the post-socialist Bosnian condition". Sarajevo was nonetheless, similar but at the same time way too different case from Tuzla where the wave of popular uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina actually started. Tuzla had a strong tradition of the working class resistance, whereas Sarajevo could count neither on the (organized) working class nor on any other clearly defined (culturally constructed or materially grounded) social actor. No organized group of people could have stood behind the protests and helped out in securing the social basis for the movement. This had to be done along the way, so after the uprising had already started. The overall consequences of the external influences were hence, more negative than positive.

The influence from Zagreb had a similar effect. The organizers of the Sarajevo plenums were insisting on horizontality, led by the experience of Zagreb's student movement (but also Tuzla which has followed the same decision-making method). The idea of having plenary sessions where everyone could speak out was imported into the context which was not as suitable as the other two. The reason was again, the absence of a clearly defined social base and, consequently, unenviable situation with respect to the accommodation of external influences and formulation of a clear idea of where the whole process should or could go. In this sense, it appears even logical for the "core" group in Sarajevo, to put an emphasis on the process itself, since they had no illusions about the optimal outcome. "My thoughts were constantly on what should come after the plenums", the interviewee no. 18 said. From the perspective of the objectively "impossible" circumstances for a more "focused" and well directed social struggle, one could, in other words, only try to push the process from the dead point, without having illusions about a more tangible social change in the nearer future. The activists were mostly aware of these limitations:

"I remember a girl who told me after the second plenum: „If this fails, I'll never forgive you". In that moment I thought we can't even fail – because the whole thing doesn't go anywhere. We couldn't go further from where we had already gotten. I knew we won't come to power, we won't establish a dual power system because there was no one we could cooperate with." (Interviewee no. 17)

In order to initiate the process of creation of some sort of subjectivity, the social base had to be built along the way, since there had not been any inherited base from before. Discursively, this was achieved to an extent, whereas practically the whole endeavor proved to be more difficult. The external influences could indeed serve well for motivating the people by making them aware that what they were doing was a part of a bigger wave of uprisings in the region. Sarajevo was yet, not as ready for such endeavors as were Zagreb and Tuzla. And how ready was Belgrade?

Belgrade stands half way between Sarajevo and Zagreb. Its municipal movement was also affected by the external influences which diffused both through space and time. On the one hand the origins of issues related to local communities, "right to the city" and "commons", are clearly to be found in various municipal theories and social movements' activities around the globe. In the past decade, these impulses were especially coming from Spain and this is why NDB has developed special ties with Barcelona en Comu, for instance. Another source, as previously mentioned, comes from Croatia, from the city of Pula. The influence of Barcelona en Comu and the "Pula Group" upon Belgrade's activist scene was nonetheless, not supported by a well-organized, solid social base. This means that there was no "ready-made" social group which could have capitalized on the inflow of new ideas quickly. There was, furthermore, no

social group which could have claimed, either materially or ideationally, coherence and readiness to conduct or at least imagine radically different and more progressive and emancipated society. The activist network was in the phase of occurring, but the social base with its partial or full awareness about issues typical for municipal reasoning, was yet to be achieved. In a way, Belgrade shares Sarajevo's condition, because the ground for a certain set of ideas had not been prepared before the ideas were conveyed into the local context. In Sarajevo, this tension was discursively resolved by using the most general conceptualizations such as "social justice" or "human dignity". Belgrade yet, had a "backup plan" which could compensate the absence of a solid social base and "accommodate" concepts and experiences developed outside the given context. This plan was embodied in some concepts and experiences imported from the Yugoslav era. The additional "import product" from the past served as a replacement tool for contextualization of the imported theoretical and practical influences from the domain of municipalism. How was this possible?

Simply, if one says "local community" or "popular participation" in former Yugoslavia, it sounds somewhat familiar because Yugoslav socialism, at least in theory, rested upon the concept of "self-management" which was all about people and workers' councils, as well as about democracy at the level of neighborhoods and local communities, factories or enterprises. Certainly the new trends in both theory and practice of municipalism do represent an "updated" version of the "old" idea of self-management as imagined by its main founder Edvard Kardelj.[150] The "old" nevertheless has not lost its value and could have been reinvented in the light of the newly arising municipally oriented movements in the region:

"When Eleanor Ostrom got her Nobel Price, many people started thinking about an alternative way of governing as something possible. This is when self-governing local communities jump in as one among many possible solutions. When you read Kardelj and literature on self-management you see how similar these two conceptualizations are." (Interviewee no. 27)

And another interviewee adds:

"The "old" concepts played an important role for us. We learned from them because past experiences represent knowledge that you can apply. All of the sudden people started talking about urban commons as if this fell down from the sky yesterday – we had already had this in Yugoslavia." (Interviewee no. 29)

[150]Edvard Kardelj was one of the closest collaborators of Josip Broz Tito and the founder of the concept of Yugoslav self-management. Most generally described, self-management was the attempt to keep radically democratic practice at lower levels of decision-making and somehow counter-balance temporal necessity of a stronger authoritarian role of the Communist party at the higher levels of decision-making. In Kardelj's words, "the working masses which had once gained their right to decide for themselves through the national liberation struggle, were not ready to give up that right so easily and leave it to some new state bureaucracy". Kardelj 1978, 17-19.

The socialist heritage was important for NDB, also because it should have oriented itself with respect to some other issues and lines of division which existed within the Serbian and former-Yugoslav context. For instance, the period when NDB was growing in terms of public support, Serbia was on the way to rehabilitate Nazi-fascist collaborators from the WWII and thereby fully breakup with the socialist heritage. On that occasion, the Initiative (NDB) organized a concert at the Republic square in Belgrade on October 20th, on the Day of liberation of Belgrade from fascism in 1944. Thereby the Initiative clearly stood on the partisan and hence anti-fascist side of history. The need for straightforward positioning was evident and this endeavor eventually led to a clearer articulation of this segment of NDB's collective identity.

"October the 20th was good for ideological profiling, not as much externally, but rather internally. I remember when M. wrote that Belgrade has always been libertarian and I found that problematic because Belgrade hasn't always been free. There were periods in its history when people were being killed, when neighbors were reporting neighbors due to their ethnicity or ideological orientation. It wasn't libertarian then. M. said OK - you write the speech. A. and I then took over. We wanted to say who liberated Belgrade from the Nazis, and we wanted to say that there were concentration camps in Belgrade during the WWII. Every word had to be carefully weighed – should we also mention the Red Army or should we just say "the Partisans". Hereby you are actually balancing between "the citizens" and "the people". Yet, you have to say what is true in the end." (Interviewee no. 36)

Balancing between external influences and the capacity to channel them through, accommodate and indeed, filter them through a solid social base, took its place among crucial factors which could have empowered counter-hegemonic tendencies in the region. It should be emphasized finally, that social base is not the only factor that could have helped out in the process of accommodating diffused ideas in the three national contexts. To close the argumentation of this chapter we should wonder: What was the "nature" of deliberative processes that stood behind the formation of these activist collectives and what was the role of the concept of hegemony in these processes.

6.4. Deliberation and Hegemony

In the understanding of Dieter Rucht, deliberative democracy is not a decision-making process. This process is not institutional. It ends, as a matter of fact, before the decision-making starts. This is why deliberation is not assuming power relations, outvoting and alike. It is the process which is supposed to be led by reasonable discussion in which participants apply the "unforced force of the better argument" (Habermas 1971, 137). This should lead to the

increased likelihood of “preference (trans) formation during the discursive process, oriented to the definition of public good” (della Porta 2013, 61). Among the key postulates of deliberation is non-rigidity of the initial positions, whereby each participant leaves enough space for their eventual modification if faced with a stronger argument (Rucht 2008). This kind of democratic process is, of course, indisputably considered utopian. One can never exclude different interests, lobby groups and finally, power relations that usually lead to uniqueness which favors the one who happens to be more powerful, rather than the one who has “better arguments”. The one who succeeds in establishing hegemony is the one who gets to the position to overrule others and consequently, decides. This is to say, in this case, that the final versions of epistemic discourse analyzed above are the results of power games within the three movements in which one fraction or stream, overruled others. In such conceptual constellation, it seems like collective identity, discursive consolidation included, is usually either about deliberation or about hegemony. Since full deliberation is declared to be utopia, it must be hegemony that matters more in this process.

Now, the central claim of this subchapter is that these two concepts do not exclude one another. What if hegemony may be (or if we want to be more normative we could say - should be) realized through real (utopian) deliberation? What if the conditions in which “better argument wins” (possible under certain circumstances which is what theoreticians of deliberation also argue) may (or should) seek to reach the final result, that is, hegemony? What if this is exactly what happened in Zagreb?

The main decision-making body of the student movement was plenum. Like in the best deliberative imageries, every citizen could participate and vote, including people from other faculties, but also non-students. Direct democracy is demanding but may sometimes be a convincing method of decision-making. The specific social environment (University) within which plenums took place could have been hence, partially controlled. These preconditions inserted a new potential into the process of deliberation and direct democracy.

“Ever since the blockade, I started believing in collective processes. Before, I was suspicious. But here was the following situation. I would say something, and five or six people would speak after me. Those interventions would make me agreeing with people who actually criticized my position. The thing is that other claims were not necessarily opposite to mine. They were rather contributing by widening what you had said and developing it further. These interventions would rapidly get integrated and get beyond the arguments preceding them. So, collective intelligence exists! You know the old Gramscian saying about the pessimism of intellect and the optimism of will… Before the blockade I had only the pessimism of intellect. The optimism of will came after I had gone through the whole process and witnessed its results.

The blockade hasn't changed my views on capitalism, but it has provided me with trust in the possibility of collective democratic processes." (Interviewee no. 12)

In order to secure the "rule of better arguments", to make people acknowledging and accepting their value, one had to have a specific social environment as well as a stable and clear social base. On the other hand, the quality of arguments of the core group (especially the ones coming from its "theoretical branch") which sought to shape the movement's discourse, had to be indeed valuable, well-articulated and convincing. The specificity of social habitus such as University, as well as a solid organization based on trust, has sped up internalization of certain theoretical positions and conceptual apparatuses by theoretically less equipped activists. In a short period of time, the circle of people capable of persuasively and argumentatively talking about social and political issues critically, grew larger - both within the "core" group and the wider group of activists. The process of diffusion of (primarily) theoretical knowledge from the theoretically equipped, towards more practice oriented activists, turned out to be crucial for collective identity creation and discourse articulation.

"It was fascinating how people who had not been familiar with literature, theory or discourse, but who had been politically "on the line" – have become sovereign in their excellency of articulating our demand and the overall discourse - within a month or two, overnight almost. This type of articulation has introduced a new paradigm because such type of discursive organization had not been on the radar of the mainstream media before the blockade. The very word "socialism", for instance, had been taboo for a long time and we started using it again (also) in the light of the world economic crisis." (Interviewee no. 7)

Here we may trace the effects of deliberation. Activists coming from the previously mentioned reading group and those who had stepped into the process of conceptual learning and equipping before and during the blockade could simply articulate arguments better than others. Certainly, no one's arguments overruled other sets of argumentation always. Especially at the beginning, even the moderators at the plenums[151] were sabotaging the organizers and the ideas pushed forward by the "core" group. The first couple of meetings were quite difficult to comprehend, let alone control. As the process of collective identity formation was progressing, things were slowly coming to its place:

"The feeling of togetherness and collectivism increases self-confidence and strengthens the sense of social belonging (…) You could of course find people who were against us, but simply the strength of arguments was making more and more people changing their opinions and support us." (Interviewee no. 1)

[151] Everyone could be a moderator. All one had to do is to express this kind of wish.

The “Jacobin” [*sic!*] wing of the movement, and its rhetorical skillfulness nonetheless, had another internal / organizational advantage or an additional “tool” in its hands. On the one hand, they managed to equip other “core members” theoretically and thereby keep the high degree of influence upon the “core’s” projection of collective identity. On the other, some of them belonged to the “notorious” (*sic*!) “media section*”* of the student movement. This section actually shaped media reports and thus controlled the main channel of communication between the movement and the wider public. Thanks to the above indicated dynamics and presence of trust, strength of the established “core” group, as well as the rapidness of diffusion of critically intonated ideas and arguments, the media section succeeded to safeguard its privileged position with respect to its influence upon collective identity.

“The fact that we were sitting in the media section made a huge difference. This position allowed us to communicate with the public and organize the whole discourse. I did it consciously, I politicized the whole thing. This is why we were perceived by some as the hardliners, and this is why we were called by some the „arrogant media section“. Moreover, we faced three initiatives for replacement, but each time the plenum supported us.” (Interviewee no. 12)

The “hardliners” thus established hegemony through deliberative process. “Better arguments” moreover, did not affect only those who were politically “on the line”. Other activists, with conservative worldviews, also showed readiness to open up for different explications of social and political dynamics, different kind of mapping causes of social hierarchies and injustice and allow for the possibility of (progressive) cognitive transformation.

“Already before the blockade I knew that extremely conservative attitudes, typical for Christianity, are not well perceived and received at the Faculty of Philosophy. Their language was different, values such as homophobia, sexism and alike were simply not welcomed there. Soon after I got involved with the movement, I realized the difference between myself and the environment. My worldview tough was not so rigid and well structured. You notice how some dimensions of their discourse are compatible with yours, whereas some are totally opposite. Then you start asking yourself where these differences come from and you discover a whole new universe, corpus of knowledge you had never gotten in touch with before. I happened to be quite open for new ideas and this corpus simply resonated with me. What they were saying made much more sense than the mainstream argumentation behind certain social and political phenomena.” (Interviewee no. 9)

In democratic processes, or processes by which new democratic actors seek to re-encourage participation in the “post-democratic” world, deliberation often appears as essential. At the same time, hegemony may enhance the power of deliberation and make it functional, contrary to Rucht’s abovementioned definition, also within a decision-making

process. If what Habermas calls “ideal speech situation” is indeed just a goal that can practically never be achieved, then every collective identity building includes (also) power relations. In order to secure the *almost* “ideal speech situation” and the “rule of better arguments”, actors who are in possession of “better arguments” should build their power both argumentatively and organizationally. The case of the student movement illustrates this. On the other side, the situation in Sarajevo was different and showed what happens to “better arguments” if no group builds or manages to secure at least minimal organizational advantage before the beginning of collective identity formation.

From the very beginning, namely, the issue of persuasiveness of argumentation did not work within the Sarajevo’s “core” group or between the “core” and the wider popular movement, let alone the wider public. Firstly, homogeneity of the “core” was determined by the necessity to channel sudden outburst of anger and discontent on the streets of Sarajevo. There was no serious deliberation between them because they had to react to the escalation of street protests which preceded their formation. Even though the “core” group was compound of Marxists, Trotskyists, anarchists and others, there was simply no time for internal discussions and deliberation. The sudden outburst of anger and dissatisfaction on the streets of Tuzla and Sarajevo (as well as other cities, such as Mostar or Zenica) caught the (future) organizers of plenums unprepared. On one hand, their theoretical endeavor (mentioned above) made them deliberate at the theoretical level. Deliberation about eventual political agenda that could have come from theoretical discussions did not take place before the occurrence of protests. Considering the *ad-hoc* reaction by the “core” group during the protests, the space (and time) for political deliberation was limited, if not even non-existent. The absence of such deliberation within the “core” prior to the initiation of plenums (which were about to make the movement “popular”) did not, however, represent a serious disadvantage for that group alone (in terms of internal persuasions and/or power games). It is clear from the first document analyzed in the part on epistemic discourse, that the “core” was comprised of people who shared a radically critical vision of Bosnian society. The problem with the absence of political deliberation, as well as with hegemony, became more tangible after the plenum started functioning as the main decision-making body.

Unlike the cases of Belgrade and Zagreb where the core group navigated or at least proposed a rough framework for collective identity formation and discursive consolidation, the popular movement in Sarajevo could not do more than channel through and somehow make sense of the dispersed ideational impulses, coming from the streets and discussions at the plenary sessions. Thereby, the group was prevented from playing a role of reservoir of ideas and the navigator of overall discursive performance. Space for conceptual redefinition and intervention into the very essence of the post-socialist paradigm (which was the intention of the “core”, as evident from the first document analyzed) was thus, very limited. Concepts, or

more abstract (theoretical) knowledge that proved to be highly important for the comprehensive/systemic critique, could not find an easy way through such complex set of social, political and economic relations. The idea was to encourage deliberation at plenary sessions and then hope for an optimal outcome.

"The whole thing happened with very little or no theoretical reflection which could've helped us to handle the situation better. Regardless of how much some of us were well-read and educated, this didn't play a real role. It couldn't, because we had to deal with accumulated and abrupt boiling energy which appeared in form of a great discontent and not much else." (Interviewee no. 17)

The organic process of deliberative direct democracy is difficult to apply even in less complex contexts than the one in Sarajevo. Under given circumstances, one of the main front-running master-frames appeared as a forced solution. Even though the main decision-making body (the plenum) was launched by the "core" group, no control was established over it, whatsoever. Their initial idea was not to impose hegemony, but the confusing part is that it seemed like they did not want to win it throughout the process of deliberation at plenums, either. This is evident from the above indicated testimony in which the activist explains that the organizers spoke very rarely at the plenary sessions. One cannot, however, put all the blame on the organizers. The situation was suitable neither for deliberation, nor for direct democracy. The first couple of plenums, actually, "stripped" Sarajevo's social image. Everything started with "collective psychotherapy sessions", where people would simply come together and talk. They would tell personal stories for hours and share among themselves their personal traumas. It seemed like this was the first time they were given a chance to speak up about their suffering and, more importantly, to be listened to.

"People would approach us and say, thank you – just for giving us a chance to talk about the war. This wasn't our idea, not in our craziest dreams. No one among us even mentioned the war, as if it never happened. Then, suddenly, a slogan emerged: "We're hungry in all three languages". People started saying that all of them lived through the same suffering, regardless of who was where and when. They suffered from a common pain, and their voice was silent for the last 20 years." (*ibid*.)

Listening and talking are indeed, components of deliberation, but what made a difference was that these two activities almost became their own purpose, without possibility of developing a realistic political imagery out of it. The "core" was just transmitting the sentiment from bellow. It could neither shape it nor provide directions for its political articulation.

People were then invited to contribute and write down their demands. The plenum established working groups that were supposed to organize demands according to different

sections. In the end, there were some 2200 demands submitted. Based on them, the working groups formulated four general demands (the last document analyzed in the chapter on "mapping concepts"). Despite all challenges, the "core" tried to secure a minimum of common ground, a denominator which could have put all demands under the same conceptual "umbrella". This is why they tried to emphasize *social justice*, which was not a matter of persuasiveness of arguments but, possibly, the only solution for the "multitude" to come together:

"(…) the concept of social justice served as a reserve signifier which could cover everything we have been thinking and working on, all our theoretical inputs and worldviews. This concept became the alternative instrument with which we somehow managed to stay on the "revolutionary path", under the circumstances." (*ibid.*)

In a society where political agendas usually have a tone of ethno-national determination, this was an attempt to come up with an, at least non-nationalist, if not clearly and openly anti-nationalist discourse. Post-conflict societies such as Bosnia and Herzegovina are very difficult to be addressed in such way, let alone to be ruled over by such narratives. Here is another remarkable detail illustrating the overall social and political climate.

At one point, the anti-nationalists among the protestors in Sarajevo (on the street) found themselves side by side with the people carrying the "lily" flags, symbol of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina used during the war.[152] It seemed that no one could do anything about this group without direct (and undesired) confrontation. No one among the activists dared to approach them and ask to take the flags down because the whole thing was not about "lilies", "double headed eagles"[153] or "checkerboards"[154], but about social and economic impoverishment of the people regardless of the flag they carry. Among the masses, several activists recognized the representatives of the so-called "minor fighters' club"[155] and assessed that these people might be the only ones who have credibility to take the "lily flags" down. This is precisely what happened, and most of them were removed and only a few remained after the intervention of the "minor fighters'". This example shows that the only group which could have claimed the right and establish hegemony over meaning on the streets, was the group

[152] The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of the three regular military formations during the war in Bosnia, apart from the Army of Republika Srpska and the Croatian Defense Council (HVO). Even though it was firstly multiethnic (to an extent), the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was soon made almost exclusively of ethnic Bosniaks. The other two regular armies in Bosnian conflict were mainly Serbian and Croat (along with some paramilitary formations present). The symbol of lily became associated with the Army of BiH and (mostly) one ethnic group – the Bosniaks.

[153] Double headed eagle is a Serbian national symbol.

[154] Checkerboard is a Croatian national symbol.

[155] This is a group of people who fought the war on the side of the Army of BiH while still underaged (under 18 years old) – Juvenile Defense and Liberation Volunteers in the Army of BiH.

that was somewhat linked to the war. This situation illustrates how difficult it became in Bosnia, since the war onwards, to push forward any sort of progressive social and economic political agenda and put identity politics aside. Every time someone says "we are all equally disadvantaged", memories pop up, memories of the recent past when some were more disadvantaged than others only on account of their name and surname. This is why no other group of activists could have intervened in situations like the one here described. Under such circumstances, discursive framework could not go too far either:

"The furthest I could go is to say that we managed to get some attention for our socio-economic life in the public sphere. This wasn't anti-nationalism, as such. We didn't try to make any supranational bodies and we didn't want to talk about it because they have been keeping us imprisoned in that narrative for too long. That is why we didn't want to set the agenda around it." (Interviewee no. 25)

A minimum of common ground was therefore achieved on the basis of a non-nationalist agenda. This was, however, more visible in documents issued by the *ad-hoc* gathered "core" during the first couple of days of protests. Later, when the same group tried to articulate impulses coming from the chaotic street protests (by organizing plenums), the problems arose again. Among the main "enemies" of deliberation and any sort of political imagery that could lead to a more solidly set collective identity, were war traumas that remained alive in both individual and collective memories. This obstacle took the wind out of sails of a more effective collective endeavor.

"The first person to speak at the first plenum was an elderly gentleman who stood up, gave his name and said: "I come from Vogošća and I spent more than two years in the concentration camp. My wife was killed, and my daughter was a victim of something I'm embarrassed to say out loud, here, in front of all these people." You immediately assume that his daughter was raped. Everything you imagined beforehand, whatever political agenda – at that moment goes into a completely different direction." (Interviewee no. 23)

Without a clear and stable social base, trust and solidly developed activist network, no space for fruitful deliberation and appreciation of *"*better argumentation*"* was left within the popular movement in Sarajevo. *Democratic hegemony*, as one could label the process of achieving hegemony through deliberation, was finally left out from the outcomes of the collective identity building.

Regarding the issues of hegemony and deliberation, the case of Belgrade may be (again) placed somewhere in between Sarajevo and Zagreb. On one hand no plenary sessions (plenums) were ever held in Belgrade. This means that there was no "official" deliberation between the "core" and the rest of the movement. On the other hand, hegemony within the

"core" was established through deliberation. Deliberation thus existed, but was limited to a narrow circle of people. Those who managed to prevail within the "core" decisively shaped the discourse of the entire movement afterwards. It is symptomatic that those "core" members who prevailed were usually well theoretically equipped. They were people from the abovementioned "Ministry of Space", on one side, and others who shared their vision of the activist and political directions, on the other. Hegemony was taking place gradually, from action to action, from one informal or formal meeting with other actors/activists, to another. This is how one stream of thought ruled over the others, from "Inex Film" to the occupation of "Zvezda" cinema and, finally, actions concerned with "Belgrade Waterfront". People were joining and leaving, but there was always a constant in the process - the "core" group gathered around the "Ministry of Space". Thanks to their dedication and persistency, this group managed to set out (in a rather subtle way) the essence of collective identity and epistemic discourse. Along the way, some activists left the movement because their understanding of what NDB should represent differed from the dominant conceptual stream.

"My understanding of why the Initiative (Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own) was established had to do with defending the rule of law and legal state. This was my motif to join the movement. The biggest problem for me was the collapsing state and violations of the constitution – aside from my opinion about the constitution. People were coming from the confused left, as well as from the liberal-civic milieu. Initially, the accent was on the real actions, without much theoretical or ideological elaboration. Slowly, however, you could see conflicts popping up within the group, mainly over conceptual and ideological understanding of what we were doing. I remember when someone said that the rule of law shouldn't be central at all because it's nothing more but a shitty neoliberal concept. On the other hand, I was trying to explain that without it, you can't even get a chance to say anything about this society – from the inside, but also from a distance." (Interviewee no. 28)

It was the municipal, left-leaning stream that managed to overrule both the (more) radical left and the liberal (central) left. Even though activists were coming from different social spheres (from the alternative cultural scene to NGOs and different subcultural milieus), but also with different theoretical and political affiliations, there was only one concept, or one perspective from which the sphere of politics was to be penetrated. When asked which concept in his view is central to NDB, one of the activists replied:

"I would say that our central concept is "right to the city". The inspiration clearly comes from Harvey. That concept is the core idea of a different way of governing. It's still not completely clear what kind of governing it's supposed to be, but it's clear that people are excluded from decision-making process which has to be streamlined "down" to the people (…) The "Ministry of Space" was formed in the period when topics related to the commons and

public goods were becoming a conceptual umbrella in some (activist) circles." (Interviewee no. 27)

The way in which this conceptual edifice was constructed within the "core" group represented a typical hegemonic maneuver followed by sporadically deliberative and non-deliberative processes. Since there was no permanent body for deliberation and decision-making (such as plenum), the "core" was building its predominance on basis of networking, (mostly) informal deliberations and persistency to push forward the type of discourse they found appropriate. The concept of the right to the city was not, finally, introduced as superior over other concepts (such as the rule of law), but was pushed forward as an "empty signifier" which was supposed to carry out all the "unfulfilled demands" coming from various social groups. Even though not everyone was satisfied with this maneuver, the movement "survived" after some individual members distanced themselves from the group.

A similar strategy was applied as the movement grew bigger. Many people, who took to the streets after the demolition in Hercegovačka Street, participated due to the violation of the right to private property. The cognitive background of NDB, on the other hand, either individually or collectively, had nothing to do with this kind of framing. NDB's previous endeavors, like the occupation of the (private) "Zvezda" cinema or "Inex Film" stood in direct contradiction to such conceptualizations because these were all violations of the principle of private property. Nevertheless, people from the liberal civil sector or libertarian organizations knew this well. Despite that, everyone managed to insert their meaning into the (common) empty signifier and find enough reasons to come out and protest. The "core" got a big "push" by massification of protests (after "Hercegovačka"), with a higher number of people who inscribed their meanings into the concept of the right to the city and municipal nature of the movement:

"To a great extent, municipalism is inspiring us. It's based on the reinvention of the way in which we're supposed to deal with our communities. This has nothing to do with Serbia's geopolitical orientation or similar things – only with our ability to fix roofs or bus stops in our city. The point is to start from the bottom, repairing a leaking roof and then moving step by step up the stairs. Politics became a matter of "professionals". We want to conquer political sphere by emphasizing things that are within our scope of decision. You can't decide about "Europe-Russia" issues or something similar. The only level where you can practice politics is local. The elites indeed annoy us, but we're not calling for a lynch mob, but to reclaim space. For me, the concept of "commons" is practically quite unusable, but it could be good for slogans: "Our water pipe", "our – this" or "our – that". "Right to the city" is quite suitable for articulation of our narrative. Practically, this means that that the whole set of things – from the right to decide, to the conditions that make you well-informed before reaching a decision.

Municipalism helped us “translate” certain things and acquire a reference that helps us have a better perception of reality.” (Interviewee no. 33)

Finally, NDB’s discourse showed vulnerability once the movement decided to enter the political arena. After the local elections held in 2018, the movement did not reach the electoral five percent threshold. After that, together with other local initiatives around Serbia, they established a new entity called the “Civic block”. Their desire to scale up their activities and make a national political entity turned out to be in contradiction with their municipal discourse. The logic behind their ambition was to join forces with various local initiatives and compete at the national level. Nonetheless, it turned out that without “big narratives” in a country that, for instance, still did not define its borders (the issue of Kosovo is still dominating public discourse) one cannot do much with “everyday” local themes at the national level. Even though this stage of movement’s development is not studied here, the insights from this work have given, I believe, a good basis for studying further developments and steps of Don’t Let Belgrade D(r)own.

6.5. Conclusion

Considering that the process of collective identity formation is here understood in Melucci's terms, as a cognitive process, one may conclude that (every) cognition, including discursive consolidation that is in focus here, takes place under influence of both external and internal factors. At the individual (micro) level of analysis, in a research such as this, one could address only external, meaning social factors influencing individual cognition. Addressing internal (psychological) factors in the process of acquisition of knowledge and "cognitive mapping" was not possible under given theoretical framework, because it would require tools from other scientific fields. At the collective level of analysis, both internal (meso) and external (macro) factors could be assessed (and addressed), because both were detectable in the sphere of *social*. In the chapter four, the "external" side of the three collective identities was covered. It was shown that the three case studies have both convergences and divergences with respect to their epistemic discursive performances. Convergences are embodied in the attempt of newly rising social movements to challenge the dominant transitional paradigm. Divergences, on the other hand, have to do with various structural factors, as well as with variances in the type of movement in question. In this, sixth chapter, the analysis is expended onto divergences concerning internal/organizational factors affecting the process of discursive consolidation. Throughout the analysis, I traced several internal factors which shaped this cognitive process. The following table shows what was elaborated in this chapter.

Table 6.1: Factors influencing collective identity formation

Cases	Previously established activist network	The level of Trust	The way of synchronization and collective identification	Social Base	External Influence
Student movement (Zagreb)	Solid	High	Deliberation and hegemony through the power of Persuasiveness of (better) arguments	Solid (students)	Significant/not decisive/positive
Popular movement (Sarajevo)	Poor	Low	Lack of deliberation and inability of establishing	Popular (fuzzy)	Significant/ decisive/negative

			hegemony; Channeling chaotic impulses from the streets and plenums, instead		
Municipal movement (Belgrade)	Solid	High	Informal deliberation and Hegemony through informal deliberation and subtle power games	Fluid (between popular and solid)	Significant/semi-decisive /positive

By recalling conceptual "backbone" of the three movements, meaning their front-running and supportive master-frames, I can start concluding this part case by case. Regarding internal factors, the case of Zagreb showed how significant were the high level of trust, previously established (dense) activist network and a solid social base. The stable social habitus where the moment arose is of no less importance. All these factors pushed forward the "free education for all" demand and concepts such as capital(ism) and neoliberalism as the (front-running) master-frames. "Free education for all" was specific enough, so people could identify with it in the context of critique of capital(ism) and neoliberalism, while the supportive set of master-frames provided an additional context within which the central demand and the "frontrunners" were placed. All this would have not been possible without the ability of the theoretically equipped activists to formulate the central demand and the wider context where it was about to be addressed. Furthermore, such agenda would have never been settable, had there not been for partially controlled social habitus. A solid social base, on the other hand, allowed trust to be gained and the rule of "better argument" to become convenient and fruitful for the process of deliberation.

On the opposite side from Zagreb, Sarajevo case showed all difficulties that a movement can face if some of the above indicated factors are absent. Certainly, this absence is, to an extent, predetermined by the unfavorable structural conditions. Yet, we could observe organizational and other variations *within* the Bosnian context as well. The social movement in Tuzla (which shares structural obstacles with Sarajevo), for instance, had a much clearer social base and could have relied on some sort of previously established (workers') activist network. Structure, hence, may indeed affect internal processes of collective identity formation positively or negatively, but various non-structural factors may possibly compensate for, or enhance structural disadvantages.

In Sarajevo, the "core" of the popular movement was faced with an incredibly difficult endeavor: to channel through the dispersed anger and despair accumulated throughout these last two and a half decades. Without a clear social base and at least roughly defined margins of social habitus where the action takes place, as well as with a significant degree of external influence unsuitable for a given context, one of the crucial components of every functional collective, trust, could not be achieved either. That is why the employed set of master-frames, especially the "front-running duo" (social justice and human dignity), operated at such high level of abstraction. This was the only way to reach, or try to reach, the widest possible consent of the dispersed and unmitigated clamor of the multitude. Every attempt to concretize demands and put them into a wider context of (macro) conceptual critique of the *status quo* (like the student movement in Zagreb did), resulted in proliferation of narrow demands which, often, stood in contradiction with macro concepts (the "government of experts" vs. "social justice", for instance). Clearly, no stream within this popular movement succeeded in establishing hegemony over meaning, under such unfavorable structural and organizational circumstances which prevented participation and conversation to gain shape of deliberation.

In Belgrade, finally, the activist network had been, to a large extent, built before the municipal movement managed to gain public visibility and reach wider support. A certain level of trust, both within the "core" group and later, between the "core" and the wider scope of activists (and eventually the wider public) were established and achieved. However, the social base and the habitus where the movement occurred were not as clear and solid as in Zagreb. They were not, on the other hand, as fuzzy as in Sarajevo either. The movement was undoubtedly, under tremendous influence of municipalism from the "outside" and would have normally (under such conditions) had much more trouble with accommodating this conceptual apparatus into domestic context. Had this shortcoming not been compensated by reintroducing, in parallel, the conceptual apparatus from the (socialist) past, this would have probably been the case. This way, the front-running master-frames such as "right to the city" and the reinvented sense of the local community, were "translated" by using the main concept of the Yugoslav period (the concept of self-management) as a supportive master-frame. Thereby, the space for (further) contextualization of issues of "commons" and "local democratic governance" was opened as well. This space, then, could have been filled out with a sense of anti-neoliberal agenda. In this case, similarly to Zagreb, the specific issue ("Belgrade Waterfront project") was spotlighted as a paradigm for a whole set of systemic fallacies and misconceptions, typical of the post-socialist condition.

Chapter 7: General Concluding Remarks

I started the thesis with a reference to the fall of the Berlin wall. This event undoubtedly announced, both symbolically and practically, the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. Since then, the often-repeated catchphrase related to the new world order became the phrase "the only game in town". This means that the announced victory of neoliberal capitalism did not only become evident, but almost final and irreversible. Globally speaking, this alleged irreversibility was soon brought into question. During the late 1990s, protests started spreading from Seattle to Genoa and intensified throughout the following decade. By the end of the first decade of the 2000s, "the only game in town" was significantly discredited across the globe, arguably due to its numerous social and economic (but also political) misconceptions and side-effects.

The post-socialist space was, at first, lagging behind with respect to these trends of global resistance. Keeping in mind the context, it was difficult for "post-socialist" activists to come up with a convincing critique of the system to which their states were (still) trying to catch up with. Soon after the socialist systems disintegrated, the narrative about a "brighter" future was closely tied to the (nation) state building, market liberalization and privatization. In some parts of the post-socialist world such as former Yugoslavia, the "nation state building" brought about ethnic cleansing, mass killings and genocide. Ethnic nationalism became the most relevant political category. Liberalization and privatization, on the other hand, exposed the already devastated economy to much more powerful competitors and economic "tigers" (multinational companies included) that managed to suck even the last drops of "blood" from its fragile "veins". While privatizations, left hundreds of thousands of workers jobless, ethnic nationalism kept their anger at bay. "National freedom" and "modernization" represented the key pillars of a narrative which secured hegemony of the post-socialist political and economic elites. Almost two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the resistance was born in this part of the world as well. The hegemonic paradigm proved to be contestable.

The thesis was set to illuminate the conceptual "backstage" of this resistance and get as deep as possible into the very essence of the critique to which the peripheral version of neoliberal capitalism in former Yugoslavia was exposed to. Research questions and theoretical framework were set up in order to dig deep into the matrix of actors, social relations, structural, organizational and social factors that opened the space for (re)penetration of counter-hegemonic, critical knowledge into the post-Yugoslav region. In order to investigate which ideas influenced the activists and the three social movements in question I applied the "cognitive approach" to social movements. I looked at the way in which the so called "critical communities" and social movements cooperate, and sought to assess the way and conditions

under which this linkage is established. The three case studies on which this research relied, belong to the specific context of post – socialist and more specifically, post-Yugoslav space (and time), which implied two important notions. Firstly, it was the space (and time) where the paradigm (of "transitology") indeed became dominant, so that very little or almost no space was left for counter-hegemonic tendencies. Secondly, the region of former Yugoslavia has specifically undertaken a path from a *role model for democratic socialism* (as proclaimed by Erich Fromm) to a fertile ground for peripheral and (hence) predatory neoliberal capitalism. The research on the occurrence of counter-hegemonic tendencies in this region was, therefore, the research about emergence of critical discourse in the time period of social, economic and indeed, political regression.

Results of this research include both theoretical and empirical insights. Theoretically speaking, the most general conclusion covers the domain of sociology of knowledge. Thus far, the field was usually preoccupied with investigating how widely accepted commonsensical knowledge upon which societies rest gets established and institutionalized. My task was to show that the field of sociology of knowledge should pay more attention to the other side of the medal, as well. Instead of focusing solely on the acquisition of knowledge that builds and reproduces the *status quo*, I showed that the assessment of sources, channels of diffusion and (social, structural, etc.) conditions under which counter-hegemonic knowledge finds its way through and starts functioning as a "counter-narrative" through activism, might be equally important for the field.

Second important theoretical insight covers the field of social movement studies – more specifically, social movements and knowledge. I showed above that the dispute over whether social movements produce knowledge or just use (and accommodate) ideas - is resolvable. By dividing discourses into micro, meso and macro levels of abstraction (chapter four), I argued that both "inherited" and originally produced knowledge by social movements are important for their discourses. The higher relevance of generic knowledge originating in critical communities over, for instance, commonsense knowledge at the micro level or knowledge produced by "organic intellectuals" at the meso level – or vice versa, is a matter researchers' interest and the specific goal of a research. Thereby, the tension between social movements as active producers of knowledge and social movements as passive recipients of knowledge may be eliminated. Social movements are both producers and recipients of knowledge. The emphasis on one type of knowledge instead of the other would depend on the level of abstraction one is looking at.

The empirical insights allowed for encompassing full matrix of cognitive and social (meaning individual and collective) processes which eventually led to "cognitive liberation" and counter-hegemonic tendencies within a given historical context. Starting from the distinction I between

theoretical and non-theoretical knowledge, I sought to illuminate the way in which counter-hegemonic ideas interacted with the activists and social movements in question. Even though my focus was on the side of theoretical counter-hegemonic knowledge and its effect on formation of critically intonated discourses in former Yugoslavia, the non-theoretical knowledge is likewise addressed and explored.

The empirical research went along the trajectory posed by the three research questions. In chapter four, through discourse analysis, I gathered that the initial assumption of counter-hegemonic tendencies in former Yugoslavia was justified. Furthermore, through "mapping concepts" I started showing that theory (still) matters with respect to activism. Apart from the shared anti-hegemonic "nature" assessed through "mapping concepts", the three discourses illustrated three different types and, indeed, three different levels of the critique of the post-socialist paradigm explicated in the chapter one. While the commonalities have to do with the shared post-socialist condition, variances are to be explained through differences in structural and organizational/social characteristics of the three national/social contexts. The conceptual apparatuses used by three social movements covered various fields of potential contestation: from higher education, to the "commons" and general notions such as social justice and human dignity. Each of the three critical discourses managed to resonate, at least partially and/or temporarily, with their national publics by challenging dominance of the post-socialist, transitional discourse. Alternative interpretations of the past, the present and the future made an alternative narrative of the post-socialist condition more visible, and, if nothing else, shed light on some of its most tangible misconceptions.

Chapter five deals with the micro perspective and tackles the question of origins and channels of diffusion of critical knowledge from critical communities to individual activists. This part also sought to illuminate the most important social factors that contributed to the diffusion of critical knowledge, from its origins to its spreading to activists and social movements. The empirical material showed that the counter-hegemonic cognitive edifice in former Yugoslavia was compound of both theoretical and non-theoretical knowledge which diffused from various origins, through different channels. Starting from the non-theoretical corpus of knowledge, the empirical material showed that the dominance of the transitional discourse never remained totally uncontested. In the private sphere, as well as in some subcultural and other marginalized social circles, critical narratives survived, defying the dominant post-socialist narrative. Even if sidelined and pushed deeply below the surface and out of sight of the wider public, critical narratives survived in some milieus. My research singled out these milieus within progressive family or subcultural (including musical) habitus. Factors that increased the possibility of having inherited such anti-hegemonic value systems included, among others, coming from families with parents of different national origin, impulses from the punk scene, atheism or "depoliticized" religious sentiments. For this non-theoretical side of

knowledge acquisition, important was the persistence of anti-fascist Yugoslav heritage, as well as the heritage of coexistence between different ethnic, national and religious groups all over former Yugoslavia. Once the critical narrative spread, the "great refusal" of such categorization of individuals and groups signified an important precondition for any further counter-hegemonic reasoning.

Additionally, the inflow of critical theoretical knowledge turned out to be crucial for the development of counter-hegemonic "cognitive mapping". In this respect, I looked at "critical communities" as "laboratories" and "suppliers" of critical theoretical knowledge. It turned out that the most influential authors of contemporary era, for the former Yugoslav region, stemmed from "classical" academic branches, especially philosophy, political theory, political philosophy, sociology and political economy. Disciplines such as psychoanalysis are also detected as influential (especially in Bosnia), whereas other more specialized branches such as social movement studies or alike did not affect, to great extent, the "cognitive mapping" of contemporary activists. On the other hand, philosophers belonging to the Frankfurt School (especially Marcuse and Fromm), or Foucault or, in contemporary era, Žižek (especially his "Sublime Object of Ideology") seem to have a significant influence. Abstract theoretical thought, as argued throughout this thesis, proved to be important for generating a comprehensive critical mindset that assesses an enviable level of analytical capability and (cognitive and practical) innovation, thereby avoiding conformity and passivity. Activists appreciated the combination of analytic complexity, vividness and polemical style of writing. Assuming that the so called "orthodox" critical theory is more rigid, in some cases, the combination between "orthodox" and "contemporary" critical theory could become an optimum the activists were looking for. The examples of David Harvey who managed to put complex theories into understandable terms without simplification, or Hannah Arendt whose style of writing tended to attract even those who disagreed with her in certain points, illustrate this claim. Having that in mind, the question about which stream, "orthodox" or "contemporary", "talks" better to contemporary social dynamics and illuminates better the path for social struggle, got a simple answer: both. Instead of "competing" with one another, Harvey and Lenin or Rosa Luxemburg and Hannah Arendt, are seen by the activists as complementing each other – in spite of mutual (theoretical) differences.

Insights extracted from the qualitative interviews with activists thus provided additional evidence that (critical) theory (still) matters for contemporary activism. Despite living in an era which is considered to be much "faster", where "depth is replaced by surface" (Jameson 1991, 12; in Billig 1995, 135), deeper theoretical considerations and more abstract ideas find their way from critical communities to activists. As mentioned, a significant amount of recognition for counter-hegemonic "cognitive mapping" in former Yugoslavia must be, undoubtedly, credited to the Yugoslav socialist heritage. Elements of socialism, personal memory of it, or

inherited affirmative narrative of the Yugoslav legacy are present in majority of the activists' early political socializations. The theoretical upgrade of these inherited worldviews understood as "value systems", on the other hand, gave an important "touch" to the counter-hegemonic, critical discursive expression. They opened the space to move forward, while simultaneously remembering the progressive elements of the socialist heritage. It was theory, in other words, that allowed the critique to go beyond simple "Yugo-nostalgia".

Equally important to the sources of critical knowledge are the *channels of diffusion* of critical knowledge, whether they are non-theoretical or theoretical. Within the time and space of post-socialism, many institutional channels of diffusion were cut off. It was hereof very important that non-institutional channels provide some sort of compensation. The empirical research showed that alternative social centers, informal and formal gatherings, left-wing festivals of activism and critical thought managed, to a certain extent, to make up for the lack of critical reflections on the dominant (transitional) paradigm within the mainstream public sphere. In some cases these channels reached (future) activists. In other, activists found the channels by being proactive. Who was going to reach who (channels activists or the other way around) depended mostly on the presence or absence of progressive narratives within one's family. If present, progressive family narrative tended to encourage lighter or stronger commitment and search for the alternative channels and sources of critical knowledge. If absent, other factors such as subcultural environments or progressive social habitus, intervened and slightly illuminated channels through which critical knowledge was diffused. Among the strongest in that sense was the subcultural punk milieu or other types of progressive social habitus, such as university. As to the institutional channels of diffusion, the research showed that, in most cases, these had to be singled out abroad. Foreign universities, such as the Humboldt University in Berlin or CEU in Budapest were among the most successful institutional channels of diffusion when it came to critical (theoretical) knowledge. Internal institutional channel of diffusion of critical knowledge was detected in Zagreb where the Department of Comparative Literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences played a significant role in "cognitive mapping" with several activists.

Finally, individual cognitive developments, as well as production, diffusion and acquisition of critical knowledge would have never surpassed individual cognitive maps or smaller intellectual groups, had there not been for social movements. These activist groups spread critical discourses. They were not, however, simple transmitters or summarizers of individual cognitive contributions. Dynamics and certain elements typical of collective identity formation within movements provided a final cognitive "touch" that was both autonomous and connected to the cognitive inputs provided by its activists. With addressing the way in which this collective dynamics affected epistemic discourses, the research circle was closed. In accordance with the literature on collective identity formation, this process is understood as the final part of the

cognitive process that brought concepts from the individual activists - to the stage of collectively constructed discourse. In the sixth chapter on consolidation of discourses, several factors were traced as influential. Among others, a decisive effect on the strength and coherence of collective (epistemic) discursive performance was ascribed to: the existence of previously established activist network, as well as its density; the degree of trust achieved; the issue of hegemony and its relationship to deliberation; the existence of a solid social base and external influences which could be, generally speaking, positive or negative depending on other factors involved. All these factors determined, consequentially, the way that conceptual content of discourses has been built. By making this last empirical step, I reached the final destination of the research endeavor where I sought to explain the "cognitive edifice of the counter-hegemonic tendencies" in three case studies in question.

To recapitulate, first I mapped the presence of critical discourses and assessed the structural factors that had an impact on the them (macro perspective); then I dug deep into the origins and channels of diffusion of both theoretical and non-theoretical critical knowledge at the individual level of analysis (micro perspective); and finally, I moved to the collective level and wondered about social and organizational factors that intervened along the process of discursive consolidation and integration of various individual cognitive inputs (meso perspective). These research outcomes are, one should point out, certainly valid for the given context. The question of generalization of these results is a question that cannot fully be addressed here. The insights from this research could, on the one hand, serve for another similar research endeavor in a different context. The concrete patterns of counter-hegemonic reasoning at both worldview and theoretical level seems however relevant for certain political contests. This certainly holds for the countries of the so called "Global South", which share with former Yugoslavia both peripheral economic position, and "transitional" hegemonic discourse. In some cases authoritarian tendencies overlap as well. Phenomena such as investor urbanism or general deindustrialization and privatization followed by mass layoffs, are also shared features of many countries, across the globe. In that respect, it seems like the critical literature addressing these issues could be shared among social movements internationally. Factors detected as influential in the acquisition of counter- hegemonic non-theoretical knowledge could, possibly, become generalizable in other multiethnic and/or post conflict societies, as well.

A question not addressed in this thesis refers to the social and political consequences after the breakthrough of critical discourses. Evidently, the emergence of critical thinking was not sufficient to counter-weigh the dominant discourse in its totality. This is why one can talk of a breaking through of critical thought, rather than of a counter-balance or a "victory" over the transitional paradigm. The three societies, including Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, remained on a similar track as before. In some cases, the most powerful actors

installed before the breakthrough of critical ideas became, in the meanwhile, even more powerful. During the last few years in Serbia, its ruling Serbian Progressive Party reached the support of over fifty percent vote. Other two case studies showed similar trend of power-strengthening by the ruling political elites. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the system of "ethno-nationalism" continued to reproduce itself, on daily basis and all sides, from domestic political elites to the "international community". In Croatia, despite its European Union membership, political and social climate clearly regressed during the last ten years. As a matter of fact, joining the EU contributed to less feigned decency in the political and social sphere, whereby chauvinism, hate speech and open re-fascisization of public discourse come from the highest state officials and politicians.[156]

It seems, therefore, that radically critical voices from below have not seriously threatened the reproduction of *status quo* in the region. The system was discursively contested, but not (yet) significantly shaken. It might be that other actors or other types of political engagement will continue the struggle that could possibly shake the edifice of the post-socialist condition more seriously. Have the social movements I analyzed exhausted their potential by reintroducing critical tones to their national and regional public? If they have, who can continue from the point where social movements stopped? By making a critical breakthrough in such highly layered, complex and, sometimes unfortunate region, those social movements took necessary, but certainly not sufficient steps towards more tangible social and political change in the future.

[156] For instance, the slogan "Za dom spremni" ("Ready for the homeland"), is forbidden by law because it was the official slogan of the rule of "Ustaše" during the fascist Independent State of Croatia, during WWII. In spite of that prohibition, the former president Grabar Kitarović, or Miroslav Škoro (who won around 25 per cent of votes running third on the elections for the president), several times "defended" this slogan publically, claiming that it is "the historical Croatian slogan).

Appendix 1: Historical Relevance of the Research

This work should not be finished before drawing attention to the historically rooted relevance of this research. Firstly, the insights dealing with the historical relevance of the research show that my interest in exploring the link between social movements and (critical) ideas come from what had become evident long before I decided to tackle it systematically. The greatest historical events, revolutions, big uprisings and social and political movements namely, have been followed by different corpuses of knowledge. In order to illustrate this, a couple of centuries' long tradition of "cooperation" between critical knowledge and social and political action, it is good to provide an overview of the most tangible examples of this tight connection between thought and action. This appendix serves for showing that the idea of studding the link between critical knowledge and social and political action is not an ahistorical "research adventure". To the contrary, it aimed at digging deep into the nature of the relationship that is widely known, though not so much widely studied.

A detectable or more clearly traceable history of the correlation between ideas and social and political action starts with the French Revolution. Since then, the link has been gradually straightening, as the level of literacy, education and development of public spheres was increasing. Already in the early period of Enlightenment, in the "Reflections on the Revolution in France", Edmund Burke addressed the French revolutionaries by referring to "contradictory principles reluctantly and irreconcilably brought and held together by their philosophers" (Furniss 2000, 137; in: Whale 2000). The first set of ideas with a significant influence upon the content of social demands after the French revolution hence, was the one of "utopian socialism". This stream of thought played a very important role in the 1848 revolutions as well, especially in France. The 1848 European revolutions pretty much reflected in their demands what had been going on both materially and cognitively before they occurred, as they represented a turning point between pre-modern and modern times, i.e. pre-modern and modern politics. The ideas behind the revolutions, nonetheless, remained pre-modern in their essence.[157] No wonder that probably the most influential modern thinker in history, Karl Marx, could only have observed and learned from the events of 1848 and 1871, rather than attempting to shape them, whereas pre-modern thinkers did influence these events. "There is evidence in the slogans of 1848 – "The right to work", the state as the "banker of the poor", "the organization of labor" – that during the 1840s Blanqui's basic ideas had become familiar to a wide section of the Paris working class" (Calhon 1952, 36). Even though Blanqui himself

[157] "One of the central messages of Eighteenth Brumaire is that the radicals of 1848 looked back too much, borrowed too much language from the past, and failed to act on a clear understanding of the class struggle characteristic for capitalist society, and hence wound up replaying 1789 as farce instead of waging proletarian revolution as such." See more in: Calhon 1952, 234.

wanted to breakup with "utopians" such as Saint-Simon and Fourier, he did, however, build upon some of their theoretical and conceptual insights. By the same token, the heritage of radical democracy taken as the agenda of many social movements (even today) starts with the mixture of Jacobin tradition and radical democracy upon which Luis Blanqui constructed his thought and political strategy. As Blanqui himself argued, "before men could be organized for a revolution, they had to be drawn out of their lethargy and activated by 'an electric current of ideas" (1980, 29).

Historical examples of the linkage between political thought and direct actions have, from then on, multiplied. Many movements for national liberation and/or unification have built their cognitive edifices out of theoretical blocks of Fichte's primordialism, Mazzini's voluntarism, and other prominent figures of theoretical (and practical) nationalism. Similarly to socialism, nationalism by the time of 1848 had only been in the stage of infancy, with its fully modern shape to come only in the future. A combination between nationalist and anarchist theories in movements for national liberation, for instance, may be found in the early 20th century Yugoslavia[158]. The political movement "Young Bosnia" whose member Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, was politically inspired mostly by movements such as Young Italy and figures like Giuseppe Mazzini. Theoretically however, "Young Bosnia" was mostly inspired by authors from the Russian anarchist tradition, such as Kropotkin, Herzen, Bakunin, Stepniak, Gorky, Chernishevsky, and Plekhanov (Stavrianos 1958, 465).

The year 1968 is also a turning point that launched a process of post-modernization of both thought as well as social and political action. The rise of student movements comes as a response to globally relevant issues of the time such as the war in Vietnam and the Cold War. Furthermore, it is also grounded in the formation and rise of new ideas underpinning new interpretations of global politics, social and cultural norms as well as subjectivity. Situationalism has established itself as one of the most influential streams of thought of that time. Guy Debord, as its most prominent representative introduced a new discourse into the rigid left-wing politics and started talking about issues such as the environment, technology and art, among other things. The Situationists focused on "everyday life", personal alienation in consumerist society, as well as the big "come back" of passions[159] in the public sphere, opening

[158] At the time, the state still had not been unified since most of its territory was under occupation of the Austrian – Hungarian empire.

[159] The replacement of the pleasure principle by the reality is the great traumatic event in the development of man (…) but the unconscious retains the objectives of the defeated pleasure principle. Turned back by external reality (…) the pleasure principle not only survives in the unconscious but also affects in manifold ways the very reality which has superseded the pleasure principle. The return of the repressed makes up the tabooed and subterranean history of civilization (…) this *recherche dutemps perdu* becomes the vehicle of future liberation. See: Marcuse 1966. 15-16 and 19.

up a new horizon for “return of political romanticism”, typical for the European revolutions of 1848.

The activists from the United States of America, Germany, France, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia all experienced 1968 in different ways due to various contexts, i.e. ideas and knowledge of social action. Situationalism rooted its influence in the USA, Praxis philosophy (and critical theory) in Yugoslavia, existentialism in France, the Frankfurt School in Germany and the USA, as Marcuse had been among the most influential thinkers within the anti – war movement, together with Noam Chomsky and the “spiritual father” of the student movement against the war in Vietnam, Bertrand Russell. As argued by Angela Davis, “Marcuse was an indispensable theorist for all those around the world who sought liberation but confronted domination of one – dimensional society in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s” (Davis 2017, viii). Hence “he influenced (and was influenced by) a generation of organizers and activists who were involved in a diversity of radical political projects” (Funke and Lamas 2017, 3). One of the leaders of the radical left German movement, the RAF, Rudi Dutschke, adopted Marcuse’s analysis in his criticism of the allegedly repressive “formed society” that managed Cold War politics. Dutschke drew on Marcuse in order to justify “external pressures” on established institutional authority (Suri 2005, 127)

Apart from Marcuse’s great intellectual influence in Germany and the USA, among the rare theorists who were fully endorsed (as an individual) by the student activists, was Sartre, not for his Marxism, but rather for his existentialism. He was seen as a (theoretical) contributor to the projection of a new “liberated subject” by a new generation of French students. By many, the “French May” was considered a cultural rebellion, whereas others prescribed “proletarian” revolutionary spirit to it. In the specific case of France’s 1968, Sartre emphasized the need for continuation of the movement’s activities (despite the proximity of summer holidays) underlining the necessity of collaborating with the workers (Appignanes 2005, 153). Evidently many people thought about these protests in terms of their historical uniqueness and its strength in overcoming all previous models of rebellion. Among them was Georges Pompidou, the French prime minister who, “in the midst of the crisis”, remarked the following*: “*The only historical precedent (of the May events) is the fifteenth century when the structures of the Middle Ages were collapsing and when students were revolting at the Sorbonne. Right now, it is not the government which is being attacked, nor institutions nor even France. It is our own civilization*” (*Seidman 2004, 2).

As already pointed out, 1968 may be seen as the turning point between modern and post-modern times, same as 1848 represented the turning point between pre-modern and modern times. Nonetheless, both series of events belonged to what was about to become replaced. In the same sense, both came as a consequence of particular material and ideational

conditions/shifts. The so called "post-material" values and the shift towards "lifestyle activism" (Sotirakopoulos 2016), on one hand owed much to the relative economic stability of the "30 glorious years".[160] On the other, they also are indebted to the authors and literature that had been attempting to disrupt the edifice of the Cold War status quo before 1968. The new theoretical tendencies led to the establishment of the "New Left".

Old Left	New Left
Dominance of 'orthodox' Marxism	Influence of Frankfurt School, and of minoritian voices in the radical milieu (anarchism, autonomism, council communism, etc.)
Political parties and trade unions	Self-organization through loose networks
Change through established institutions, like parties, trade unions and parliament	Change through direct action; development of 'parallel institutions'
Working class as the revolutionary agent	Young people, progressive middle class and 'outsiders' as the radical avant-garde
Improvement of material conditions	Counter-culture, alternative values, new issues (environment, peace, etc.) and solidarity with the oppressed/marginalized

Table: The "New Left", Source: Sotirakopoulos 2016, 19.

Theoretical "backup" to the "New Left", had evidently been produced in "critical communities" such as the Frankfurt School in Germany, or Praxis in Yugoslavia. Critical knowledge certainly had different variations and focuses. Some were preoccupied with "socialist humanism", some with "libidinal politics" and others with social and cultural backwardness in spite of economic progress etc. All these were relevant topics of the 1960's. The New Left (thought) had also different impact in different contexts. In Germany, the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory had a very strong influence on the student movement of 1968. In a correspondence between Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse from February to August 1969, they discussed the student movement in Frankfurt and whether or not students perverted their theory in practice. The decisive moment happened when Adorno was forced to call the police after his lecture was interrupted by the students who, according to Adorno, "crossed the line of decency". While Horkheimer and Adorno advocated for "philosophical purity" Marcuse "always saw his ideas as best understood in the context of social change" (Fominaya and Cox 2013, 14). In this correspondence, Adorno argued that discussion with students was not possible anymore. Marcuse's reply was:

"You know that we are united in the rejection of any unmediated politicization of theory (…).The student movement today is desperately seeking a theory and a practice. It is

[160] This was a generation (…) perhaps the first in history—for which the imperatives of material necessity ceased to dominate everyday life (…) Wolin 2010, 73.

searching for forms of organization that can correspond to and contradict late capitalist society (...) I believe that it is precisely in a situation such as this that it is our task to help the movement theoretically, as well as defending it against repression and denunciation. (…) The students know all too well the objective limits of their protest—they do not need us to point it out to them, but perhaps they need us to help them get beyond these limits (…) We cannot abolish from the world the fact that these students are influenced by us (and certainly not least by you)-I am proud of that and am willing to come to terms with patricide, even though it hurts sometimes.*"*[161]

The influence of the Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School and its authors, as well as the influence of the "existentialists" led by Sartre - are certainly the most conspicuous examples of the tight link between theoretical inputs and activist endeavors of the 1968. In countries like Yugoslavia, this trend is also detectable, in the same period. The Communist party nomenclature was seen as the "red bourgeoisie" in power and was criticized for its "embourgeoisement" (Michels 1911, 161). Among other factors, the role of the philosophical group gathered around the so called "Yugoslav Praxis School" was very important. The group had already existed for four years by the time when the 1968 student protests had begun. The aim of this group that launched the philosophical magazine "Praxis" was to deal not only with "narrowly philosophical problems but also with problems of Yugoslav socialism and with more universal problems of the modern world" (McBride 2001, 21). The school of thought was therefore highly critical of the socialist elites which got bureaucratized so that the ideals such as egalitarianism, brotherhood and unity and alike – appeared as ideals betrayed in practice. The wave of "socialist humanism" coming from authors like Erich Fromm also influenced the Yugoslav youth at the time. Of course, new theoretical influences worldwide were neither clear and coherent, nor immune to the intervention of more rigid sets of ideas embodied in (still valid) traditional left.

By the time of the late 1960s, the social democratic and communist parties in both West and East had already lost connection with the theoretical apparatus from which they initially arose. As argued by Christopher Henning, "politics lost the corrective of theory, and retained only the function of pragmatically solving day-to-day problems. This social - democratic politics has lost the reflexive moment of Marxian theory (…)" (Henning 2014, 37). No wonder that France was the only country in which the trade unions joined the students, when close to eleven million workers went on strike.[162] French intellectuals (and also Italian) were at the time,

[161] Adorno, Theodor and Marcuse, Herbert. 1969*. SHOULD BEin text (Adorno and Marcuse 1969)*

[162] The "hard core" wing of the Communist party was still very strong and influential at the time. What had begun as a student uprising in the Paris suburbs had metamorphosed into a mammoth anti-Gaullist student-worker alliance. The worker-student coalition was an unprecedented development. At no other point during 1968 - not in the United States, not in Latin America, nor elsewhere in Europe—did an analogous front materialize. See: *ibid*., 92

still affected by Maoism, so the late 1960s can be perceived as the period when the last sparks of traditional left could be detected, but have started losing influence precisely due to reasons indicated by Henning above.[163] The more traditional left was giving in to ideas such as German philosopher Rudolf Bahro's early thought on "de-growth". The anti-modernist branch of the German Greens was under direct influence of this author, who claimed that the goal of the Greens should be "rolling back of the industrial system, rather than its advancement." (Sotirakopoulos 2016, 81)

"Considering that the function of philosophy is to corrupt the youth, to alienate (…) them from the predominant ideologico-political order, to sow radical doubts and enable them to think autonomously" (Žižek 2018, Introduction), the relationship between critical ideas/knowledge and political/social action, between rebellious practice and critical thought has remained intertwined until today. In the past three decades, we have been witnessing many theoretical attempts to provide conceptual frameworks within which one may critically observe and potentially launch a more substantial social change. Here we come to the contemporary era.

As every system has its characteristics and means of reproduction, every social/systemic change starts from conceptual delegitimization of the *status quo,* before it develops conceptual and political/economic strategy for the future. If feudalism was challenged by the Enlightenment and "its philosophers"; early industrial capitalism by utopian and scientific socialism; late capitalism and "consumerist culture" by the Critical theory - one inevitably wonders about contemporary neoliberalism and its substantial critique. If the brief historical overview of the relationship between ideas and social/political action tells us something, then it is that no major change comes before conceptual tools for deconstruction of the ruling paradigm had been developed.

Firstly, it took a long time for neoliberalism to become the main object of criticism, as it has been analyzed so thoroughly in order to be criticized aptly. The American theorist, David Harvey (2005) contributed greatly in this respect. Not only economic, but also its political and conceptual logic should be understood and explained. After that, many tried to reinvent the (new) radical subjectivity and point the finger at a social actor which could contest the new ruling paradigm. Thinkers have been trying to reset political thought and start building new

[163]: "As with other French intellectuals, Sartre's Maoist episode was a way station and rite of passage that allowed him to escape the political strictures of orthodox Marxism. But even more important, his association with the Maoists allowed him to think through problems concerning the role of the intellectual that had preoccupied him for years. Although Sartre was the consummate twentieth-century French intellectual, he always felt extremely ill at ease in this role. On the one hand, the intellectual claimed to be the exponent of universal values. On the other hand, he or she remained powerless to realize these values in real life. This chasm or breach afflicted the core of the intellectual's being. It accounted for her endemic "bad faith" (mauvaise foi). Sartre's Maoist commitment impelled him to view the intellectual's role in an entirely new light." See: Wolin 2010, 179.

concepts on the ashes of 20th century ideologies and their conceptual backgrounds. Recently, there were two concepts which have managed to "speak" to activists and political struggles for (social and political) change. *The first* is "populism" developed primarily by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Spanish "Indignados" and later "Podemos" have clearly followed the post-Marxian conceptual apparatus of Laclau/Mouffe. The whole logic of "radical democracy" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) and the "populist reason" (Laclau 2005) have been implemented in practice. Thereby "Podemos" abandoned classical Marxian "essentialism". What does this mean in conceptual terms? In a nutshell, the working class has lost its "privileged" position of the main carrier of radical (emancipatory) social change. The field of contestation has been shifted away from materially determined class struggle, and pointed towards discursive field of articulation. The idea of "left populism" introduced social demand as its central category and, among many unfulfilled social demands, Laclau argues, there should be one which may be capable of articulating all other demands. This demand Laclau calls "empty signifier". Considering that each unfulfilled demand is carried by an actor, gathering social demands into one which is "emptied from meaning", signified, by the same token, a convergence of different actors as well. What appears as crucial in Laclau is that all these demands and actors are pointed against a "common enemy".

Now, the link between Indignados and (especially) Podemos on the one hand, and Lacalau (and Mouffe) on the other, has become evident from numerous studies (Erejon and Mouffe 2016; Valdivielso 2017; Agustin and Briziarelli 2018; Eklundh 2019). Had there not been a theoretically developed new "left populism", Indignados or Podemos would have never occurred – at least not in the current shape (and possibly historical moment). Left populism however, has become the leitmotiv of Spanish "Podemos" and to a certain extent, Greek "Syriza" (and the mass popular movements behind them). The very idea of populism, apart from specific authors such as Laclau and Mouffe, is also often associated to the "Essex" scholars who still copiously work on academic production based on Laclau. The "Essex School" thus, might be considered, at least to an extent, a reaction to the previous victory by the (neoliberal) "Chicago school".

The second concept which has resonated with activists is David Harvey's "the right to the city" (Harvey 2008) as the key conceptual pillar of municipalism, fueling the idea of "rebel cities" (Harvey 2012). These "rebel cities", or "critical cities" as called by some authors (Naik and Oldfield 2012), have become the platform for plausible critique under circumstances of globalized world which make subversion on national or international levels, way more difficult than ever before. All these attempts sought to "re-politicize critical theory" (Kellner 1989, 225), make it applicable or, at least inspiring (again). Interestingly enough, by claiming that municipalist movements have been inspired by authors such as David Harvey, we go against the claim of no one else but Harvey himself. In his book on the "rebel cities" (2012), he argues that

"(…) the idea of the right to the city does not arise primarily out of various intellectual fascinations and fads (…)" It primarily, Harvey argues, "rises up from the streets, out from the neighborhoods, as a cry for help and sustenance by oppressed peoples in desperate times" *(Harvey 2012, xiii).* But at the same time, he emphasizes something that brings the story, again, back "on the side" of importance of ideas. The right to the city, Harvey argues, "can never be an end in itself, even if it increasingly looks to be one of the most propitious paths to take" *(ibid., xviii).* It might be true, in other words, that the very beginnings of municipal struggles were not inspired by any generic knowledge, but rather by deprivation and/or discontent based on a direct, every day experience. However, in order to perceive this experience as a part of a wider social and economic logic and politicize it, one needs generic knowledge. It definitely makes more sense, as Harvey argues, to claim that theoreticians actually learned from "ordinary" people and their local struggles. The "next step" however necessitates for conceptual knowledge to be essential, as it should prevent local municipal struggles from remaining "an end in itself" and connect them with other local, national or international struggles.

The link between ideas and social and political action is indeed clear. But the research on the very ways in which this link is established has been lacking. By revealing the type of knowledge which matters with respect to activism today (in a given context of former Yugoslavia), and the specific role of generic (theoretical/conceptual) knowledge in the construction of a counter-hegemonic perception of reality, mechanisms of interaction between ideas and activists – this research precisely sought to provide a deeper understanding of the historically rooted ties between ideas and action. My aim, hereof, was to show that this linkage should be studied and not simply taken for granted.

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