

Srebrenica As Discourse: An Ethnography of Power

by

Suzanne Elaine Petrusic

BA Political Science, The Ohio State University, 2008

MA, University of Denver, 2011

MA, University of Pittsburgh, 2013

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This dissertation was presented

by

Suzanne Petrusic

It was defended on

July 2, 2021

and approved by

Waverly Duck, PhD, Department of Sociology

John Markoff, PhD, Department of Sociology

Robert Hayden, PhD, Department of Anthropology

Dissertation Advisor: Mohammed Bamyeh, PhD, Department of Sociology

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The literature on power and resistance has long struggled to define discursive power as separate from the resistance used to influence it. Many studies have placed the individuals they've studied in the position of either being powerful or powerless in an effort to document, understand, and theorize both discursive power and resistance. Rather than placing individuals in positions of powerfulness or powerlessness, this research centers the discourse as power itself using Foucault's theoretical framework on discursive formations. It examines the objects, authorities, and concepts endorsed by, on the one hand, a group of marginalized local residents of Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and on the other hand, a series of international visitors to the infamous town. Through interviews, ethnography, and participant observation, both groups are treated as equally powerful users and subjects of discourse. By examining the discursive power of each group and watching as individuals from each group try to influence each other's image of Srebrenica, the research examines strategies of discursive influence and resistance, identifying a methodology for studying power that is promising for future research.

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1.0 Chapter 1: Introduction, Theoretical Framework, and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

Back in 2012, in completing my field work for my Master's thesis, I had the experience in Srebrenica of quite a few local residents telling me that they don't have a problem with ethnic identity. That statement, and the passion with which it was usually spoken, was often bewildering, mostly because I hadn't asked them about ethnic identity in the first place. Through time, reflection, and analysis, it occurred to me that they were *expecting* me to ask about ethnic identity, probably because I am an international visitor, and those visitors are known to want to talk a lot about ethnic identity. That they had assumed I would want to talk about it planted a question in my mind, which eventually grew into the work that produced this dissertation.

The dissertation could have taken many different forms, anchoring into any one of a number of literatures related to nationalism, anarchy and the role of the state, ethnic conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding. On the literature on nationalism, the data I have collected could go far to demonstrate how *groupism* has led theories of nationalism astray from really beginning to understand what drives massive political change in the context of the institutionalized, international state system. For the literature on anarchy and the role of the state, the data here could contribute to further understanding on how local sensemaking and systems of power maintain state power, but also how they can change drastically (for example,

from privileging class identities as in the former Yugoslavia to privileging ethnic identities in Bosnia). The data can also demonstrate the sensemaking that remains the same culturally at the foundation of society even when political apparatuses change and seem to signal nothing is the same (again, for example, the Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia).

The literature on ethnic conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding focuses on the role of the state and ethnic identity in causing conflict, and as cause, presumes the state, and its most mature expression—democracy—is the solution. When that solution fails to secure peace, the peacebuilding literature often presumes democracy simply wasn't implemented fully or well. I think the data I collected could also speak to the literature that critically examines whether democracy is a substantive good or a procedural solution.

Because it is so very rich, ethnographic research can be richly applicable across a broad swath of literature. Alas, the literature I chose for the dissertation was that on power and resistance, and in the beginning, it was a question about power and resistance, about how powerless people try to resist the powerful. Rather than casting international visitors as powerful, with the discourse on Srebrenica they bring with them somehow privileged in interactions with local residents, whose discourse is powerless, I began to understand the situation from the perspective Lughod (1990) suggests. I saw that both international visitors and local residents were using their own understanding of Srebrenica in their interactions, and sometimes, when it seemed they were different, they both tried to influence each other.

That is, it never seemed to be the case, or at least I could not find evidence of it, that one or the other was, in their interactions with each other, more or less privileged regarding power. To the extent that language *is* power, in the most Foucauldian sense, because both visitors and

residents had access to language, they could both be powerful and influence each other using discourse. These were *multiple* discourses of Srebrenica, and given the unique circumstances surrounding Srebrenica, those different ways of understanding Srebrenica often came into contact with each other, which had led to those local residents' unsolicited statements to me that they don't have a problem with ethnic identity after all.

For this dissertation, my starting position is that there is a difference between the reality that is Srebrenica the city and the discourses that try to define Srebrenica in the minds of different people. Srebrenica itself has become a contested discourse. As a reality, Srebrenica itself is a remote city with its own reality, but it has emerged as its own discourse both locally and internationally. In this work, I first outline relevant elements of Foucault's theory of power as a theoretical framework for the study. Then, in the next few chapters, I look at those elements from both perspectives, identifying them and comparing them.

Then, I examine what happens when these two images of Srebrenica meet—how they interact, and sometimes, how international visitors and local residents use them to influence each other. In this way, I bring new meaning to the assertion that *resistance is power* by showing that this is quite literally true: what we see as 'resistance' is really the use of one field of discursive power to *influence* a different field of discursive power. In that sense, this study is less an ethnography of Srebrenica, and more an ethnography of power.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Simply stated, this dissertation explores how people try to influence each other when at least one of them thinks they disagree with how another person sees the world. In academic terms, it explores Foucauldian power and resistance to it. This study takes Foucault's work on power and some of the literature that flows from it as its orienting framework. In particular, I draw inspiration heavily from *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, *History of Sexuality, Madness and Civilization*, and *The Birth of the Clinic*.¹ One major concept from this work is called a discursive formation (Foucault 2002[1969]: Chapter 2). Simply put, a discursive formation is the **set of rules** that determines what kinds of things we pay attention to and ensure that we continue to pay attention to those things.

Madness and Civilization, for example, looked at the set of rules and norms of society that led the field of psychopathology and then larger society to pay attention to 'madness.' *A History of Sexuality* looked at the set of rules and norms of society that led society to recognize intimate behaviors and focus on them as sexuality. Foucault was trying to identify how the very reality of seemingly peculiar behavior became known as 'madness' or 'sexuality' in the first place.

His biggest point was that the presence or reality of so-called peculiar behavior did not necessarily warrant the volume or the character of the attention that madness or sexuality eventually achieved. He wanted to uncover what it was exactly that led to that volume and

¹ This body of work has rightly been criticized for the vagueness of the terms it often uses. In order to have a conversation about this work, I use these terms, but I try to use them as little as possible and instead use more colloquial vocabulary in its place.

character of attention given to that behavior such that it became known as madness or sexuality. By doing so, he would eventually expose how arbitrary the set of rules were that determined that madness or sexuality should be something people generally pay special attention to.

But in order to do so, he had to solve a very difficult methodological problem. He had to identify the kind of data he should collect to study madness. He knew that all the data he could collect about madness itself would have presumed just that set of rules he was curious to uncover in the first place. The data set, if it focused on examples of madness or sexuality, would effectively disguise from him the very thing he was interested in studying—the set of rules that had produced them as examples in the first place.

To get around that problem, Foucault focused instead on understanding three things. First, he wanted to understand how, when, and where those seemingly unusual behaviors began to systematically be understood as madness or sexuality. In his terms, he called this understanding the formation of objects.² In trying to reveal the formation of these objects, Foucault was answering questions about who began to notice madness, where in society they began to see it, and how they categorized and structured knowledge about madness.

In the nineteenth century, it was the family, social groups, work situations, and the religious communities that likely identified ‘peculiar’ behaviors, which later became referred to as madness. They were able to identify what seemed ‘normal’ and against this background called attention to what seemed to be unusual behavior. At the same time, new spaces in society

² For simplicity, I refer to this simply as ‘objects’ throughout the dissertation.

were emerging— space for art or for penalty, for example. Those places gave madness a space to emerge, where it could become an *object* of attention.

Those who drew attention to and suggested a need to focus on madness obviously included the institution of medicine, but the legal profession and religious authorities did so as well. Importantly, these institutions were afforded recognition by the public as major authorities on the topic. In addition to knowing where and when and by whose direction madness emerged, it is also important to understand how madness was categorized. To categorize and understand madness, one had to know more about a person's soul, body, personhood, and their personal history.

Second, Foucault wanted to understand who could speak with authority about madness or sexuality, what places and roles in society they had to occupy in order to have that authority, and who in society recognized them as authorities. In his terms, he called this understanding the formation of enunciative modalities, but I will refer to this simply as "authority" for the rest of this dissertation.

For example, for disease, the answer was firstly the doctor, a status granted to persons through demonstrated competence and knowledge, granted by certain institutions, and practiced through particular relationships with other institutions. For madness in particular, he identified authorities such as psychiatrists. But members of the judiciary and the church were also recognized as authorities on madness.

Also important to the question of authority are the sites from which authority could be exercised. In the field of medicine, doctors, who are afforded a particular authority to speak about disease, can do so from hospitals, private practices, laboratories, and the 'library' or

archive of documents related to the medical field. There was a time they could also speak from private homes.

The roles these authorities can assume is also an important aspect for understanding the authority related to a discourse. In the medical and psychiatric context, the doctor takes the position of the authority who questions the patient, listens to the patient's responses, and who takes an objective perspective removed far enough to determine the relevant from the irrelevant. The doctor can take up and operate instruments in practice. And the doctor can disperse information.

Third, Foucault wanted to understand how different ideas related to madness or sexuality. In his terms, he called this the formation of concepts, but I will refer to this simply as 'concepts' for the rest of the dissertation. He was keen to identify how ideas related to madness and sexuality came to be related to them in the first place, to understand how those ideas or concepts related to one another, and then to understand how those concepts become 'knowledge.'

For example, Foucault [(2002[1969]:63)] describes how Natural History has a

general arrangement of the statements, ... a set of rules for arranging statements in series, an obligatory set of schemata of dependence, of order, and of successions, in which the recurrent elements that have value as concepts were distributed.

Some concepts systematically precede or succeed others, are hierarchically arranged, or are systematically negated by others. (Foucault (2000)[1969]: 64 – 65). Concepts can become knowledge in a myriad of ways—one can take descriptions from the past and put them into new contexts, take natural language and make it formal, translate quantitative data into

qualitative statements and descriptions, or make knowledge about a concept ever more detailed.

Foucault developed this methodology for understanding the sets of rules that emerged around sexuality, madness, or natural history because he was interested primarily in revealing how things like madness or sexuality became an important thing for people in general to pay attention to. Madness or sexuality, he argued, were ideas that society began to use to exercise discursive power. His theory of power demonstrates how so-called peculiar behavior became madness and sexuality, and how madness and sexuality as discourse began to be used to mold behavior.

An important conclusion to draw from Foucault's work is that all these objects, authorities, and concepts are *discursive*. At some point, madness or sexuality, for example, separate themselves from the behaviors they are presumed to represent. They became madness and sexuality in the minds and imaginations of people. In this way, they became something else; that is, a separation occurred, and the thing (behavior) exists as separate from the words used to imagine it (madness or sexuality).

To continue with the example of madness, it is not the case that the family, through human comparison of what is normal and what is not, established that a person was mad and then handed the person off to the psychiatrist, who had also seen separate instances of what was obviously madness and had studied it. Nor was it the case that the judicial system identified behind a murder the psychopathology of 'paranoia' or behind a sexual offense the psychopathology of 'neurosis.' That is, the way that madness and sexuality are understood is

not simply a product of the relationships that individual people make between, for example, madness and criminality as two logically connected things.

Instead, particular expressions of neurosis or paranoia were labelled as madness because of the relationships medicine and the judiciary, for example, had with each other, and with 'madness' as a discourse (separate and apart from the behaviors it supposedly merely described).

In contrast to Foucault, this dissertation is not focused on identifying the set of rules that define *Srebrenica* as a discourse or how *Srebrenica* as a discourse is used to mold behavior.³ Instead, this dissertation asserts that multiple discourses of *Srebrenica* exist. It focuses on people who have two very different discourses or images or perspectives of *Srebrenica*, how they try to influence each other's images of the city, and whether and when they are ever successful at doing so. In Foucault's terms, this dissertation examines discursive power and resistance to it to identify what strategies are successful in resisting power, and what contextual factors seem to be important to that successful resistance.

I start by asserting that, in the same way that madness emerged as a discourse based on the reality of what otherwise would have been unsystematically understood as 'peculiar' behaviors, discourse has also emerged around the reality of the city of *Srebrenica*. More specifically, two distinct discourses have emerged around *Srebrenica* as a remote city in a

³ I would argue that *Srebrenica* as a discourse does mold the behavior of both international visitors to the city and local residents.

remote region of the former Yugoslavia—one based on the perspective of a specific group of local residents, and the other based on the perspective of international visitors to the city.⁴

Because of the international attention the city of Srebrenica maintains given the events that occurred there in the 1990s, these local residents and international visitors interact with each other quite often. When they do so, an opportunity arises to study discursive power and resistance to it. The remainder of this dissertation does just that, using Foucault's methodology as a guide. In particular, I compare and contrast the objects, authorities, and concepts that represent the images that both local residents of and international visitors to the city have of Srebrenica. Then I look at the strategies each group uses to influence the other when there is a contentious difference in those images. By doing so, I come to conclusions about discursive power, resistance, and the strategies that seem to be effective in influencing others.

The literature on power inspired from Foucault's work has led to another field of study focused on resistance. Taking a cue from Foucault, the trick to understanding power is to find resistance to it. By examining that resistance, one would be able to identify and understand better the power that invited it.

There are two problems with this approach. First, resistance is understood as a product of the power that produced it. The assumption is that there is a hegemonic system of power that creates all the subjects within it; if that is true, power is flawed and the very motivation for studying resistance is negated.

⁴ Important to note, not all international visitors bring with them the exact same image of Srebrenica. It is also the case that many local residents have different discourses of Srebrenica. Sometimes, international visitors and local residents even share the same discourse. The qualitative analyses here and throughout compile themes identified from my ethnographic immersion and from the interview data I collected and are representative of the local residents and international visitors included in the study.

Second, the focus on studying resistance has lead researchers and theorists to forget to study the power that invited it in the first place (Abu-Lughod, 1990). In studies of resistance, increasingly less time is spent focused on understanding power (Abu-Lughod, 1990:41-42). There is a tendency to “read all forms of resistance as signs of the ineffectiveness of systems of power and of the resilience and creativity of the human spirit in its refusal to be dominated.” That focus has left the original question of power yet unexplained.

Abu-Lughod (1990) encourages a move away from “abstract theories of power toward methodological strategies for the study of power in particular situations.” But she noticed that a lot of research was presupposing hierarchies of power. More than twenty years later, Bloom (2013: 220) documents the same trend: researchers place people into the category of powerless and powerful, which “neglects the heterogeneity and complexity of an individual’s social position.” And he cites Hollander and Einwohner (2004:550), who leveled a similar observation and challenge nearly ten years earlier: “dichotomizing resisters and dominators in this way ignores the fact that there are multiple systems of hierarchy, and that individuals can be simultaneously powerful and powerless within different systems.”

In this study, rather than position local residents or international visitors as powerless or powerful, I position them as equals. The methodological contribution this dissertation makes to the study of power is that I begin by describing the markers of the discourse each of these groups has of Srebrenica. I use as a guide Foucault’s methodology in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. In his terms, I carefully describe the objects, concepts, and authorities that are relevant to both the visitors and the residents. By doing so, I demonstrate a path for a study of power and discourse that exposes its components, enabling analysis of the strategies for

influencing discourse and power, without entrapping the study in impossible debates about what resistance is and who can do it.

1.3 Methodology

Ethnography: This study began originally in July of 2012 as I embarked on my field research for my Master's thesis. The data I collected in July, August, and December 2012 also influences the new data I present here. I gathered field notes during the summer and December and conducted interviews during the last several weeks of August 2012.

For the dissertation field work, I was in Srebrenica from May of 2014 to February of 2015, March of 2015 to June of 2015, October of 2015 to February of 2017, and March of 2017 to July of 2018, totaling nearly four full years. During that time, a few biographically important events took place. I was employed full-time at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of East Sarajevo from October 2015 to July 2018 as Lecturer. I also became pregnant with our first child, Ognjen, and carried the first half of the pregnancy in Bosnia. I returned to the U.S. in June of 2015 to give birth, and our family returned to Srebrenica in October 2015, when I began to work full time at the University. The following year, I was pregnant with our second child, a difficult pregnancy that was carried to an easy birth, in Bosnia.

These biographical events influence the cadence of data collection for this research. While constantly learning what life in Srebrenica is like today for the duration of my time there, and having exposure to and living in the culture, the interview and participant observation data

collection was largely conducted when possible given the constraints of pregnancy, travel, motherhood, and full-time employment. The bulk of my data collection occurred in Winter, Spring, and Summer 2016 – 2017, though there were periods before that when I did conduct interviews and participant observations.

Important to note is that the ethnography and interviews with local residents were mostly conducted in the local language, but also in English when the local resident wanted to or the circumstances of the participant observations demanded English language use. Having taken two years of university study of the local language and my time in the field, I am fully fluent in the local language, and in practice assessments score what corresponds to a 3/+ on the ILR for Bosnian/Serbian. All of the interviews and participant observations conducted with international visitors to Srebrenica were completed in English. There were times when we consulted Google translate to help make sense of words unfamiliar to interviewees who speak a first language other than English.

The ethnographies focused firstly on understanding patterns in the use of the ethnic identity markers by local residents, including *Musliman/Bosnjak* (Muslim/Bosniak or Bosnian Muslim), *Srbin* ("Serb") and *Bosanac* ("Bosnian"). The second was understanding patterns in the use of other identity markers by local residents, including *stranac/stranci* ("foreigner(s)", "outsider(s)"), *nasi* ("ours"), *seljak* ("villager/redneck"), *bogati* ("rich"), *politicar* ("politicians"), *kulturan* ("well-mannered," "refined"), and *posteni ljudi* ("good/moral people"). The third was a focus on situations in which I, as an outsider who does not have the local social capital to understand fully the meaning and use of ethnic identity markers, expected ethnic identity to be important and it was not, or did not expect it to be important and it actually was.

The second important focus of the ethnography was to gain access to local understanding when international visitors (other than me) are not present. Avoidance of international visitors is one strategy local residents use in order to avoid the sometimes unpleasant consequences that result from those interactions. The ethnography, to the extent that I earned the trust and acceptance of local residents, lent insight into these perspectives as well.

Often, I voice recorded and then transcribed the data I had from the ethnography. I suffered data loss during my time in the field and have since reconstructed some of these events from memory. The reconstruction of those events served as a source for confirming, disputing, and refining my understanding of ethnic identity as it is used by local residents, as well as for limiting the statements that I can confidently make about what ethnic identity means to local individuals; there remain instances where I cannot understand why ethnic identity markers were used in interactions. The events that form the corpus of my data are only partial to the knowledge I've gained from the experience itself. The more informative source is the totality of what I understand given my immersion in the city.

Living in Srebrenica during the nearly four years I was there provided opportunities and access to a wide range of situations that serve to inform my robust understanding of life in Srebrenica. These included the more social aspects of life. I was present for private family events and celebrations in a mostly Serbian space. I was also present for holidays and events that took place in the city beyond the religious/family lines, including graduations, New Year's celebrations, May Day celebrations, celebrations of the very young people in the city, and the yearly "Days of Srebrenica" events sponsored by the city and its inhabitants. Participation in the

daily community aspects of life in the part of the town where our condominium is located was also an essential source of learning for the ethnography.

My experience also included more professional opportunities. I worked with many local non-profit organizations in collaboration on a variety of projects. This included project implementation as well as project planning and proposal writing. In addition, I was employed at the University of East Sarajevo. The University is located in Pale, about two hours' drive from Srebrenica, so the ethnographic value added was partially in contrast to Srebrenica, but also provided insight into the culture of the academy and how it relates to other institutions, e.g., the church, politics, and civil society. This was an important perspective, especially as it relates to the literature on the former Yugoslavia and the characterization of academics and their influence on the war itself. Additionally, it provided exposure to a wealth of young people enrolled in the English and Chinese Language and Literature program. In addition to this direct professional involvement in society, I also partnered with my husband in the day-to-day and financial operations of his café, which lent considerable insight into the complex overlap between private and public life, especially in an ethno-feudal context.

My interactions with local government were of three qualities. While my presence in the local government building was marginal, I had a few opportunities to see inside its workings in the overlap between the local non-profit organizations and their cooperation with the local municipality. The second was the experience I had with local and national government, as an alien resident. This included our marriage, registering myself and otherwise complying with legal requirements for non-citizens from the U.S. residing in country for longer than 90 days, interactions with local police and the judicial system during barricaded traffic stops, as well as

the follow-up to an incident in which a drunk driver collided with our car head on. I was interviewed by police, examined by medical institutions, and notified of court events by the judicial institution.

I also gave birth to one son in country, but in the Federation, so that I was able to gain understanding of the complexity of the bureaucratic apparatus that connects and thereby separates the two entities. My experience also included working with the U.S. embassy for paperwork for our children, my husband, and for me. Finally, I experienced local government from the perspective of business owner, subject to taxes, regulations, and inspections.

We also relied upon local social services and I was able to gain experience into the consequences of a sometimes more and sometimes less developed social welfare system. For example, the lack of emergency services became apparent in two situations—the car accident we experienced and an incident involving the detonation of a bomb in the night in the café on the entry floor of the apartment building in which we were sleeping. In contrast to these less developed social welfare systems, there were others more developed. Because I was employed full-time as a lecturer at the university, I was afforded a full year of maternity leave at 100% of my pay. We also used the daycare in Srebrenica for childcare for our elder son, a subsidized service. In addition, following the car accident, which was caused by a drunk driver who had no insurance, we were partially compensated for our losses by a social fund made available for exactly these situations.

I also had experience in the medical system in Srebrenica, from both a bureaucratic perspective and the perspective of a patient. On the first, I saw first-hand the way the government and the medical system overlap through the medical and psychological

examinations I underwent in order to gain legal status as a resident alien, and to gain a permit to work. I also experienced the relationship between the judiciary and the hospital when my blood was drawn to determine my blood alcohol level after we were hit by a drunk driver.

As a patient, as I mentioned, I gave birth to one son in the country, and was pregnant twice. In addition, I spent time in two hospitals for treatment of a kidney stone. I also likely suffered a broken rib from the car accident, which was treated in one hospital. In addition, I had routine check-ups and illness checks as necessary, as well as exposure to the private medical system when the public system couldn't accommodate our needs. This happened more often than not.

I also had financial experience in Srebrenica, understanding what it takes to own property, how one operates a bank account, how loans work, and how money is exchanged outside the banking and financial system, on a personal level.

My personal interaction with local religious organizations was nearly non-existent. I had no access whatsoever to the local mosque and my interactions with the local church were mediated through my husband, and his interactions were already quite limited. My exposure to the church was mostly through stories told by others, notices in the community, and through following the local news.

Taken together, my experiences in Srebrenica were quite robust to gain an understanding into life in Srebrenica today and how local people make sense of it. While I have recorded the particular instances I outline above, most of the ethnographic knowledge I have is not in written form, but rather in experiential form. My understanding and knowledge of local life and many different local perspectives informs the way I understand both the interviews

with local residents as well as with international visitors. It also informs the analysis of events I report in this paper. It is important to note, however, that I am not native to Srebrenica and cannot claim expertise on that perspective. I can give a close approximation, but nothing more.

The experiences I have are extremely unique and they influence the interpretation of my own data and the way I interpret the research coming from others from the region, so I want to provide a bit more of the ethnographic anecdotes here to help readers contextualize my analysis and interpretation of the data. Not unusual to ethnographic research in so-called 'divided societies,' I was more exposed in the long-run to the Serbian community in Srebrenica. But it wasn't always that way.

I first came to Srebrenica through a Summer University sponsored in part through the Potocari Memorial Center that had advertised its programming on a list serve on which a professor was a recipient. She forwarded the email to me and I, who had been researching an entirely different potential research site, but was in need of field research to complete my master's thesis, applied. Three weeks later, I was in Sarajevo, embarking on a two-month research journey.

This initial entry into the city was through the Potocari Memorial Center, and therefore, exposed me initially more to the Muslim community in Srebrenica. From a local perspective, in many ways, I was marked as 'Muslim,' not in religious practice of course, but by association, though the reality of that marking was not at all clear to me until much later. That experience was marked by near daily visits to the Memorial Center, staying in a hostel with a Muslim woman (who became a dear friend and our *kuma*), walking the *Mars Mira*, and being invited to and attending several iftars. During that time, importantly, I had experiences and contact with

local Serbian youth, for example day trips to a local lake, but no invitations for in home meals or family celebrations, for example.

When it became publicly known about year after my entry into the very small town that my husband and I were in a relationship, at the time not yet married and he a man who was of fighting age at the time of the war, I quickly became aware of how ‘marked’ I had become as a member of the Muslim community. There were some in that group who explicitly offered their support to me, giving their reasoning: “*Dobar je covjek*,” referring to my husband. (“He is a good man.”) Others, those I later found out did not know my husband, asked around about him—where was he during the war? What had he done? Mutual friends reported to me that others had asked them how I could have betrayed them. Of course, that was reported to me, so I could not verify that, though de-friending on Facebook would suggest to me this was at least consistent with the sentiment. Finally, from not a few of these individuals, I felt immense pressure to vocalize my opinion about the genocide, despite having developed the intimate relationships with some of those survivors, despite having walked with them during the *Mars Mira*.

Over time, I was able to reestablish friendly acquaintanceships with these individuals, able to meet for a coffee and catch up about family and children, school and work. And I have always maintained an empathetic analytic understanding of the situation from their perspective. Given a vacuum of mere knowledge about the past, let alone acknowledgement of the truth, and recognition of atrocity, among other things, I can imagine having similar feelings and reacting similarly.

Once married, I had become “Serbian,” and this time I was more fully aware of the fact that I was being read this way from a local perspective. To take an example, the attendees at the local municipal building at our wedding ceremony cheered when I agreed to take my husband’s last name.⁵ In the same way that I was asked previously to vocally express my opinion about genocide, and therefore my loyalty to the Muslim community, I was also tested by some in the Serbian community. For example, on a few occasions, I was asked what language I was speaking. Smartly, I would answer, “*Vas!*” (“Yours!”) Invariably, the question is asked by someone trying to make a point, who would follow-up, “*Koji?*” (“Which one is that?”), pushing me to say whether it was Bosnian or Serbian. Also invariably, one or two others present would jump in, “*Pusti je, ba!*” (“Leave her alone!”)

It was also the case that because I was married to a Serbian man and because I was in field for so long and built relationships with so many local residents, many felt comfortable speaking to me freely about their thoughts, feelings, and opinions about local and international politics. I heard a wide range of them. I met those who long for Tito’s brotherhood and unity. I met those who want a separate but equal lifestyle. I met those who want revenge. I met genocide deniers. I met those who acknowledge the atrocities against Muslims in 1995. I met those who don’t want to talk about Muslim victims, but who lost their own grandfathers, mothers, fathers, cousins, or sisters. I met those who will call what happened in 1995 to the

⁵ I remember feeling surprised when they cheered. I wondered if I had misunderstood the official’s question, spoken in the local language! My maiden name is from my biological father with whom I have no meaningful connection, so for me the decision, as a woman in our modern world, was to 1) share a name with the love of my life and my future children, 2) keep a name that is meaningless, or 3) create a different name that is meaningless to everyone. I’m still confused as to why everyone cheered that day, but I feel mostly sure that no one was cheering *with me* that day.

Muslim community genocide. And I met those who don't want to call it genocide simply because the number of those murdered doesn't compare to the Holocaust.

Right or wrong, the opinions are vastly different within the Serbian population in Srebrenica. This ethnographic experience, the contextualization my unique experience offers becomes important in understanding the interpretation and the conclusions I am trying to make later in this dissertation, one of the most important of which is that there is very little consistent substance under the label "the Serbs" as far as political opinions go in Srebrenica.

Interviews: During the 2012 field work, I completed 14 interviews with local residents from a variety of backgrounds. Some interviews were conducted in English with local residents who speak English as a second language. A translator was present for the other interviews. At the time of this initial study, I did not speak the local language.

The dissertation field work includes single interviews from 29 local residents and two interviews each with most of the 34 international visitors who participated in the research. The interview length ranged from as few as six minutes to as long as one two-hour long interview. It also includes 26 participant observations. Participants in the study were selected first by introduction to international visitors in the city. Sometimes this was a product of happenstance—I would meet visitors while in a café or elsewhere in the city. Other times, I became aware of the visitors to the city through interactions with local residents.

I asked the international visitors if they would be willing to conduct a few interviews with me and for me to conduct participant observations of their interactions with local

residents. Upon gaining their consent, I conducted the first interview.⁶ With some international visitors, I was able to conduct the initial interview very early in their visit to Srebrenica. With others, especially those who had been to Srebrenica before or who had spent a lot of time in the city already, the interviews were surely influenced by experiences they'd already had. This manifests itself in the data, as noted in later chapters.

The participant observations lasted anywhere from short, hour-long observations to days-long participation in programs brought to the city by international visitors. During these observations, I looked for moments when international visitors and local residents seemed to struggle over meaning. While the participant observations yielded a few valuable pieces of data for analysis, as a general source for data analysis, its use was limited. Logistically speaking, it was not plausible to follow the international visitors for all or even most of their time in the city, and so I often heard about interesting discussions or conversations from the interviews because they had occurred at times when I wasn't present. Their value added to the data analysis is limited. The second interview with international visitors occurred as soon after the participant observation as was possible, and this was largely dependent on when the international visitor could manage to find time. Some of the second interviews with international visitors occurred over Skype, but most of them were in person in the city.

As with the ethnography, I want to provide a bit more detail here to contextualize my experience with international visitors. I was in a very unique position in Srebrenica, and of course many international visitors understood that. I was myself an international visitor, and

⁶ See appendix for the questionnaire that guided these interviews.

other visitors immediately recognized that. I was able to help them navigate the local situation, connect them to resources (such as where to secure housing and food, or connect them with translators), or get them directions.

Through the interviews and the participant observations, I did develop relationships and friendships with many of the international visitors to Srebrenica, though not all of them. On many occasions, they began to confide in me, seeing me as a safe space to ask questions that they otherwise did not feel comfortable asking local residents, or asking for clarification when they felt confused or needed direction. I avoided answering questions related to my research until after I had completed my second interview with them.

Aside from the questions they asked me directly, I often found myself in uncomfortable situations, either because I vehemently disagreed with the international visitors approach or ethics, or because I was the recipient of the ire of local residents who had felt disrespected or slighted by some or another visitor. More often than not, I felt compelled to apologize.

On the questions I received, I often heard questions about whether things were really peaceful in Srebrenica. There were questions about whether Serbs and Muslims could really get along and be peaceful with one another, and how that could really be possible when tensions were so high and the past so unresolved. I was often asked about the ethnicity of local residents and how one could tell the difference. But other questions were just innocuous, about the damage from the war and why houses were still vacant and unrenovated twenty years later.

On the ire I heard, this ranged widely. Some local residents simply do not want to talk about the war. Occasionally it happens that all the strategies they have developed to avoid

international visitors and the war questions that come with them fail. These are usually dark moments. In my experience, the Serbian youth are most associated with this posture.

This is a generation barely old enough to lucidly remember the war itself, but know their lives without a mother or father, uncle or grandmother. They are also old enough to remember a life of international visitors blaming “Serbs,” a name they claim but a blame they cannot. And while they do have empathy for their Muslim counterparts who have grown up in similar situations, missing fathers and grandfathers, uncles and cousins, or with mothers, aunts and cousins victimized during and after the war, they struggle to understand why their losses have not been recognized. They have learned not to seek recognition anymore because the denial of it is simply too painful and enraging to bear.

Other local residents however continue to seek recognition, and they do it by engaging with international visitors. Some of their stories are included here—Stefan, for example, though there are many others. On many occasions, I listened to them as the international visitors left them. I listened to them recount stories from months or, in two cases, years earlier.

Others would be upset at the seeming idiocy of some of the questions asked. One local resident annoyed with one international visitor confided to me his disbelief that an international visitor had asked him why so many houses were vacant and unfinished. *“Because they are dead! How could she ask me that?”*

On the other hand, it is also important to note that there were a handful of international visitors to the city that seemed to be fully welcomed and accepted into the local community. These were usually individuals who had longer-standing relationships with the community, had been back and forth to Srebrenica on many occasions or had lived there for sustained

periods of time, learned at least a little bit of the language, and the local residents spoke of them as “*nase*” (“ours”).

On my own relationships with international visitors, as mentioned they often looked to me for assistance and as a participant observer I obliged where the assistance wouldn’t interfere with the research. For example, if they needed information about housing or food, I would provide recommendations or connect them with phone numbers or escort them to a hostel or restaurant. In other situations, they might ask me what Serbs or Muslims think about such and such or whether one location or another was a Serbian or Muslim place. I would note the question for my own records but avoid answering it.

Often, the second interview with the international visitors would trigger a kind of reflection for them and open up a conversation that would inspire in them questions to ask me. After we had finished those questions, sometimes those conversations would continue and I would talk more freely with the international visitors about my own opinions and experiences, but always framing them as my own, not quite fully international, but not fully local either.

The second interview with local residents occurred as soon after the participant observation as possible, with at least one of the local resident interviews occurring weeks after the observation because the observation happened on July 10th. Out of respect for the family’s participation in a burial of the remains of a loved one, I waited for an appropriate time to conduct the interview. I also used the observations to orient myself to the post-observation interviews with both international visitors and local residents.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) recommend data analysis begins with data collection, and that it continues with transcription, reading, and coding the data. I followed their

methodology, writing memos about the data as I was collecting, transcribing, reading, and coding it. During this process, I identified events that were important (attempts at influencing others, e.g.) and themes across visitor and residents interactions that seemed to be important (friendship, e.g.). I coded these during the several reading and coding passes I took with the data.

I approached the data analysis first by reading through the transcripts of the interviews, while recalling the interactions I witnessed and the interviews with others I had documented. While reading, I marked all instances where it seemed that international visitors and local residents struggled to convey meaning one to the other. These were usually marked by either outright disagreement or by negotiating back and forth, clarifying, and coming to either resolution, an agreement in difference of opinion, or abandonment of the topic by one or all individuals involved. During this analysis, I identified about 80 instances of this type of engagement reported to me by the interviewees or recognized by me in the analysis of the entire corpus, including the other interviews and the participant observations.

Of these 80, I focused the analysis on those instances that were related to negotiating the meaning of Srebrenica and what it signifies today to the international visitors and the local residents. In doing so, I reduced the number of events to a manageable size, and identified instances of local residents asserting their understanding of what Srebrenica and life in it is like to international visitors as well as instances of international visitors asserting their understanding of Srebrenica and life in it to local residents. Within these, I identified both instances of success at influencing the other, as well as instances of failure.

I defined success as recognition of a changed perspective by the person who was the object of attempts at influence—either international visitor or local resident. In reading through the interviews in the context of the entire corpus of data, including the other interviews, the participant observations, and what I learned through the ethnographic study, I also derived some themes that seemed important in shaping the ability of international visitors and local residents to influence the other.

As for the manner in which I present the interview excerpts and observations as well as the ethnography, I had to take care to represent the local and visitor perspectives in the most neutral way possible, while also preserving the anonymity of the participants involved. Those two principles most influenced my decisions regarding editing the stories and interview excerpts, as well as decisions about what to include and exclude.

What follows is a "good enough" ethnography, one that accounts for the practices of a diverse group of individuals in Srebrenica (Bourgois 2009:15). As noted, I cannot claim to speak for people of Srebrenica, though for shorthand I refer to the group of individuals I interviewed and observed as 'local residents.' Nor can I claim to speak for all international visitors. Some of their experiences were similar to mine and others very different.

I have edited the interview excerpts for readability, mostly focusing on phrasing from English as a second language interviews to be more clear to the apparent intended meaning of the interviewee. Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006:98) advise obscuring and disguising data to protect individuals' identities. In conversation with local residents and with international visitors, I have confirmed my understanding of some of the sentiments they

report, and they have in that way confirmed what I have written. However, I have not sent this text to any participants to verify my understanding.

2.0 Chapter 2: The ‘Object’ of Srebrenica

I am arguing throughout this work two separate discourses have emerged that are separate from the reality of Srebrenica as a city today. In order to understand how local residents and international visitors try to influence each other when their images of Srebrenica differ, I use Foucault’s objects, authorities, and concepts as a framework for first comparing and contrasting the two images. This chapter focuses on how, when, and where Srebrenica emerges as an object. First, I look from the perspective of a specific set of local individuals, then from the perspective of the international discourse around Srebrenica. Then I compare and contrast these perspectives, using ethnographic, interview, and participant observation data to provide qualitative examples.

2.1 The Local Residents’ Object

Srebrenica for the local residents included in this study⁷ first emerges as an object of attention in the local political situation over which there is still great controversy. Srebrenica was infamously handed to the Serbian Republic at the end of the war, a war that ended a very

⁷ Discursively, Srebrenica has multiple local iterations, including those produced by local political, religious, and cultural groups. In this work, I focus on Srebrenica as understood by a specific set of local residents, a group of mostly unaffiliated, marginalized, underemployed or unemployed citizens of both Muslim and Orthodox backgrounds. As a group, they share for the most part a cosmopolitanism, skepticism of politics, struggle with the economy, and love for the city itself.

long pre-war period of a thriving economy, a healthy tourism industry, a city full of life and people, and good relationships under Tito's *brotherhood and unity* strategy for cohesion in the former Yugoslavia. Muslim and Orthodox more than occasionally intermarried, were friends, and went to the same schools. People had jobs and prospects and hope for the future. Ethnic identity was, by all of the accounts I've learned, an important sense making device for daily life, and for the most part fluid in its uses and salience.

At the end of the war, Srebrenica was designated to the Serbian Republic's territory within the newly formed country of Bosnia. Reeling from the end of the war, tensions and fear remaining critically high, and newly formed political arrangements yet to be fully understood in practice, the Serbian Republic made efforts to forcibly migrate ethnic Serbs living in the Federation (the territory parceled to the Catholic/Croatian and Bosnjak/Muslim groups), to parts of the Serbian Republic. Srebrenica was a region where quite a lot of ethnic Serbs were asked, and sometimes forced, to relocate after the war.

As the truth about massacres and the genocide against the Muslim population began to emerge, and military and political leaders were beginning trials for war crimes, the gravity of the atrocities in Srebrenica, which happened under the watchful eye of the UN troops, created momentum behind the voices of a set of Muslims seeking mere information (not to even mention justice) about what had happened to their loved ones. Srebrenica's status as a city under the Serbian Republic came to many to be unbearable. But with no Muslims living in the city, with the personal threat to some of those Serbs who fought during the war of trial for war crimes, and a lot of misinformation, the progress the Muslim community was making in gaining

recognition for what happened, gaining information on the status and location of their loved ones, and gaining rights to return to their homes was hard won and extremely slowly realized.

As such, Srebrenica became a powerful discourse available for use by many groups—victims groups on both sides, political parties, and by international organizations and actors. Thus, Srebrenica emerges as an object as politicians and others use its image as a political tool that these local residents believe stifles its future. The image directly influences the daily lives of these local residents and their future is profoundly dependent upon it. Therefore, they have a very real stake in what image of Srebrenica dominates discursively.

Who brings Srebrenica into focus as an object that demands their attention? For these local residents, this includes the political class in Srebrenica and in Bosnia, and most of this group of local residents suspect political motives behind anyone who employs Srebrenica as a tool in the media. This even includes groups who are still seeking identification of the remains of their loved ones, who are also drawing attention to Srebrenica. In addition, international and local media, the ICTY, and the myriad international visitors that come to the city every year also do so. They ensure Srebrenica is an object of attention and try to designate its meaning, which maintains Srebrenica as an object of attention and contention for these local residents. Their futures literally depend on it.

The context in which Srebrenica emerges as an object of attention described above and the list of actors who bring Srebrenica into focus give meaning to the various ways that local residents categorize and structure their knowledge about Srebrenica: through demographics of people and the relationships people have with each other.

Local residents prioritize certain demographic splits of the city when they assert their knowledge of the city and evaluate others' images of it. Given the disdain these local residents have for the political use of the image of Srebrenica, and the consequences that use has for the present and future of those residents, it's unsurprising that they prioritize knowledge about whether individuals are politicians (*politcari*) and whether they are rich (*bogati*). They also think about who really lives in Srebrenica versus those who only work there and then leave. They also consider whether they are good or bad (*posteni ljudi*), and if they are from the city or the village (*seljak*). Ethnicity is obviously a major aspect as well, as it is really a profound aspect of life for most local residents. So the markers of Muslim or Orthodox inform their understanding in mostly neutral ways; however, how individuals relate to their own and the other's community is also important to know (*cetnik* or *mudzahedin*, e.g.).

Another way of structuring their knowledge about and image of the city is by understanding relationships between people, which is typically marked by its ethno-feudal character. When asserting their knowledge about and image of Srebrenica, these local residents are focusing on the connections (*veze*) between people in the city—financial, ethnic, family, and social. This detailed, hyper-local and hyper-historical social capital can explain even the oddest of occurrences to local residents. Important to emphasize here is the level of complexity that shapes their discourse of Srebrenica.

In sum, for local residents, Srebrenica emerges as a discursive object when Srebrenica became an object of political attention, the beginning of the war, and the political and rhetorical battle that has been fought for the past twenty-five years. These residents give that discourse on Srebrenica attention because their futures depend on it. They are deeply interested in producing

a balanced, cosmopolitan, empathetic image of Srebrenica that cannot any longer be used to perpetuate a stagnate, corrupt, and hopeless present. In that context, demographics of local actors and hyper-local relationships become the framework these individuals use to generate knowledge about the discursive image of Srebrenica they hold.

2.2 The International Visitors' Object

I argue that multiple discourses around Srebrenica have emerged. Here I focus on how Srebrenica emerged as an object for international visitors, who has called so much attention to it, and what structure they give to the knowledge they have of Srebrenica. At the global level, in defining where and when 'Srebrenica' could have become an object, the first and probably most obvious is that of a globalizing world, in which a small town in a remote region of Europe could become internationally recognizable. Part and parcel to that notion of a globalizing world is the political foundation of it—the nation state. But just as the family, social groups, and work situations were present for ages before the emergence of madness as an object, so have globalization and nation states existed long before Srebrenica became the focus of attention.

What was unique at the time of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia when attention on Srebrenica emerged? The "post-Cold War world" had snatched away the more comfortable terms that had previously made conflicts understandable (e.g., capitalism vs. communism, or East vs. West). With the end of the Cold War, and its use as a sense making framework for armed conflict, the world was met with the unusually quick resolution of the Gulf War in 1991.

Reeling forward with the U.S.-led military intervention in Somalia, and recoiling given its disastrous consequences, the world in a few short years saw the ravages of what seemed like a new kind of conflict there, and in Rwanda, Cambodia, Iraq, and in the former Yugoslavia.

Theories to explain these conflicts had to grapple with their stickiness: they seemed not to end, were of a different kind, fought under different rules, and aimed at seemingly different goals. But not long after the end of that decade, the reaction to the attacks on September 11, 2001, gave the world a new, more global and more tenacious framework for thinking about (and directing attention towards) a new kind of conflict moving forward: wars of terror, extremist-led wars, wars of religion. That new framework tightly contained the academic and practitioner assignment for interrogating the conflicts that occurred between the bookends of the Cold War at the end of the 1980s, and the War on Terror at the beginning of the 2000s, conflicts that marked the 1990s and became known as 'ethnic wars.'⁸

In the context of the end of the Cold War, and before the emergence of the war on terror and conflicts that followed it, these conflicts emerged as a problem uninterpretable to the modern global world or to the institutions that were available and which had authority to talk about them. Drawing on analyses from experts, limited by resources of government, contingent upon a yet to be defined framework for thinking about them employed by politicians and policy makers, sensitive to the reports and focus of the international media, and beholden in part by the atrocious images coming from these conflicts, a general context in which one could

⁸ The argument I am making here is broadly applicable to the international scene in the 1990s and 2000s, but Woodward (1996) and Burg & Shoup (1999), to name a few, demonstrate it happening in the former Yugoslavia.

understand the conflicts of the 1990s emerged: ethnic war. That understanding largely informs the image many international visitors bring with them to the city.

Who directed attention to these wars, and specifically to Srebrenica? This new form of conflict was brought to the forefront by a variety of international non-governmental organizations, international governmental organizations, non-profit and human rights organizations, the military, and the media. The media in this instance was particularly instrumental in defining the discourse around these conflicts, as the ravage, despair, and suffering propelled intervention as a topic to the global conversation at the same time the relatively new phenomenon of 24-hour news coverage on cable television amplified it.

The United Nations also played an essential role in defining and designating the attention that was paid to these conflicts, as well as directing partially which conflicts would receive attention and which would not. NATO also became an important actor, especially related to the conflicts that emerged in the former Yugoslavia, and the attention they gave was gravely influenced by dramatic U.S. soldier losses also amplified by a non-stop news cycle. Human Rights Watch as an INGO was instrumental in drumming up attention to these wars as well as the momentum for international intervention.

What framework for knowledge do they use to understand this discourse around Srebrenica? The conflicts in the 1990s were dissected and explaining using a variety economic, political, social, psychological, ideological, and developmental aspects of the locations in which they occurred.⁹ While ethnic hatred was typically understood as a causal mechanism, at least in

⁹ See, for examples, Brown (2001), Collier *et al* (2007), Commission on Human Security (2007), Kiernan (2007), Krasner and Pascual (2005), Langer (2005), Large and Sisk (2006), Mann (2005), Mueller (2005), Snyder (2000), Stein (2001), and van Arsdale (2009).

the popular mind, more complex analyses compared and contrasted these conflicts along many of these lines. Most commonly, the economic poverty of the location was emphasized, a lack of democratic political institutions cited, extremist ideology asserted, and general social development—understood as related to, dependent upon, but different from the combination of economic and political conditions—implied.

Even so, ethnic identity, conceived as a powerful human construct, was usually not far from the explanations offered. In the context of poverty, undemocratic political systems, ‘backwards’ social systems, and/or extremist ideology, the thinking went, one can understand the power ethnic identity holds over a population. Fix those and ethnic identity will no longer be a cause of war.

Specifically from the perspective of the international visitors coming into Srebrenica in the mid- to late-2010s, the context in which Srebrenica emerges is primarily marked by its position as recipient of global aid or charity, and secondly by Srebrenica’s memorial services in July of each year. On the former, it was not unusual that international visitors I interviewed cited that it was their desire to help local residents that brought them to the city in the first place. To take only a few examples, one long-time visitor to the city is not only motivated by being useful to local residents, but also is passionately critical of other international visitors who come to the city in July each year. The metric by which the value of an international visitor can be judged, according to this visitor, is the extent to which one can be *useful*.

Another long-time visitor reported that the organization that originally brought him to Srebrenica was motivated to help the children of different ethnic backgrounds come together to work on ethnic relations, and to receive therapy for trauma. One more example was a young

woman from Eastern Europe who demonstrated clearly that her purpose was to help local residents through art and culture better understand the world and themselves, to know different and more points of view. She was in the position of being able to help the local residents, and it was clear that the transmission of knowledge could only be from her to them, and not the other way around.

A condition of the emergence of Srebrenica as a recipient of aid is related to its position as 'developing' or 'non-western.' This categorization of the city in those terms was also evident in the way that visitors talked about the city and interacted with local residents. For example, a few visitors were quite surprised that Bosnia was so geographically close to them. One woman from a Dutch organization expressed surprise at how close Srebrenica is to the Netherlands, but how different it is because of the war and the consequences of the war. The place has different needs and a different perspective. One young man from Germany was also surprised how close Bosnia is to Germany; in his mind he thought it was much further away.

In the case of Srebrenica, the very presence of most of these visitors establish who has directed attention to Srebrenica as an object of attention—the organizations they represent or who have funded their visit to the city. Often they are part of organizations who have taken post-conflict situations as their mission: NGOs, non-profits, peacebuilding organizations, INGOs, universities, and media outlets that have been studying, documenting, reporting, and doing peacebuilding. Their very presence in the city suggests their ability to define, designate, name, and establish Srebrenica as an *object* of attention.

There are two main ways that international visitors structure their knowledge about Srebrenica: ethnic identity and age. The most obvious for people coming to Srebrenica was the

aspect of ethnic identity. When asked about identity and how it influences the work the international visitor is doing in Srebrenica, the responses ranged from confusion by the question to a direct answer about how their work focuses on or changes based on that aspect of life.

Just a few visitors really seemed not to be interested in ethnic identity at all. In their interviews, some of them didn't seem to recognize it was an important aspect of life or of the war. Some others seemed to recognize its importance in understanding the war and present-day life. For example, one professor visiting from another part of Europe reported how his background in the country where he grew up (India) gives him the social capital necessary to understand the implications of identity and how to navigate those situations. A filmmaker from the U.S., noted that of course ethnic identity is an aspect of the daily lives of people in Srebrenica.

Others tried to ignore it, or at least to reduce its centrality in their understanding the local environment. One researcher focused on the anthropology of food before, during, and after the war and was aware of ethnic identity as an important local concept. But she was keen to focus more on the ways that food blurred the lines of identity separation and in some cases created connections across ethnic dividing lines. Still, even in that sense, ethnic identity was a prominent factor in her work.

Still others focused directly on it. On the one hand, some visitors used it as a way to make decisions about how they would work in the city. For example, one organization that focuses on preserving memories of the war worked exclusively with Muslim organizations. Another peacebuilder reported that his organization wanted him to focus on the ethnic identity of local individuals in order to ensure equity and awareness.

Some visitors used it to inform the methods they would use in interactions with local residents. For example, four visitors (Zahra, Abraham, Fenna, and Sophie) suggested they would change the way they ask questions to local residents depending on the identity of the local resident, especially as it relates to the question of genocide and other topics related to the war.

On the other hand, others' focus on it was instead aimed at eradicating its importance in the city. One young woman stated that she wants to bring art and culture to Srebrenica as a means for people to see things differently (that is, so that they embrace difference and don't create divisions between people). The filmmaker also noted that he wished they create a world wherein ethnic identity was not at all important.

Another aspect that seemed to be important to international visitors was the age of the local residents with whom they were interacting. For many, their work was focused on the youth and their initiatives. Julian, Lotte, Tamara, Jerry, Bram, Lars, and Ankit all specifically remarked about the youth initiatives in the city. At the same time, many of them referred to the youth in ways that contrasted them with the older generation, where the older generation's scars and wounds from the war are more direct.

2.3 Comparison

The perspectives of these local residents and international visitors overlap in some ways and diverge in others. On the overlap, there is general consensus on the fact that a war

occurred, that the fact of the war had major consequences for the city, and that the city should be the object of attention by a lot of people, including the international community.

But their images of Srebrenica differ in some important ways. For most international visitors, their image of Srebrenica fails to account for a lot of complexity and detail that local residents know. I cover this in the next chapter more, but for now simply point out that for the local residents, where and when Srebrenica emerged as an object of attention is continuous, with each July 11 that passes, with each local and national election, with each local scandal. It's emergence is persistent, as compared to the international visitors' image, which is static, typically starting and ending in 1995, occasionally punctuated by their own return visits to the city or by the occasional bubbling up of Srebrenica to the global news cycle. In the international image, so much of the local residents' understanding of complexity and nuance is invisible.

One more aspect of these interviews that is worth mentioning is the posture each of the groups took in thinking about Srebrenica. For each participant in the study, I started their first interview with the question, "What is interesting about Srebrenica today?" In one analysis of the data, I coded the statements in terms of their point of reference in time—past, present, or future—where it was relevant to the utterance made. Of the 36 utterances codable in the local residents' answers, a posture toward the future was taken 10 times. A present-oriented posture characterized 21 of the 36 utterances by local residents, and a mere 5 of the utterances were backward looking to the past.

In contrast, the international visitors were mostly focused on the present and the past, with a mere five mentions oriented to the future. Compared to the nearly 59% of utterances oriented to the present by the local residents, 45% of international visitors' utterances were

oriented to the present. And nearly triple the percentage of utterances by local residents oriented to the past were utterances by international visitors referencing the past. And, the local residents' utterances oriented to the future 27% of the time, whereas international visitors' references were oriented to the future about 16% of the time. This is an important difference in the way Srebrenica emerges as an object to local residents and international visitors. The international visitors' attention is brought to Srebrenica given the importance of its past, whereas the local residents' attention is brought to Srebrenica given the important its presence and its future.

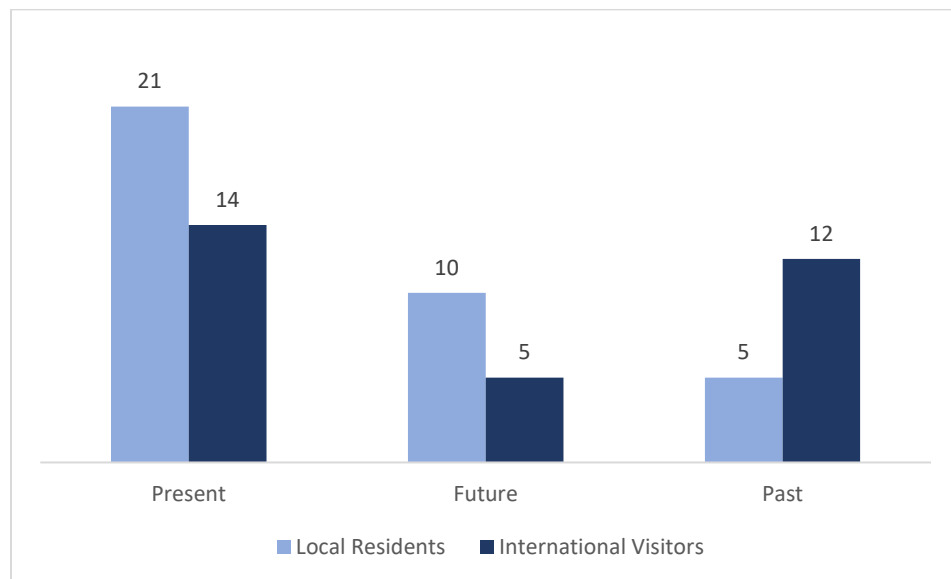


Figure 2.1: Time Orientation of Respondent, n = 67

2.4 Attempts to Influence Others' Objects

When these two images of Srebrenica differ, both parties often notice. International visitors sometimes noticed where their image differs from what they expected and other times they noticed that their perspective of Srebrenica was different than that of local residents. Other times, local residents tried to point out to international visitors when they noticed visitors making different assumptions.¹⁰

Many local residents carry a suspicion that international visitors likely think incorrectly about the city. One young man who served as a translator for a journalist from the Netherlands says that people “come with prejudices.” He asserts that international visitors have a different image: “you need to have some sort of mindset when you come to Srebrenica. It’s a specific space, specific town, specific things happened here. It’s unique and special in many ways. And you cannot be blind or deaf, so you probably have heard something about Srebrenica before you come here.”

Another young activist and artist notes that she assumed that two international visitors she met would have come in with

what you can hear about Srebrenica and what you can learn through different media or whatever; you can hear just about the previous things which have happened during the war, the end of the war, many people were killed, and genocide, and those kinds of things, and nothing else. And I saw many people who were coming with a lot of prejudice and many of them were not able to, didn’t want to, be open for real people’s stories. They wanted to follow what they, why they are here, so you know, just to get those answers.

¹⁰ Some local residents avoid interacting with international visitors completely to avoid what they see as a high-risk situation for disturbing conversations. The war is usually the topic of choice (see Chapter 4); for local residents, twenty-five years have passed, and many of them lost loved ones. They don’t want to talk about the war.

Often, these local residents do try to influence how international visitors contextualize Srebrenica—how it emerges to them as an object of interest. As an international visitor myself, this type of interaction, where the local resident explains what the correct image of Srebrenica is, occurred to me often, usually when I first would meet a local resident. While it happened most often during my first few months in the city, I experienced these conversations three and four years into my time there—when I met residents for the first time. I came to understand this to be a ritual; I was read as a visitor who likely has certain thoughts and therefore needs to be told such and such.

One energetic young man felt that because two visitors came from outside, there was a likelihood that they need to be corrected about what they think about Srebrenica. “We as a group had the urge to point out at the beginning” that Srebrenica is not the picture that is in the international media. Another young father believes that most visitors come to Srebrenica with the impression that what happened there couldn’t have happened in the place from which the visitor had come. He tries to reset how Srebrenica emerged as an object of attention for them by describing to the visitors what Srebrenica was like before the war.

A young musician is also keen to change the way that international visitors think about Srebrenica. He has made it his mission to seek out interactions with international visitors in order to show them that Srebrenica once was a great city. Similarly to the young father, he is attempting to reset how Srebrenica has emerged for them as an object of attention in the first place.

All of this anecdotal evidence suggests that local residents do often try to influence how Srebrenica became and remains an object of attention for these international visitors. And all of

this effort raises the question as to whether residents are ever effective at changing the way the visitors think about Srebrenica. It raises the question as to whether any attempts at changing the way a person imagines an object are actually successful.

In one case from data, it was. Greta came to Srebrenica from Italy with some friends after hearing about Ahmed, a local resident, and his work in Srebrenica. Ahmed focuses on connecting people to nature and the natural rhythms of life, while at the same time showing a side of Srebrenica that often gets missed in the international media surrounding it. When she came, Greta says what motivated her was, in part, having read a book about a girl who, about Greta's age, had survived the war in Bosnia.

The book had been meaningful to her not only because she could relate to the girl, but because she had been in the former Yugoslavia before the war with her family on vacation. She remembers that when the war started, she was shocked for two reasons. It was so close to her home in Italy, but she'd also thought that war was obsolete because of the way that her grandparents and parents had talked about World War II.

In her interview, she told me that she and her friends had planned an art installation in the city that would commemorate the massacre from 1995. But, after speaking with Ahmed, she reported,

I think that we felt that nobody needed that again. I mean, nobody here needs to talk about it again....Ahmed told us about that, and he suggested us to start working on the project [while we were] staying here. ...We are [doing this public art installation], and everyone can see it, so you have to think about what these people need. So I think what people here need is not to talk about that in that gloomy sense again. And I don't feel entitled to talk about that.

From Ahmed's perspective, he confirms this recollection of events. He says that 99% of people who are coming to Srebrenica already have a stereotype of Srebrenica in mind, so it's really hard to get them out of that thinking, to get them to see from a different perspective. He tried to influence their work, but he also wanted to be careful not to intrude too much. He advised them that putting in an art installation in Srebrenica is not like putting it in any other city. It can have a much wider impact and effect.

He was trying to get them to focus less on the war, and more on the experiences that they had while they were visiting the city. "I'm really surprised with what they [included in the art installation]. There is basically that experience, what was important for all of them, from the food with the people, to the tools of that guy, to the coffee with Lamija, or whatever." He's referring to the pictures they included of food, a tool, and coffee in their art installation.

So, Greta had listened. He influenced her to reconsider, but also to understand that from a local perspective, another memory of the war was about the last thing the residents of the city would want. Instead, they decided to paint portraits of the people they had met during their visit.

In this case, Ahmed had been successful in influencing the focus that took Greta's attention for the project away from the war and toward present-day life. He'd successfully changed the context in which Srebrenica was emerging as a discursive object of attention. He changed her focus away from the past and toward the present, everyday aspects of life of the local individuals with whom they'd interacted to align more closely with the image local residents have of Srebrenica. Greta confirms that in her interview, and the art installation as completed confirms that. In Foucauldian terms, he changed how the object emerged for Greta.

3.0 Chapter 3: The ‘Authorities’ on Srebrenica

This chapter focuses on the next of the three parts of Foucault’s framework, ‘authority,’ which asks and answers questions about who has the authority to speak about Srebrenica and from what institutions they are able to do so. First, I look from the perspective of the local residents, then from the perspective of the international discourse around Srebrenica. Then I compare and contrast these perspectives, using ethnographic, interview, and participant observation data to provide qualitative examples.

3.1 The Local Residents’ Authorities

To understand the image of Srebrenica held by these local residents, it’s important to understand who has credibility to speak about Srebrenica, what position those individuals can take, and from which institutional spaces in society they can speak. In this case, from this mostly marginalized population, acknowledgement and authority to speak about Srebrenica is granted selectively based on a few criteria. For the most part, to be granted authority requires one not to be a politician, not to be affiliated with a political party, to live in Srebrenica, to be marginalized, relatively poor, and, usually, not to be chauvinist. That latter point is negotiable.

For Srebrenica, from this marginalized perspective, the sites from which people can speak are exclusively those outside the institutions of government; this can include cultural spaces, cafes, other places of business, private homes, and in nature. One cannot speak from

political sites, or from religious centers; both of those sites are suspect: if you are speaking from them, it is unclear whether you are being genuine or whether your statements are '*politika*.'

This was a difficult concept for me to understand in my ethnographic study, but it became clear to me in one specific situation. There was a particularly chaotic period in the political scene in Srebrenica a few years ago, when the municipal assembly was trying to form a majority coalition. The coalition had been changing nearly daily, sometimes more, and the process had been particularly dramatic that year. Many local residents, observers, and the members of the assembly themselves noted how they hadn't seen such difficulty in forming a persistent majority before.

As a consequence, the directors of various local government agencies were being changed nearly daily, according to each new coalition formed, and any type of progress in the political atmosphere was stalled. It was at that time that one bureaucrat who had been removed from a directorship position was the topic of a local news story in which they related how they had been forcibly, physically removed from the local municipality offices by an armed guard. The way they described the situation was that they had felt threatened.

Previously, I'd had coffee with them, and we'd developed an arms-length acquaintanceship. When I ran into them a day or two after this news story broke, I asked how they were doing, if they were alright. They nonchalantly answered that they were doing fine and asked how I was. I responded and then asked again, "Are you feeling alright?" They were puzzled and asked why I was asking them. I responded, describing the story I'd read and heard about in the city. They said, "*Jož, Suzo, pusti to! To je samo politika!*" In English, "Oh for goodness' sake, Suzie, let that go! That's just politics!" Translation: That was strategic. They had

used the situation probably to give some energy to their party, their ethnic group, and themselves at a time when the situation was already in great turmoil.

The masquerade of this event as an incident and the brazen admission in a public place symbolizes one major reason that non-affiliated non-political local residents refuse to give these sites the authority to speak. The impossibility of distinguishing between genuine and strategic statement renders all statements from these sites suspect. As such, the sites from which authorities can speak and be acknowledged by this group of individuals is quite limited.

In this local situation, the local residents of Srebrenica take the position of receiver or victim of the system, the authoritative commentator, but one who never has enough power to do anything to change the situation. They can translate the public statements made by the political class, clarify to outsiders what the real situation is, and describe the lived consequences of this situation. But they cannot take the position of change agent.

For the local residents whom I describe, few people are granted authoritative voice on Srebrenica; those who are usually must at least live in Srebrenica now or recently; those who are not are typically 'outsiders,' politicians, and chauvinists. In this way, the authorities are different, and they are hierarchical.

3.2 The International Visitors' Authorities

From the international visitors' perspective, I want to start with a broader perspective. From the more general context surrounding Srebrenica as it emerged in the 1990s onto the

international map, the authorities afforded the right to use language around the conflicts of the 90s are characterized by a few markers. The first and probably most obvious is that they come from the 'west,' granting them an experiential and knowledge-based competence in 'progress,' democracy, and economics. Given that background, those recognized as experts are academics who have studied the conflicts, policymakers, practitioners of peacebuilding, international political figures, military leaders, and notably, journalists and actors.

It is probably the case that some of these figures have more or less prestige, and that the level of prestige held is at least partially dependent on the audience who presumes the authority's statements to be true. The more formal in this list (academics, policymakers, political figures, e.g.) are typically granted the assumption that what they speak is, at least, accurate. Included as authorities are a variety of institutions, including the various programs within the United Nations, NATO, the African Union, other prestigious IGOs, as well as a collection of INGOs, universities, and some think tanks, such as the International Crisis Group. This also includes the ICTY. It is within these bodies that the discourse used by authorities are authorized. Human rights organizations also offer sites from which authorities can speak.

In the cases of journalists and actors, a perhaps more insightful discussion would be to lay out on what grounds prestige is granted. Most certainly included here is time spent by the journalist in the field, level of involvement in the conflict, breadth of experience across geographies, and involvement in their resolution. In some more cynical cases, the degree to which one exposed herself to danger in witnessing the conflict also adds prestige.

The recognition offered to them lends special insight into this question: the site from which they can credibly speak are the sites of conflict themselves. It is through their witnessing

the conflict that they increase credibility. Contrast this with the credibility of a person who witnesses the conflict because they come from the place where conflict occurs, whose credibility will most certainly be approached with skepticism.

Muslim residents are authorities on their own experiences and traumas, but perhaps less so on the broader context of the war. In Srebrenica, Serbian residents are rarely afforded authoritative voice in any case.

3.3 Comparison

In the case of most local residents and international visitors I interviewed, there were very few overlaps in whom they considered to be authorities on Srebrenica. For international visitors, while local residents could be seen as experts, it was usually only as experts on their own individual experiences, and even that was often impossible for some local residents. For local residents, the very fact that most of their criteria require that authoritative voices balance the future with the past, center politics as the root of most problems in the city, know the lived experiences of residents in Srebrenica personally, and lack political representation to effect change renders most of their authorities powerless and unrecognized by international visitors. The two sources of authoritative knowledge about Srebrenica could not be further separated.

3.4 Attempts to Influence Others' Authorities

Marta came to Srebrenica to pilot a new project she and her organization, affiliated with a research university in the UK, had developed to coach youth in post-conflict situations on cultural entrepreneurship. It was a train-the-trainer program, wherein the youth who participated spent a week's time and learned how to conduct a training program for other youth in the region. The focus of the program they were to give to their peers was to train them on finding alternative means of funding their projects, such as repurposing spaces, crowd-sourcing, and up-cycling materials. The program itself was comprised of ideas that the organization had crowd-sourced and collected; they were success stories from quite resourceful youth around the world, whose circumstances would otherwise predict low chances for the success of any entrepreneurial initiatives.

The train-the-trainer programming that these youth attended focused on helping them contextualize the content of the trainings they would eventually implement to the local situation. For that reason, much of the week of day-long sessions was focused on taking the chassis of the training and customizing the attachments to it to the local situation. In that sense, the programming actively sought out and depended upon a clear understanding of Srebrenica today. The youth eagerly provided that context. And because the programming relied on the local contextualization, it squarely placed the local youth as the authority on Srebrenica in practice.

The picture they painted of Srebrenica was bleak. Andjela describes what it was like at the beginning of the week: "All of us were so negative...whenever [Marta] was trying to

encourage us, we were like, 'this is not possible here.' And I heard that so many times, and I heard it from myself!" Ana also felt that Marta couldn't understand the local context because she had a western way of thinking, not in the sense of a cultural divide but rather different political and economic experiences. She didn't think it was possible for Marta to understand the mentality of the local political elite, the political situation, the corruption, and the manipulation that happens.

Marta heard throughout the training that it is more or less impossible to accomplish anything in Srebrenica. With corrupt politicians, an ethno-feudal economic system, and a local population barely able to sustain their own survival, none of the ideas presented by Marta, imported from other places, would be successful in Srebrenica. Crowdsourcing wouldn't work here; the local population is too poor, the youth told her. There is no space for youth to be creative, and they can't afford to rent out space, they told her. People are apathetic and hopeless; who would even come to such a training?, they asked.

But by the end of the week, more than a few of them had really changed their minds. Andjela reported a new energy among the youth who had attended. Slobodan saw how he would be able to take the project he'd had in mind, but for which he'd struggled to find funding, and realize it. Zeljka mourned the past two years she'd wasted, thinking she had nothing to do because she hadn't been able to find employment. In a few months' time, she was heading to another country in Europe to work and now wished that she'd spent the time in Srebrenica working toward a project from this perspective.

This situation represents one of the few instances where the international visitor successfully influenced local residents' image of Srebrenica and established themselves as an

authority in the discourse of the local residents' image of Srebrenica. Slobodan and Andjela remarked how Marta seemed to come into the city without seeming to know anything; she hadn't exposed her thinking about Srebrenica to the local youth. But she was also careful to treat the local youth as the authority, in the Foucauldian sense. She was specifically asking them for their local expertise, and specifically not asking Google, or local politicians for example. For her, the youth were the ones, during their interactions at least, who were afforded the right to speak about Srebrenica. By the end of their week together, most of the youth (with the exception of Ana) had accepted Marta's authority about what was possible in Srebrenica.

In contrast to most of the rest of the youth, Ana did not accept Marta as an authority on what's possible in Srebrenica. She felt that Marta couldn't understand the local context because she had a western way of thinking, not in the sense of a cultural divide but rather different political and economic experiences. She didn't think it was possible for Marta to understand the mentality of the local political elite, the political situation, the corruption, and the manipulation that happens.

Only Ana had remained skeptical of the possibility of this working in Srebrenica. Ana has had multiple experiences of her own where her personal efforts have been destroyed by political intrigue and the local 'mentality.' She has also witnessed the struggle her parents have had to survive in their work in many NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs. She felt Marta couldn't really understand the local context. And she wasn't there long enough to really understand the local context in any case. In Ana's case, she was rejecting Marta's authority.

Ana had an experience a few years' prior where her effort and success at planning and then bringing to reality a huge event for the city was ruined by a dispute with a local resident.

The municipality sided with the local resident, and she was devastated when she had to cancel the events just a few hours into it. The disappointment after all that personal effort impacted her, as probably did the personal embarrassment of having been the public target of a complaint.

In Ana's case, Marta's optimism simply wouldn't do much to recast into a different light the situation they were in locally. Ana was, and remained, the authority; she did not grant Marta authority to speak about what was possible in Srebrenica, even if she was an expert in what had been possible in other post-conflict situations around the world, the way that her local counterparts in the training had. Her previous experiences determined her level of optimism despite the effort on Marta's part.¹¹

Nedim, a local resident, has put a lot of effort and time into trying to influence international visitors to understand the local context the same way he does. He reports that he's "giving 200%" of himself to this endeavor and trying through conversation to change the minds of the visitors he meets. He is trying by being completely honest, and revealing everything, even when honesty reveals what is so messed up about the town.

Nedim's contrasting experience with two organizations is instructive. On the first, he worked closely with a woman named Lotte. She and the organization she represents have, at least up to now, remained committed to a major project despite slowdowns, setbacks, and a

¹¹ It's worth noting that Ana's reading of the local situation, in the long run, seems to be the more accurate. Economically, the situation in Srebrenica is deteriorating. Politically, elections are divided and day to day politics seem to be as corrupt as they ever were. The local youth are still leaving, and one of the biggest projects, partially inspired by some of the youth involved in Marta's project, is yet unfinished. Whether due to COVID or politics as usual in Srebrenica remains to be seen.

local situation that is in her opinion bewilderingly corrupt and unrecognizable given her experiences.

Lotte reported to me in our interview that she does not think she really knows the local people very well and is self-consciously aware of the fact that aside from Nedim and another young man who works with him, she's not really gotten to know many local residents. And for that, she admits that she doesn't really know if she understands the local situation. But Lotte was one of the international visitors I interviewed who had had experiences in Srebrenica prior to my interactions with her. Her humility in her approach to Srebrenica was something she had learned through time, and specifically through interactions with Nedim. She reported to me that Nedim had changed her perspective on Srebrenica.

In his interview with me, Nedim provides a bit more insight into what exactly occurred. A few years before this, Lotte's organization and another organization from Italy had a meeting about bringing a series of week-long events and projects to Srebrenica. Nedim describes his frustration during that meeting because the ideas the people were coming up with were ones that were nonsensical in the context of Srebrenica. "They brought to us all ideas from Italy [and said,] 'we would like you to be a part of this story.'"

He said that in that moment it became clear to him how hard the project was going to be: what he saw was a group of very young, seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds coming from western Europe, who have fun in their lives, who are living their lives, and simply can't understand why a normal thing [the idea they are proposing], which is really a normal thing that's good for everyone in the town and for the government and for all the governments in Bosnia, just won't work. Why [won't it work]? There is no answer.

So Nedim spoke up that meeting and tried to impress upon the group why the ideas they had proposed were unlikely to work.

At the meeting, Tamara, another international visitor with a long track record of visits to Srebrenica, and who was involved in that initial project, after having listened to all the ideas proposed and to Nedim's response to them, stood up and said, "All this sounds interesting and it sounds good, but why didn't we ask people here, people from Srebrenica, what they really need and what they think is good for them?" Nedim says that after she said that, "it was like twenty minutes of silence in the meeting."

It was about half an hour later that he spoke with Lotte, who at that time had told him that she felt very uncomfortable that they hadn't realized this very obvious thing from the very beginning. While he can't say definitively from what moment Lotte really realized what he had been trying to do, he reports that they eventually had a very different relationship with each other.

Lotte reports in her interview with me that originally, she now realizes, they came to Srebrenica with too much of their own ideas, their own plans, and their own enthusiasm, without really understanding the local people or environment.

I think we came here with too much a western point of view and that we didn't realize enough at first, that this is a different country, with a very different and tragic recent history, and that people here maybe in general are in need of completely different things than we were thinking...

She reports that she does think that Nedim has been trying to influence the way that she understands Srebrenica and how life in it works.

In this case, Nedim tried to influence two different organizations, but appears to have only been successful at changing the way one organization, and particularly Lotte, viewed him. More specifically, Nedim was successful at getting Lotte to recognize that he was an authority on the local situation, and this went a long way for him to influence the project they'd brought to the city.

From the perspective of discourse, Lotte and Nedim had in mind at the beginning different authorities. Nedim's strategy was to position himself as an authority on the local situation and context in order to be influential on Lotte. It seems he was successful. She and that organization began to defer to him and his counterpart for advice and guidance on what would happen and when on the project. He changed Lotte's answer to the question, "Who is accorded the right to talk about authoritatively about Srebrenica?" from hers and other international organizations and herself to him.

In contrast to Lotte, the result for the Italian organization seems to have been different. I do not have the benefit of having had an interview with them, but Nedim's interview and my ethnographic data suggest that, while Nedim was trying to do the same thing with them, he had not successfully established himself as an authority in their eyes.

A third example involves Stefan and Fenna. Stefan worked as a translator for Fenna, who is a freelance journalist who has been to Srebrenica on multiple occasions and has pretty extensive experience working and living in the former Yugoslavia. During this trip to Srebrenica, Fenna wanted to find out what local residents think about "politics, [the] rhetoric of politicians, like [how they are] playing national cards against each other, because it has an effect still." This was especially relevant for the story she wanted to report because the mayor of

Srebrenica had been publicly denying genocide. Her work entailed interviews with local residents, especially Serbs, for which Stefan had been her translator.

For his part, Stefan understands that most international visitors come with a particular perspective, an image of Srebrenica; no one can really come as a blank slate. He felt that way with Fenna, as well. So he “tried to give [her] an insight from the other [Serbian] side.” In his interview with me, Stefan said that he was purposely trying to show her a different side of Srebrenica, a different side of the history of Srebrenica, one where both sides had victims. He mentioned to me that she likely didn’t understand or accept what he was saying to her because he’d never published a book about it—i.e., he wasn’t an established authority. He couldn’t see a different path to becoming one, either.

In Fenna’s second interview with me, she confirmed; not only had Stefan not changed the way she understands Srebrenica, no one had. She did not consider him to be an authority on Srebrenica, and rejected his answer to her questions about victims of the war. Stefan seems to have understood the situation correctly—she did not see him as an authority and he was unsuccessful in his attempts to change that.

4.0 Chapter 4: The 'Concepts' of Srebrenica

This chapter focuses on the last of the three parts of Foucault's framework, 'concepts,' which asks and answers questions about how ideas come to be related to the discourse of Srebrenica for both of these groups in the first place and to understand how those ideas or concepts are related to one another. First, I look from the perspective of the local residents, then from the perspective of the international discourse around Srebrenica. Then I compare and contrast these perspectives. I use ethnographic, interview, and participant observation data to provide qualitative examples.

4.1 The Local Residents' Concepts

At the start of each of the interviews, I posed to the respondents the question, "What do you think is interesting about Srebrenica today?" A summary of their answers is in Figure 4.1.

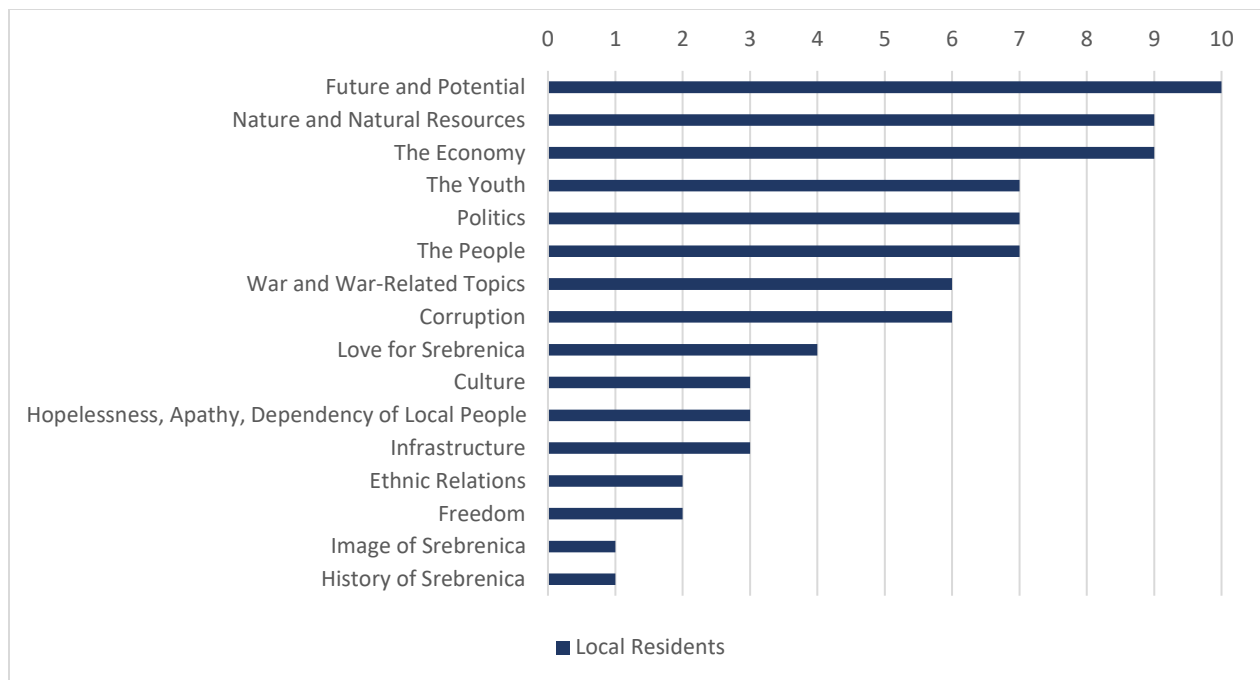


Figure 4.1: Local Residents' Concepts (Number of Utterances by Topic), n = 80

The future and potential of the city was the most mentioned, indicating its importance to local residents. At the time of these interviews and the participant observations, a few residents were involved with projects sponsored by a few different foreign organizations: developing a craft beer brewery, a community center, new businesses opening. Others were encouraged that people seem to be returning to Srebrenica. In contrast, ethnographically, Srebrenica's future seems to most residents pretty bleak. Many consider leaving, even if they never actually will.

Srebrenica is rich in natural resources and natural beauty, and that is evidenced by the mentions made of it by so many local residents and its presence in the mind of people from an ethnographic perspective. It's not unusual for impromptu hikes, trips to the lake, or casual groups going out together into the woods for a hike or to gather resources. Communion with nature is customary as well for the Orthodox on their major holidays, and the relationship

between nature's cycles with the moon and sun determine the Muslim holiday dates. So it is not surprising how prominent the topic is.

But in addition to enjoying nature, local residents still depend on the natural resources. They find and collect during the appropriate seasons various wild foods (e.g., wild mushrooms or cherries). They gather these resources for personal consumption, while others earn cash by selling what they gather. Some also rely on wood for their cooking and heating needs.

Srebrenica also has a health spa that historically attracted people to the city to visit, famous for its healing waters. Srebrenica was, before the war, a vacation, relaxation, and healing spot. The natural surroundings of Srebrenica provide opportunities for exercise, relaxation, and exploration. And, the forest hides the remains of ancient structures and grave sites. Not far from Srebrenica is the Drina river, with its signature shade of green water. There is also a lake about an hour's drive away that provides a day or weekend getaway from the city.

The next most prominent topic mentioned by local residents was the economy. Economically, Srebrenica is depressed. There are not enough jobs in the city to employ most people, and while factories open, they don't stay open for long. The local municipality is and has been taking steps to attract larger employers to the town, but with limited success. One recent initiative has been the push for the diaspora to invest in the city.

Additionally, the jobs that do exist in Srebrenica, especially the best paying ones, are mostly occupied by people who do not live full-time in Srebrenica, and therefore, do not spend their money in the town. There is very little return to the city of the money earned there, necessary to sustain the businesses that are locally-owned and whose owners actually live in the city full time, e.g., the bars and cafes, the hair dressers, restaurants, and hotels.

Many residents in Srebrenica report dissatisfaction with politics there. There is a clear line between those who are politicians and those who are not. From the perspective of non-politicians, the political class looks after its own interests and will resort to the lowest of tactics to remain in office, including stoking ethnic divisions or, as local residents will say, “putting their fingers in between people.” Many residents think that once in office, they do little to help Srebrenica become a better place, to have a solid future, and then they seek to be re-elected in the next election cycle. The effect on the non-political class is apathy and hopelessness. The political class blame the problems of the town on this apathy and hopelessness of the non-political class.

Equally to politics was mentioned the situation facing the youth in Srebrenica. Ethnographically, there are many youth and many organizations focused on supporting them in their education, in opportunities for them to travel, and opportunities to learn art and music. And there is a strong response in the community to support youth to engage in these activities.

However, many youth leave the city because they don’t see a future. This is especially bittersweet because while they are leaving to pursue good opportunities elsewhere, they leave their families behind; many of them would prefer to stay. Worse, many of them have left after having faithfully persisted in trying to make something of their lives. When commenting about it in interactions with me, many of them have said that they cannot find a job without being affiliated with a political party. But they don’t want to affiliate with a party because to them it represents something unpalatable—“*politika*” (see chapter 3). It also signals a lack of independence, where party members must speak the party message, even if they don’t agree, or must participate in grotesque attempts to divide people.

A lot of respondents also talked about the people of Srebrenica, indicating how many of their friends and family are there. While war was the next-most common response, just *one* respondent made a direct reference to the war as an answer to this question.¹² Other than that, other references to the war were made in order to frame some other, more contemporary aspect of life. One partly war-related topic that was mentioned only thrice was the relationship between ethnic groups, where respondents talked about how good coexistence is now, how peace is made possible through Dayton, and that the war was a disruption to brotherhood and unity among ethnic groups.

After war, corruption was the next most common response. In Srebrenica, it usually refers to politicians taking money from the public coffers, either tax revenue or money donated to the city. Corruption of another ilk is the receipt of public funds by private citizens, in the form of grants to start a business, e.g. In exchange for getting the grant, the recipient knows they must return at least part of it to the party or to an individual who got them onto the grant list. Another form of corruption invariably presents itself around election time through the purchase of votes. This type of corruption is not really a secret. Most residents are aware of it, if they haven't actually experienced or benefited from it personally. Ethnographically, many citizens are aware of this corruption and dissatisfied.

¹² This interview was with Benjamin and was the first substantive interaction he and I had. For that reason, I wonder if his answer was another demonstration of that ritual reference to the war that happens between local residents and international visitors. That said, one local resident in Srebrenica reported to me during my Master's fieldwork in Srebrenica that the war is always in the back of everyone's minds. Based on my ethnographic experience, I think this is a good way to understand how people in the city live their lives. While the war is obviously an important part of all residents' experiences of Srebrenica, it is typically not their immediate focus, rather as their responses show, it is one among many interesting aspects to the city.

As alluded to previously, and a conclusion that can be drawn from this description of residents' answers to this question, the local population is tired. One respondent in my Master's field research succinctly described this local apathy: no matter the initiative to make Srebrenica different or better, "We are assured we will fail." This came through as a concept of hopelessness and apathy of the local resident population.

Finally, local residents mentioned a variety of other interesting things about Srebrenica. During part of my field work, some improvements were being made to the main road that winds through the town. This included repair to the road, a new round-about, and sidewalks that reached nearly from one end of the city to the other. Others noted the culture of Srebrenica, wanting it to be recognized by the European Union, celebrating it, and noting the strong heritage of culture in the city. A few respondents mentioned wanting to change the image of Srebrenica in the international media, and a few talked about the strength of the history of Srebrenica, and two mentioned the freedom they enjoy in Srebrenica.

Despite the mostly bleak picture this summary paints, there is a strong affection for the city that I want to note here at the end. Though many of its residents will complain about its economic depression, the political climate (which many consider to be a disaster), and the hopelessness they feel for the future of the city, they love it as their home, as the place they know, as the place they find their families and friends. They are proud of the welcoming and friendly culture, of its natural resources, of the peoples' resourcefulness, and many peoples' independence from and resilience to attempts to create conflict at the political level. They take pride in the identity *Srebrenicani*. At the same time that many of them want to leave, they would

leave reluctantly. They would want to stay if only they could make a future for themselves and their families.

Having identified the concepts related to Srebrenica, I want to describe how they relate to each other. From the local residents' perspective, what they refer to as politics is the primary and central concept that connects to and dictates the possibilities for most of the others. Politics determines the city's future, determines one's access to the economy, and defines the city's narrative of the past. In the minds of many local residents, the political situation is at the root of the problems facing the city today.

Of course, the state of politics today is a direct descendant of the war and the post-war agreements. Without having resolved basic questions about culpability, without recognition of losses, and employing a political governing device that emphasizes ethnic identity to the detriment of other viable, flexible, complex identities, the political hold on Srebrenica is the ground zero of the problems in the city. For that reason, it's important to understand how local residents relate politics as a concept to other concepts.

Politicians emphasize ethnic division and war tensions in their campaigns at the same time they control political parties. Political parties, which require membership and attendance to and support of the party message—regardless of one's personal endorsement—hold the keys to regular employment, in both private and public positions. This ethno-feudal system in the context of the Dayton agreement all but guarantees the prominence of the use of ethnic identity for often corrupt political purposes in Srebrenica. Despite the local cosmopolitan voice, because they are not represented by an actual political party, local residents struggle.

Without influence on that political system, grabbing a hold of public coffers and ensuring that donations to the city are spent in sustainable ways that benefit the entire city is nearly impossible. For example, the opening of the spa has been held up in complicated layers of bureaucracy because the owner is in a different political party than the ruling party; that prevents the development of the economy and the preservation and care for natural beauty surrounding Srebrenica.

As long as the economy is depressed, local individuals will continue to support whichever party assists them in gainful employment and will carry their message forward as well. In that sense, the knot that the unresolved issues from the war, the Dayton agreement, local corruption, and a depressed economy represent is held tightly constricted by politics. For local residents, it represents a death knell for any hope for a positive future in the city.

What I set out in this section is not a definitive description of what Srebrenica is as a city, nor an ethnography that claims to understand it by reducing it to the concepts local residents use for sense making. Instead, I want to describe how these residents render these concepts logically relevant to each other. As described later, those logical connections differ greatly from the way international visitors understand the dominant concepts they attach to Srebrenica. I turn to that description now.

4.2 The International Visitors' Concepts

I asked each of the international visitors the same question, “What’s interesting about Srebrenica today?” I have organized their answers into categories of concepts that seem to go together in Figure 4.2.

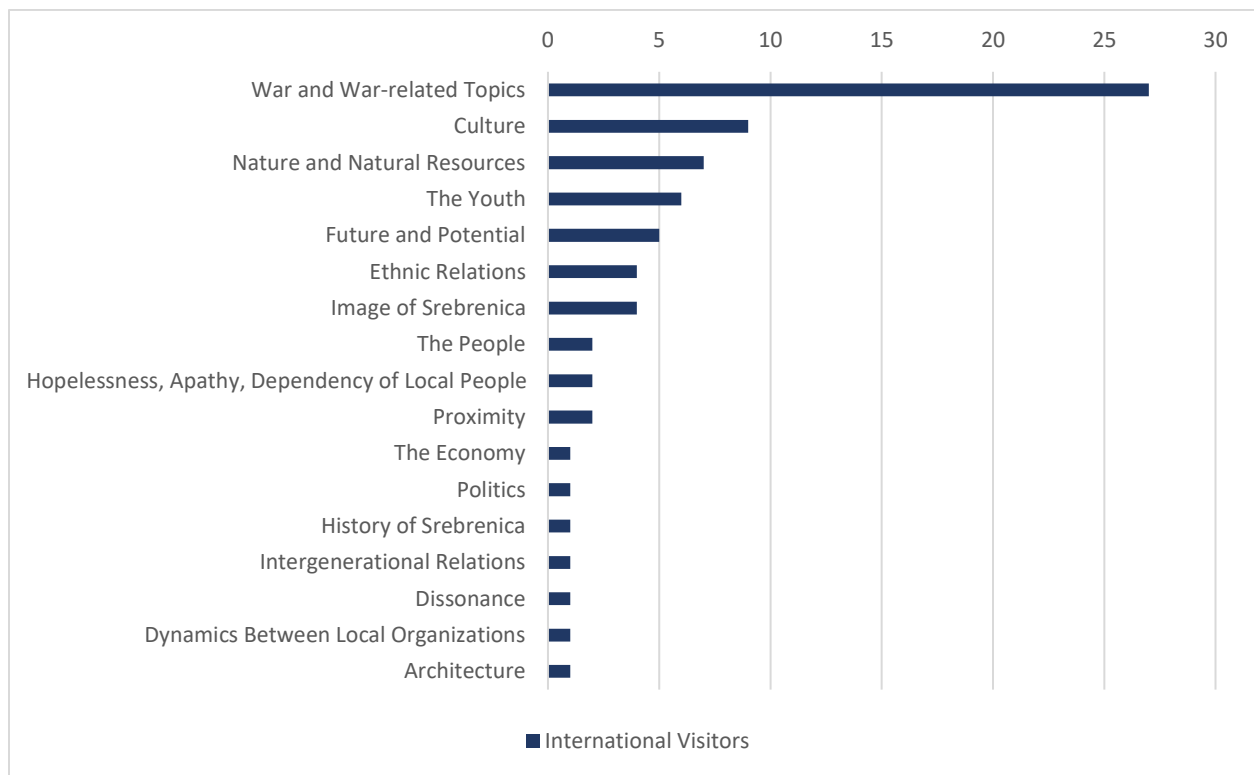


Figure 4.2: International Visitors' Concepts, n = 75

Perhaps unsurprising, of the twenty-five interviews I had with international visitors to Srebrenica, twenty of them framed their responses to the question with a direct reference to the war. Another nine comments were derivative from the war, focusing on other topics, but only as they compare or contrast to the war.

Some respondents just mentioned the war, without commentary, claiming ignorance of the war, or empathy for and sympathy with its victims. Related, many of them mentioned the consequences of the war being so evident still today. Others noted how the media coverage of the war influenced their impressions of Srebrenica.

Some visitors were interested in what life is like today but framed it in terms of a contrast to the war. They wanted to know about this instead of knowing about the war, or how that life is possible given the fact of the war. Expectedly, many respondents narrowed their response to the reason they personally came to Srebrenica, and for many, that reason was the war. They wanted to understand more about how memory and place are tied together and how that expresses itself through music, or the history of the DutchBat, to take two examples.¹³

A few respondents also mentioned cultural aspects of contemporary Srebrenica. They talked about the relaxing pace of life, the activities, music, and the hospitality and resourcefulness of local people. All of these were mentioned in relationship to the war.

Aside from the war, international visitors also mentioned nature and natural resources. They noted Srebrenica's natural beauty and focus on agriculture. Another common mention was the local spa.

Quite a few visitors also talked about the youth in response to this question. Often they wanted to support the youth in trying to improve Srebrenica's future. Some were just interested

¹³ Dutchbat is a term for the Dutch Battalion of the U.N. force placed in Srebrenica during the war, a controversial figure because it was present in Potocari when the genocide began. There has been a hard fought effort on the part of some survivors of the genocide to find the U.N. and the DutchBat responsible for the genocide, for not stopping the Bosnian Serb Army from taking the Muslim men out of Potocari, and as some have accused, for actually assisting in their separation from their families.

in understanding the youth perspective of Srebrenica, given they represent the generation that grew up after the end of the war.

Another theme in the international visitor interviews was the relationship between ethnic groups, with most mentioning that things are better than they initially expected. Some were surprised to find Serbs and Bosniaks living and socializing together, with very little conflict, or to learn of a Srebrenican identity. One of them suspected that while it looks like everyone is living together, the ties were not that deep.

Aside from these more common themes, a handful of topics were mentioned just once by international visitors in response to this one question. These included Srebrenica's proximity to Europe, the contradictions one notices in the way local residents talk about Srebrenica (more on this later), the architecture of the city, the difficulty of the economic situation, and the apathy of the local residents.

The most obvious characteristic of the corpus of visitors' answers was the overwhelming amount of attention that is given to the war and war-related topics. This is unsurprising as Srebrenica is internationally known for its war history. Most international visitors who come to Srebrenica come because they have some idea of the place as it related to the war.

As I did with the local residents, it's important to understand how international visitors logically relate these concepts one to another. In the same way that politics is the central organizing concept for local residents, ethnic identity serves that function for international visitors. Ethnic identity is the primary organizing concept for all the others—the economy, progress, the future, and politics.

To understand the international visitor's understanding of ethnic identity in Srebrenica, it is not unimportant that Srebrenica, for most international visitors, emerged as a discourse in the 1990s, that this specific period of time was marked internationally as a period of ethnic war, and that ethnic identity—a powerful discursive formation in its own right, on both the international and local sides—was cited as a cause of the war.

Srebrenica emerged as a case of ethnic conflict, explanations of which were based on theories of ethnic war, which included theories about how politics, economics, ethnicity, human nature, and other concepts could produce wars of this type. Prior to the development of these theories, a whole genre of academic work on nationalism already existed and largely informed the ethnic conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding literature that came later. That was instrumental in leading to ethnic identity playing a leading role in helping some of the major international actors understand these 'new' conflicts emerging in the 1990s, including the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

As a central concept in these theories of nationalism, theories of conflict of the 1990s, and theories of peacebuilding, it is unsurprising that so many of the international visitors I interviewed and observed also focused on ethnic identity as a central organizing concept for their own discourse on Srebrenica. For most international visitors, ethnic identity as a concept helps with sense making, providing an orienting and simplifying framework for understanding local life. In fact, in many cases, it seemed that international visitors were preoccupied with ethnic identity as a means of understanding local life—they couldn't come to conclusions for themselves about how to interpret their interactions without knowing who's who. This is evidenced by the focus so many international visitors gave it.

Some visitors focused on it more to ensure parity between groups in their relationships and projects with local residents, and to inform the methodology they used to implement their projects and in this way they emphasized it. Some visitors used ethnic identity to help explain things or reduce ambiguity and help decipher what should be expected. Ethnic identity helped them fill in otherwise incomplete information about the local context. In each case, these uses were powerful in their ability to influence the international visitor's understanding of Srebrenica, and importantly, influence the knowledge they held about Srebrenica.

But beyond simply focusing on ethnic identity, international visitors also used it for sense making. Quite a few visitors indicated in one way or another that they had witnessed or noticed differences between Serbs and Muslims. Others purposefully tried to find out who was Muslim or Serb. Aside from this more general preoccupation with ethnic identity, visitors were also concerned about parity and equity in their own actions and in the programming they brought to the city, quite careful to avoid the appearance of being biased more toward or connected more with one or the other group.

For other international visitors, ethnic identity influenced the methodology of their projects. Several international visitors reported that they would ask different questions, pose similar questions differently, and interpret the answers they would receive depending upon the ethnic identity of the local resident.

In addition to influencing methodology, ethnic identity as a central organizing concept also helped international visitors fill in and make sense of other observations they had made. One illustrative example came from a respondent who relayed to me that they understood that students go to the local school at different times--one time period is for Bosniaks and the other

one is for Serbs. I asked them if someone had told them about that, and they mentioned that another international visitor who had some tenure in the city told them the school system was two-tiered. I asked if that person had told them that it was a two-tier system based on ethnicity or just simply a two-tier system. They said the other visitor had not said anything about ethnic identity, but that they had just assumed that the two tiers were based on ethnicity, because, well, that's what a two-tier system in Bosnia *would* look like.¹⁴

This brief survey of examples shows how international visitors use the concept ethnic identity as a primary organizing device. There are two important characteristics of this use of ethnic identity that are important to understand. The first is a concept from Brubaker (2004), who calls this focus on ethnic groups as homogenous actors *groupism*. He argues that a tendency towards groupism leads people to accept what leaders and groups say on behalf of the ethnic groups they represent without really evaluating the extent to which the members of those ethnic groups support them or, more specifically, their statements.

One concrete example of this groupism came through with Fenna's approach to the work that brought her to Srebrenica. Because the mayor of Srebrenica was at the time a Bosnian Serb, she wanted to do a story about that, and more specifically his denial of genocide against Muslims. Because he was Serb and the topic was genocide denial, she felt that identity was important to her work and so wanted to know the identity of the people whom she interviewed. She did not struggle to identify who was Serb versus Muslim. I asked her how she knows, and

¹⁴ In fact, there is a two-tier system, but it is based on morning and evening classes where both Serbs and Muslims go to either session. This is true for the high school only, as far as I understand it, and it has been that way since before the war. The motivating problem behind the two-tier system was not ethnic animosity and separation, but in fact that the school was too small to hold all the students at one time.

she mentioned that she can tell based on the answer—if they approve or disapprove of the Serbian mayor's denial of genocide. Presumably, those who agree are Serbian, and those who disagree not.

She would presume a person's ethnic identity based upon their opinion of the mayor. According to her logic, the mayor is Serbian and Serbs support his opinion while Muslims do not. Ergo, when a person disagrees with the mayor, the person is Muslim, and when not, Serbian. The logical result renders the possibility of finding Serbs who disagree with him impossible—they must be Muslim. The fact is, there is a vibrant population of Serbs who disagree with him considerably, not just about policy issues but also with his explanations of the war and his denial of genocide. In that sense, groupism renders invisible the heterogeneity within groups, reinforcing and duplicating the international visitors' understanding of ethnic identity errantly.

The second characteristic associated with this focus on ethnic identity comes from Hayden (2007), who identifies a negative moral valence often put to ethnic identity in the literature on the former Yugoslavia. Ethnic identity is seen as a cause of war leading to such catastrophic consequences and usually referred to as closer to human nature, and therefore, unrefined. One understands that to value ethnic identity or national association, at least when one is not from the west, is to be backward or inferior.

Hayden (2007) argues that by taking such an understandable stance, scholars and policy-makers skew their vision of the reality of life for many individuals living in Bosnia. From my ethnographic and interview data, that negative moral valence also marked how

international visitors to the city related ethnic identity to other concepts and how they understood Srebrenica and the local residents they interacted with.

Some international visitors expressed this to me sometimes very directly in the way they spoke about it as a concept. At other times, the negative moral valence was evident in the ways that visitors understood its origins and its consequences, and the extent to which some visitors seemed to be self-conscious about the topic. In some cases, the visitors reported explicitly trying to eradicate it as a concept in the local mind at all.

A few visitors simply cast ethnic identity in a negative light. For example, one indicated that growing up where ethnic identity is important is not a positive environment. Another participant notes that, “Sadly, [ethnic] identity is of interest, because I would prefer for us to live in a world in which identity is not important...So tragically, yes, identity is important...it is part of the reality that one has to deal with, but it is a tragic reality.”

Other visitors applied a negative valence to ethnic identity in terms of its consequences for society revealing the inferred conclusion that ethnic identity in any capacity is negative. Ethnic identity serves only to divide people and ethnic identity prevents the possibility of cooperation. On other occasions, international visitors were focused on actually trying to eradicate it from the local context—to get local residents to forget their identities and instead focus on things like art, culture, or music.

In fact, only two international visitors referenced ethnic identity in a positive light. One visitor saw ethnic identity as a strong motivating factor that is tied to place; he thinks it has brought people back to Bosnia even though perhaps their lives would have been better in Germany. Another felt that it prevents people from being close-minded.

4.3 Comparison

Having described to some detail the ways that local residents and international visitors think about Srebrenica, I want to compare and contrast these images, using a graph that combines the earlier graphs. The first thing that is noticeable about the similarities between these two sets of answers is that both populations answer the questions using a wide range of topics: international visitors mentioned 17 topics and local residents mentioned 16. Otherwise, just two topics reached near parity between them: nature and the youth.

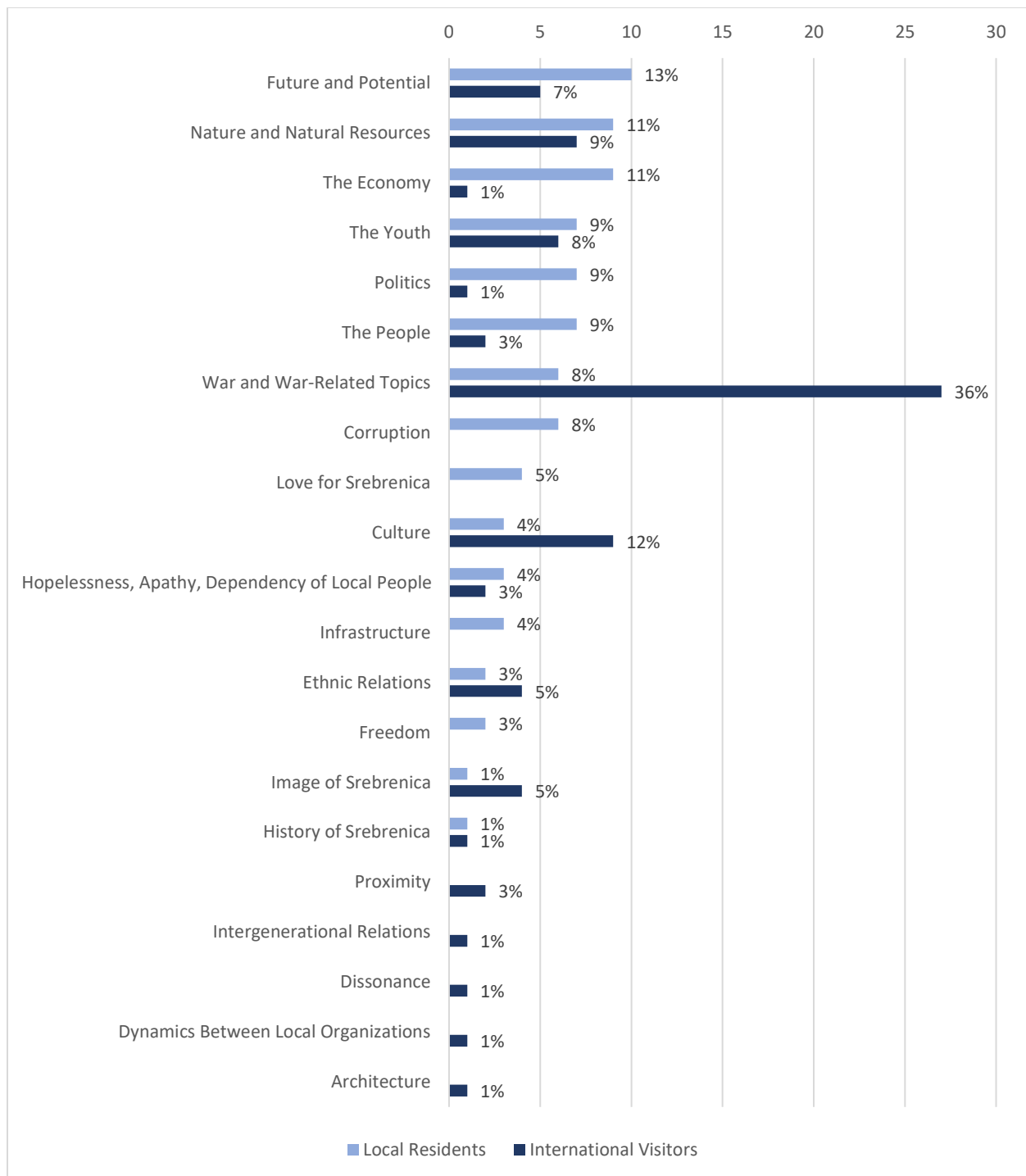


Figure 4.3: Comparison of Local and International Concepts (% of Mentions by Topic), n = 155)

The answers to the question also give pretty good insight into the differences between the concepts local residents and international visitors relate to Srebrenica. There are a few differences worth mentioning. Earlier, I shared a graph that showed how local residents focus mostly on the present and the future, but the international visitors focused mostly on the past. The graph here shows how that temporal focus is tied to the concepts each group seems to focus on more. Another difference is how closely related each of the local residents' concepts were to each other and that so many of them identified the same concepts over and over again; in contrast, a lot of the concepts mentioned by international visitors were mentioned by only one or two of them. Lastly, there was a limited amount of overlap between the concepts across the groups. Where local residents mentioned politics a lot, for example, international visitors barely mentioned it.

Rather than focus on contrasting the number of mentions between these two groups, I want to focus on the second important aspect of concepts in the Foucauldian sense—how they relate to one another. As alluded to previously, local residents organize their image and understanding of Srebrenica largely around the concept of politics, while international visitors organize their understanding of Srebrenica around ethnic identity. This is an important difference that often strains conversations between local residents and international visitors.

As described in chapter 2, Srebrenica becomes an object of attention for local residents when the image is used in a political way for political gain. Politics for local residents represents an insurmountable object to be overcome if they ever want the present or the future to be better. Srebrenica became for many an image of suffering, a valuable political tool in both the Muslim and the Serbian narratives around the war. It is still used in this way by both sides today.

Between ethnic groups, that image is most certainly contested. But this image of Srebrenica is also contested between those politicians who use it as a tool and those local residents I focus on here. Mostly marginalized, they are impacted by a backward-looking, hate-filled, infamous image of Srebrenica and its political use, which is from their perspective mostly negative.

For them, this politics stifles any chance for progress in the town. Politicians use Srebrenica during elections to incite fear and animosity to garner votes, which alleviates any pressure on them to make improvements to the town's economic, social, and political situation. At the same time, most of these local residents believe those politicians to be highly corrupt, skimming project funds and government coffers. When politicians and other groups use that contested, backward-focused, fear-inciting image of Srebrenica, the future for these individuals is bleak and hopeless. To them, it seems things will never change for this town. Understanding that, it makes sense that for local residents, politics is the cause of most problems in the city.

In contrast to that, most international visitors presume politics to be a solution to what they understand to be the real problem—ethnic identity. International visitors barely mentioned politics as a concept in their interviews, but during my ethnographic and participant observations, it was clear that international visitors see ethnic identity as the central organizing concept.

This focus on ethnic identity has its roots in the academic literature on nationalism, a field of work tasked with explaining why that particular form of politics emerged with force at a particular time in history. Most theories share two separate elements. One is the nation, a group of individuals from the same ethnic background. The second is the state, the

governmental apparatus those nations seek to control. Most theories take these two elements and combine them in different ways in order to explain how nationalism emerged when it did.

What's important to note across all of these explanations is the very existential connection these theories make between ethnic identity and nationhood. The individual is by nature, search for survival, or psychological motivation connected to their ethnic identity. Therefore, ethnic identity is an explanatory variable in understanding nationalism as a concept. As such, it is also a powerful explanation in the origin of the conflicts of the 1990s, including in the former Yugoslavia.

Over time, more sophisticated analyses of these conflicts have emerged that focus less on ethnic identity, and more on other modern problems. Ramet (2006:600) argues that system illegitimacy—lack of democracy and human rights, for example—is what drove the conflicts, and nationalism is also a product of that systemic illegitimacy. Meanwhile, Woodward (1995) suggests that it was international neoliberal policy requirements that triggered the crisis in the former federation. These economic policies were being implemented at the same time that the constitutions of the constituent republics of Yugoslavia were being re-written. As a consequence, those neoliberal policies created a heightened sense of insecurity for the individual who happened also to find themselves in a tumultuous political situation.

These analyses help explain why international visitors relate their concepts ethnic identity and politics to Srebrenica so differently from the way local residents do so. Ethnic identity is the original problem, and a properly functioning political system, presumably liberal democracy, with an effective economic system, is the solution. To change the situation in

Srebrenica, according to international visitors, local residents needed to turn more toward politics, rather than away from it.

These local residents could not disagree more, on both accounts. As noted, these residents see politics as the problem, not a solution to it, but are also intimately familiar with the impossibility of taking control of the political apparatus given the constitutional structure of the country. Beyond that, however, local residents also view ethnic identity as a concept in a profoundly different way.¹⁵ To contrast it with the way international visitors use that concept, local residents very much appreciate the heterogeneity within ethnic groups, and apply a very neutral valence to ethnic identity.

On heterogeneity within ethnic groups, local residents use a variety of concepts to reconcile what looks to international visitors as an impossible contradiction. Obviously, there did occur in the 1990s a war that was characterized and understood by local residents and international actors alike as a war between ethnic groups. So, it's clear to local residents that ethnic identity can be used to create divisions between people. Ethnic identity as somehow problematic and leading to conflict makes sense to local residents, but they employ a range of other devices and concepts to resolve what might seem like contradictions.

For example, some in the Muslim population, when talking about the war, would distinguish between Serbs and *Cetniks*, a reference to the more chauvinistic and nationalist members of the ethnic group. Importantly, this is a distinction that Serbs will also make. There

¹⁵ Ethnic identity as a concept in the local context remains partially elusive to me, even given nearly four full years in the city. For the record, I report here what I understand the local concept to be but always from an international perspective; while informed by many experiences and years in the city, my description should be taken as such.

is also the term *Ustasha*, which locally refers to chauvinists who are Croatian.¹⁶ This distinction allows them to hold two truths simultaneously: they have affection for the ethnic other, while the ethnic other killed members of their group and use chauvinist and aggressive language still.

Another example is the designation *posteni ljudi* ('good people'), which takes precedence over ethnic designation, emphasizing the reputation and personal relationships residents have developed for themselves and with others. The reasoning behind this designation is that there are good and bad people of all ethnic backgrounds. It's more important to know their reputation than it is to know their family name. This distinction allows them to retain their understanding of the war, which emphasizes ethnic animosity and crimes of ethnic aggression, while also retaining and building new relationships with others of different backgrounds. Local residents understand this and a great deal of other complexity and fluidity in their use of ethnic identity.

In contrast, international visitors often fail to see the nuances within ethnic groups. The presumption is that there is little heterogeneity in any case, so little reason to look for the ways

¹⁶ Interestingly, I do not remember nor can I find a note that I ever heard a term that primarily distinguished between chauvinists and non-chauvinists in the Muslim population. There are probably a few reasons for this. Firstly, *Ustasa* and *Cetnik* are names that became more common during and after the Second World War, and while there were Muslims who fought in other regiments, according to local accounts, most Muslims fought with the *Partizani*, an anti-fascist group comprised of many ethnicities. Secondly, so many Muslims in the former Yugoslavia are concentrated in the former Bosnian Republic, which carries with it the reputation of being the most cosmopolitan of all of the former republics. As such, the overlap of 'Muslim' and 'cosmopolitan' may have masked the need for a designator of chauvinist Muslims. Finally, the term used locally for non-cosmopolitan Muslims is marked by its association to radical or extreme religious views (*Mudzahedin*, e.g.). As far as I understand, this term first emerged in the Bosnian context during the most recent war to refer to non-Bosnian fighters who had come from abroad to support the Muslim population. Since then, its meaning has expanded to refer to those who are more extreme in their religious views and less tolerant of other ethnicities and religions. That said, it primarily signifies its extreme religious views and secondarily signifies the chauvinism that can often come with those views.

in which it might express itself. One example of this is evident in the way ethnic identity relates to the term genocide for these local residents and the international visitors.

While it is true for the most part that very few Serbs will use the term genocide itself to describe what happened to Muslims in July of 1995, the conclusions international visitors often draw from this are often errant, at best. As some international visitors suppose, Serbs will deny it because their leaders do—the groups are homogenous internally. The implication, then, is that they are guilty or blamed for it, and it is defensiveness of their own ethnic group that drives the denial. In some or even many cases, this might be even true. But, in fact, many Serbian people in Srebrenica will acknowledge the massacre and the deaths of the Muslims who are buried in Potocari¹⁷ but are reluctant to use the word genocide.

If you ask Serbs in Srebrenica, “Was the intentional goal of the Serbian army to drive out all Muslims from the Srebrenica region?” most of them would answer *yes*, and without paradox or controversy. The reason many Serbs in Srebrenica will not use the term genocide is mostly because the term itself has been politicized. Another reason is that, because genocide for them refers to the Holocaust, they associate the term’s definition with sheer number of victims, rather than the intentional elimination of a group from a region. That is, they don’t deny the facts; they deny the word being used to describe it. But the presumed homogeneity within the group disguises the mere possibility of this kind of nuance from international visitors,¹⁸ while local

¹⁷ Of course there are those who will even question these basic facts, but these truly are a minority. Others will simply refuse to answer the question, but again not because they deny the material facts. Instead they want to be able to speak about and gain recognition for their own losses during the war.

¹⁸ I only began to appreciate this nuanced view a full three years into my tenure in the city, and that only because I asked a close friend who is Serbian that exact question.

residents' heterogeneous understanding of ethnic identity renders the line of questioning confusing on multiple fronts.

The other major difference between local residents and international visitors is the valence put to ethnic identity. For local residents, it's mostly neutral. For many local residents, ethnic identity first and foremost inspires pride. Similar to the pride many humans around the globe associate with their homes, most Muslims and Serbs in Srebrenica take pride in their ethnicity. An important distinction, many from both groups consider this pride to be non-chauvinistic. Their pride in their own ethnic group has nothing to do with other groups. It is not a comparison. It is merely pride in one's heritage and culture.¹⁹

Mostly, ethnic identity serves a sense making function in society. Ethnic identity can help someone focus their job search efforts; it can help them identify a life partner; it can help an employer choose an employee. It can even help people dismiss otherwise inexplicable slights and minor rude interactions. Ethnic identity can also help local residents prevent conflict from erupting. A person can, and usually does, avoid talking about politics or the war, for example, if they are in mixed but unfamiliar company.

Thus, most local residents resent neither their own identity, nor the identity of others, rather merely understand it as a reality. That reality is harmless, up to the point of its use *politically*. Aside from that, ethnic identity seems mostly to grease the wheels of everyday life in mostly innocuous ways.

¹⁹ It is important to note that there are chauvinists in both groups who do cast their ethnic pride with a comparative valence, one that is derogatory to other groups. I came across this in my ethnography, though it was rare in occurrence. That rarity is likely due to my position outside of the local municipality and the religious institutions. I experienced this chauvinism most when I was at the university, most often with professors and rarely with students.

As such, its valence is mostly neutral. For many local residents, it does not occur to them to think about their access to jobs or life partners as somehow unfair, unjust, bad, or negative because it is limited, to an extent, by that identity marker. Ethnic identity just is, without positive or negative, but rather neutral moral valence.

Given their negative moral valence, international visitors struggle to see what else ethnic identity does in modern life in Srebrenica—an important marker for sense making for everyday life—and to situate it with other aspects of life that are also important. Coupled with groupism, they fail to see the nuances within the groups as well. The result is a general confusion in international visitors who cannot begin to understand how local residents can say they do not have a problem with ethnic identity at the same time they vote for a chauvinist politician or deny the losses of members of the other group. When international visitors remark that it is difficult for them to reconcile seemingly contradictory statements by local residents, it is likely because they are simply not understanding the term ethnic identity itself.

Because for international visitors, ethnic identity is negative, when they hear, “We don’t have a problem with ethnic identity” they often equate it to suggesting that ethnic identity does not matter. But local residents aren’t saying *that*. They are merely saying they don’t use the term to create problems between people. On the one hand is the focus by international visitors on the catastrophic consequences attributed to ethnic identity. On the other is the foundational and, importantly, unproblematic role ethnic identity plays in everyday life for local residents. The two perspectives are so disparate that the one side can hardly see, and rarely even imagines, the possibility of the other.

This highlights a remarkable competency of these local residents to reconcile what to international visitors seem like many contradictions. For example, they say Srebrenica for them offers little hope of a future, but they are reluctant to leave. They say politicians are corrupt, but often these residents will vote for them. Ethnic identity isn't a problem, they insist, but most of the political problems central to their understanding of Srebrenica is organized and understood through the lens of ethnic identity.

This group of unaffiliated, non-political residents rewrite the dominant narratives into new forms and employ different language to resolve these contradictions. For example, rather than aligning one group or the other with the status of victim from the war, victim is a category not confined to ethnic characterization; for them, there were victims and aggressors on both sides of the war, and they employ more particular language like *cetnik* in order to place blame where they believe blame should lie. In contrast, international visitors lack this versatility, and as the next section demonstrates, this creates both tensions in interactions between the two as well as opportunities to influence.

4.4 Attempts to Influence Others' Concepts

Local residents and international visitors both tried to influence the way they related concepts in their knowledge about the city of Srebrenica. One young father reported to me that he believes that most visitors come to Srebrenica with the impression that what happened there couldn't have happened in the place from which the visitor had come. He pressure tests the

causal relationships those visitors have about what caused the war in the former Yugoslavia by describing to the visitors what Srebrenica was like before the war.

Nedim has tried many times to change the way that international visitors think politics is the solution to the problems in Srebrenica. He described it to me using an example of a situation he's been in a few times. He remarked to me in his interview the numerous occasions on which he's been speaking with an international visitor about the problems that face Srebrenica today. Invariably, the visitor will come upon the topic of the local spa and make a suggestion to the effect that the local residents ought to try to re-open it.

In talking with international visitors about the fact that the spa is not open, Nedim will make the effort to explain to the visitor, firstly, that the local residents already do want the spa to open. But, it's owned by one man in particular who cannot get the permits he requires in order to finish building it to open it. The visitor will invariably suggest that local residents make appeals to the local, regional, and entity governments. At that point, Nedim will begin to explain that, in fact, the problem is not a matter of just getting the support of the entity government. Rather, he explains, the entity government is the one actively trying to sabotage the opening of the spa. The visitor will certainly ask why, and Nedim will respond: because the owner is in a different political party than the party that is currently in control.

Nedim has had the experience of trying to explain the local situation to so many international visitors partly because he seeks them out. He understands that the local situation needs outside help but is also frustrated by the myriad conversations he must first have with international visitors before they will understand from his perspective what is going on locally.

That is, he struggles to get them to change the relationships they have between concepts so that they match his.

For example, there was a group of Italian youth who he felt never really seemed to understand him. He said that they had come to Srebrenica with really big expectations, but he could tell they did not understand the situation. After they implemented one week-long project, “[they] were really disappointed. When the festival was finished, they just said, this is not possible. This city cannot be helped. ...And they ran away.”

He said that he had tried to speak with them:

We told them that we know exactly what [they] are talking about, and what kind of picture they would like to see, and change, and that we would like the same, actually. But that it’s a really long process here. Maybe more than fifty years you would need, for a start. And anyone who is not ready to handle all those challenges in that long process, in which a new generation will take over and continue, it is best for you to decide now that you won’t do it.

With this group of individuals, he was unsuccessful in changing the connections they made between politics and the problems facing local residents today.

Recall the exchange between Greta and Ahmed from Chapter 2. Ahmed had influenced Greta and the group with her away from an art installation that focused on the war, and toward something that captured their experiences in Srebrenica. He succeeded in influencing where and when Srebrenica became important to them; after speaking with him they wanted to do some portraits of the people they’d met.

But when it came to their concepts, Ahmed was a bit less successful. As Greta and her group of friends thought about it, they became uncomfortable with the idea of painting portraits of local residents because the portraits were all of Muslims. Greta said,

I've just met the Muslim part of the population, so I think that I'm missing another part of the population in my experience here. So I still have some practical doubts about...how do people feel about it, both sides? About their daily life, about their interactions, I mean, are there differences between the two communities? Are there any language differences? ...I don't have a clear idea about what it is really like to live here today.

They talked with Ahmed about this, to gather his advice. He recalled that conversation and their concern that they didn't have portraits of any Serbian people from Srebrenica. He recounted the logic of his response to them,

...for me, it's a kind of a strange thing, ...if you look at it from international perspective, it's kind of like a normal thing that they are asking...that what is important in each kind of project implemented is that there are Muslims and Serbs together. Well I see it as already a discrimination point from the institution that is asking you to make it. It's already discriminating in the way in how it is thought because you already are making a discrimination between the two people.

So in the moment that you have to count, I don't know,...I have four Muslims and three Serbs, or four Serbs, or....It's simply stupid from my point of view. While the important thing is that there are people. That is meaningful; it doesn't matter what kind of ethnicity or religion they have.

Greta's discomfort related to ethnic identity and its representation in the city was not something he'd successfully influenced for her. Ahmed wanted them to focus more on the people in their art installation, but because she was uncomfortable with including only Muslims in the art installation, they focused instead on their experiences. However, he was not able to remove the relevance or importance of ethnic identity. He merely displaced their importance in the project. Despite the change in output, she was still focused on ethnic identity in her mind, wondering whether she really understood everything because she hadn't really interacted with any Serbs. She was concerned to ensure that any permanent art installation represent both Muslims and Serbs, despite his suggestion that it doesn't matter because they are all human

anyway. The practical output changed, but her concept didn't. In this way, he was not successful in dislodging the centrality of ethnic identity as a concept.

Marta and the youth represent a unique example of when an international visitor was able to dislodge the local residents' connection of politics to all of Srebrenica's problems. Recall that Marta had come to deliver a program, wherein the youth who participated spent a week's time to learn to train their peers on finding alternative means of funding projects.

Marta heard throughout the training that it is more or less impossible to accomplish anything in Srebrenica. But by the end of the week, more than a few of them had really changed their minds. What had changed? The project had sought to change the power the youth put in politics to stifle grass-roots initiatives for change. Typically, the youth rely on interactions with international organizations or philanthropists to provide them with enough funding for less than a modest salary and the materials they'd need to implement a project. Otherwise, they would rely on project proposals sent to organizations to whom they were unknown and unaffiliated. Or they would seek and be rejected for assistance from the local municipality because they were politically unaffiliated. So many times had they gone through this and failed to get the funds necessary, or received partial funding, that many of them felt assured they would not succeed.

Marta had inspired the youth to understand their situation differently through the case of the week-long program. Their perception of Srebrenica was a place of no possibility, no opportunity, and no future. They were apathetic and they understood others like them to be apathetic as well. As noted by a local resident in an earlier interview from my Master's fieldwork, they were "assured we will fail."

But Marta asked them to look at resources from a different perspective, to be more open to possibilities of using what's already around them. For example, doesn't the local café offer its space to musicians to play? And hasn't the municipality covered some costs related to a few projects in the past? What if everyone gave just a few marks to achieve a financial goal? In addition to asking them to think a little bit differently about the menu of resources available to the youth, she also provided examples, many of them of youth initiatives from around the world, sometimes in places in much worse situations than what the youth imagined for Srebrenica. In practice, what she had done was to displace the centrality of politics to others of their concepts and how they influence the future of the city.

By the end of the week, most of the youth had changed perspectives. They believed they could achieve results. One of the youth involved in the program did go on to start several different projects, one of them an entrepreneurial venture that is gaining customers in all of Bosnia. Another of them has been involved in a major, multi-million Euro project that has taken a patchwork of individuals and resources and sewed them together to make a little bit of progress a little bit at a time.

Slobodan said,

When she showed this project in Brazil, you start to think that the whole of Bosnia doesn't have that number of young people. And you, what makes you uncomfortable is when you try to connect that project with and to put it in a local context here in Srebrenica. The first thing that you think about is human resources. And without that I cannot achieve anything. But then you start to think during the week about putting the whole thing in the local context, and then you realize it is not a matter to copy and paste. It's the matter to produce something here, to create something here. That's doable in this environment.

Zeljka said,

What we understood was that we have good resources but that people are stuck here, so they helped us to a little bit see things from a different view...They showed us something obvious...: we have good space, a lot of good people, and a lot of good opportunities. But we didn't think so, so I think that this is the first that people from outside came and showed us something so simple which we didn't see before.

The one exception was Ana, who felt frustrated with every suggestion Marta made; she knew it would not work and Marta would just respond with another unlikely suggestion. Aside from Ana, though, Marta had successfully displaced the central role politics played in the city; in terms of this study, she'd changed the relationships these local residents had between their discursive concepts.

Fenna, the journalist who worked with local resident Stefan, in reflecting on the totality of those interviews, mentioned that one thing that she says she finds it difficult to understand is "how it is possible that people are not more open to the feelings of the people on the other side." In regards to her interview with Stefan in particular, she was perplexed.

On the one hand, she says, he seems really tolerant, understanding, wanting to treat each victim as a victim. "That's the more open-minded way of thinking amongst Serbs." But what was difficult for her to understand was what he *really* thinks because when she tries to clarify what his own personal thoughts are about the genocide of 1995, she said,

you never really get a clear answer because it always goes straight to, 'but we have victims as well.' And there it stops, and you can't really figure out what their view really is because they...start comparing it with other victims, which then turns it into you know, a story that you can hardly explain. Because yes, there are victims on both sides, but we're talking now about [the victims on the Muslim side], and not about the other side. But that's always the answer when you talk about these kinds of things in Srebrenica.

She felt she had posed the question to him (and others) but didn't get an answer.

Stefan in his interview with me stated that he wanted to try to change the way she thought about victims in Srebrenica: “You know, like, it’s not that everything is black and white.” He wanted to try to help her understand both sides of the war. “We had no problems speaking about it, and I even tried to change her opinion...” He says he “tried to explain to her different stuff, you know, about that both sides had victims, and that, you know, we need to help each other.”

He did so by giving her examples of Serb victims that were killed, giving the dates that certain crimes happened, and showing her what he considered to be evidence that crimes were also done to Serbs before. He had tried also to get her to go to the Serbian memorial ceremony, though she didn’t go. She had posed a series of questions to her interviewees, including Stefan, about the Muslim victims of the war. Fenna had been perplexed by a persistence she’d recognized in those she’d identified as Serbian to answer her questions about Muslim victims with reference to Serbian victims.

During the interview, it seems that, in his own way, Stefan *was* answering her question; he was telling her what he really thinks, about the war, and about the victims of the war. But from Fenna’s perspective, which primarily focused on ethnic identity as an organizing device, marked by that groupist homogeneity and negative moral valence, she couldn’t see the answer he had given as any kind of answer at all. He was answering her question about Muslim victims with an answer about Serbian victims, giving her two answers in one. But she didn’t seem to recognize it.

I asked Stefan if he felt that he had succeeded in influencing her; he said he did not feel as though she had understood him. And she confirmed in her second interview with me that

she did not feel that any of the local residents had even tried to correct a misunderstanding on her part, including Stefan, even though she says that he helped her to understand why Serbs think the way they do.

Because their concepts were related to other concepts and to Srebrenica in such different ways, Fenna and Stefan were speaking past each other. He was trying to inspire in her an openness to the myriad opinions and feelings of people in his ethnic group, while she was, ironically, perplexed at the lack of such openness by his ethnic group. She'd posed a question he felt was invalid to ask him, and he'd answered the question he'd wished she'd asked. In Foucauldian terms, he tried to change the way she related some concepts to others (ethnic identity and victim, for example), but was unsuccessful in doing so.

Giorgia was in the same group of Italians as Greta and her experience provides some nice contrast to the situation between Greta and Ahmed. In her initial interview, she said that she didn't really know much about Srebrenica or the war and had come to find out more about the place and do this art installation. In particular, she was interested in drawing the portraits of local residents. But she was also sensitive to the fact that she had only been exposed to local residents through her connection to Ahmed. For that reason, she'd made a special effort to break free from the group at times in order to explore the city on her own. That took her to a local café for a few days where she'd seen a local resident, Ivan, sitting each day.

At some point, they'd begun talking to each other after several days of seeing each other in the café. Giorgia shared with him her sketches that were eventually going to become part of the art installation. They began looking at the sketches together and Ivan started to give her some suggestions about a portrait she put together of a woman, one that she had intended to be

a portrait of the 'every woman.' Ivan understood the picture to be the portrait of a Muslim woman.



Figure 4.4: Giorgia's Drawing of the "Every Woman"

From Ivan's perspective, this portrait was a problem. It wasn't a problem that, from his perspective, this portrait represented a Muslim woman.²⁰ "You draw a Muslim woman with that covering. I mean, okay. That's okay. I respect that." What he didn't like was that it hadn't included a Serbian woman as well. "But why don't you draw a Serbian woman?...You are drawing a mural, and you are drawing a covered girl. That's just one nation. Where are we [Serbs] here? Two nations." For him, ethnic identity is not bad, but instead *important*. The art installation ought to have both nations in it because that's the reality of local life. He was trying to get her to focus on an important concept.

²⁰ Worth noting, not all local residents see a Muslim woman in that sketch. Though she is covered, she is covered in a way that both Serbian and Muslim women cover themselves. Even so, Ivan is one of the local residents, and in this case, he saw the Muslim people represented and did not see the Serbian people represented. This could also be read as an example of that skepticism by local Serbs that the international world blames them all for genocide. He might have read into the portrait a Muslim woman because he was expecting it to be there. In any case, it's difficult to make a conclusion here.

In this case, Ivan was not able to influence Giorgia to change the portrait to include both Muslim and Serbian women. He asserted the locally important concept of ethnic identity as a way of understanding the world, but she did not change the sketch to match his suggestion—to have two women drinking coffee together, one Muslim and one Serbian. And from Giorgia's perspective, she did not even seem to recall that he had tried to influence her decision to include only one woman who was covered.

Importantly, the difference was in the concept of ethnic identity. She wanted it to be 'every woman,' presumably because to her ethnic identity, especially in the context of Bosnia, carries a negative valence. Recalling the interviews with Ahmed and Greta, Giorgia had already had conversations about ethnic identity, and at least one other in her group—Greta—was sensitive to the appearance of ethnicity. Because Giorgia's intention was an ethnicity-free portrait, she was likely reluctant to add ethnicity, even if in equal parts as Ivan had suggested.

Ljeposava is affiliated with a local organization that brings together private citizens, other organizations, international organizations, and really anyone else who is interested in participating. The purpose of the organization is to serve as a vehicle through which local people can voice their opposition to hateful incidents when they happen in Srebrenica. An additional mandate for the group is to intentionally make positive stories from Srebrenica newsworthy as an attempt to change, or at least balance, the dominant image of Srebrenica in the press.

Ioana had come to Srebrenica through her connection with another youth-focused project and was living in the city for a few months at a time off and on. She was focused on working in this local organization and had spent a lot of time and energy planning events and

putting together marketing materials to try to increase interest in the events. A lot of these events were focused on creating those positive stories from Srebrenica.

In the organization, there had been some debate about what the focus of the organization is, or should be, a problem that hadn't been fully recognized or resolved. On the one hand, Ljeposava felt the organization must be focused on at least being a mechanism through which local residents and organizations could voice their stance against hate in the city. To her, it seemed useless to have another organization in the city if the only thing it would do would be to create positive events focused on, say, the environment in order to balance that dominant image of Srebrenica in the news. For Ljeposava, there were enough organizations in the city already doing that, and she had co-founded and led one of them. To her, the value of this organization was not in its focus or ability to create positive stories from Srebrenica. Instead, it's value was that it could create power in numbers by being a vehicle through which peace loving residents in the city could voice their disapprobation of hate speech, especially by politicians, wherever it occurred. That is, Ljeposava was focused on creating a counterbalance to the politics problem in Srebrenica.

For Ioana, the organization, by producing positive stories from Srebrenica, had power in directing attention. Rather than directing it at ethnic identity and hateful events that focused on the identity split, the organization should ignore those and make their point that way. For that reason, the organization should focus on only those positive stories, which they were creating, amplifying them in the media and on social media. That is, Ioana was interested in eradicating ethnic identity in the news media as a way to resolve the problem in Srebrenica.

It so happened that, at a time when Ljeposava was away from the city, the organization had been trying to plan events for the rest of the summer. They were circulating emails about what events to plan and when. Meanwhile, Ljeposava, who was receiving these emails, was also reading the news reports coming from Srebrenica: the political situation was in near complete chaos, with directors of different agencies being replaced nearly daily, retributions exacted, and the mayor making statements denying genocide, and doing that by claiming he was speaking for the Serbian people, rather than for his elected position as leader of Srebrenica.

In reading the news reports and the email messages planning litter pickups and friendly races around the city rather than responding to that political situation the way she thought it should, she sent an email indicating her dissatisfaction with the lack of response. The organization was not living up to its mandate. For Ioana, the email from Ljeposava had also made an assumption about that mandate with which Ioana did not agree. The organization was to focus itself on the positive stories in the city. That brought this unresolved issue about what the organization stood for to a head.

From Ljeposava's perspective, silence in the face of hate speech had been a problem facing the city for so long. She understood that the silence of most people in these situations allowed politics to continue to be a problem and was precisely what had gone on so long and needed to change. In an effort to change that, she had become involved in this organization.

From Ioana's perspective, she felt Ljeposava was trying to exact some sort of revenge on the people whom she blamed for the problems facing Srebrenica today—politicians and people in the municipality, e.g. She understood this desire to reprimand the politicians for their hate speech and improper behavior as the same old focus on ethnic identity that had been employed

for years and had yielded no success. To her mind, the lesson should have been learned that one cannot continue to employ the same strategies and expect a different result. She was trying something new, but Ljeposava did not see that.

Having spoken with both of them, it would appear that they both were actually saying the same thing—that the organization needed a new strategy. Part of the misunderstanding was that Ioana misunderstood what Ljeposava had been doing in the past, and what her intentions and strategy were now. [In fact, Ljeposava was not trying to enact revenge.] In addition, Ioana was very certain that her strategy—not focusing on ethnic identity—would be a more effective method. However, Ljeposava was trying to show her that politics was the problem, namely the political use of ethnic identity. Silence in the face of that politics *had been* their strategy for so long, and in her mind, was precisely what had contributed to the situation being as bad as it was that particular day. It was hate unfettered, unopposed.

Neither Ljeposava nor Ioana was able to influence the other to change their minds about the proper mandate for the organization or the proper strategy to take in the city. Part of this was a matter of differences in level of knowledge about the city and its history since the end of the war. But it was also a matter of the two of them employing two very different perspectives on ethnic identity in the city. In terms of this study, Ljeposava's primary organizing concept for understanding Srebrenica's problems was politics, and Ioana's was ethnic identity. Ioana was trying to eradicate ethnic identity, as she explained to me in her interview. On the other hand, Ljeposava was employing the local understanding of it as a profound aspect of everyday life that, put to political use, could have catastrophic consequences. Creating a counter-voice to its political use was, for her, the only viable response if anyone ever expected anything to change.

They both wanted the same goal, but they couldn't cooperate because here again, they were so completely speaking past each other. Part of the inability to communicate was simply a difference in the knowledge sets they were using to inform their decisions and strategies in the city. But another part of the problem was the difference in the concepts they were using. For Ljeptosava, ethnic identity is an essential element of everyday life, and can be used in both helpful and harmful ways. Ioana's concept of ethnic identity recognized only that it was unfortunate and divisive. This had major consequences for their ability to communicate effectively to each other.

5.0 Chapter 5: Conclusion

I have tried to describe two different discourses on Srebrenica as two different forms of discursive power in order to understand power without assigning hierarchies to those systems of power. I have looked at two discourses about Srebrenica that routinely come into contact with each other, which has offered up the opportunity to study how people whose discourses differ attempt to influence others and sometimes even succeed at doing so.

By focusing on the objects, authorities, and concepts of both discourses, I have identified and described how the discourses are different and similar, and then looked at how local residents and international visitors use those objects, authorities, and concepts to try to influence each other. In this section, I analyze moments of success and failure at influencing others more broadly to draw some conclusions about the interplay between objects, authorities, and concepts, enabling some conclusions about both resistance and power.

5.1 Interplay Between Objects, Authorities, and Concepts

On authority, Marta had come into the city with programming that relied upon the local residents' understanding of the local situation. In that sense, Marta was an exception to the typical international visitor because the programming by its very nature presumed the local residents to be authorities on knowledge around Srebrenica. This was also one of only two

instances where local residents began to consider an international visitor to be an authority on the local situation.

At the same time, this was one of only a few occasions where the international visitor was able to effectively change the relationships between concepts of local residents (with the exception of Ana). Marta had dislodged the centrality of politics and its hold over the future of the city in a way that inspired a few of them to action. They readily admitted she'd changed their perspectives, and a few of them who otherwise would have felt powerless actually did go on to implement projects they perhaps otherwise wouldn't have pursued. This anecdote suggests the impact that granting authority to someone else can have on your own ability to influence them.

Nedim has put a lot of energy into trying to influence international visitors. I do not have an account of how successful he's been in influencing international visitors' understanding of why Srebrenica is an object of attention in the first place, though he indicated how often he has tried. He was successful, however, in influencing Lotte to see him as an authority, but it's important to note that in this situation, another international visitor had in the same moment he asserted himself to Lotte, reinforced deference to the local knowledge. It's hard to tell whether Lotte's reaction would have been different if that other visitor had not intervened.

But also recall that Nedim did not, and Lotte confirms this, give her a better understanding of the local concepts. Instead, he simply influenced her enough to show her that she was not an authority on the topic and that he was. Importantly, at the moment he became the authority, concepts were no longer important. It was *his* understanding of the concepts, and

his understanding of logical relationships between those concepts, in the Foucauldian sense, that now mattered, not hers.

Nedim had tried a similar strategy with that other organization from Italy but does not appear to have succeeded in changing their concepts. In particular, they were focused on awakening the people through inter-ethnic interaction, music, art, and other forms of culture. This was their way of attempting to help solve problems in Srebrenica, primarily by encouraging inter-ethnic connection.²¹ That he was not able to establish himself as an authority in their eyes perhaps limited his ability to influence the relationship they put to ethnic identity and the problems facing Srebrenica today.

For Ahmed, he had seen some success in influencing how Srebrenica became an object of attention for her. When she came to Srebrenica, Srebrenica was an object of attention because of its past, specifically the war. But in interaction with Ahmed, she began to pay attention to Srebrenica because of its present and her experiences in it at that time. Ahmed had done this intentionally, and from Greta's interview, it seems that he was successful.

In contrast, when Ahmed put his energy to influencing how Greta understood ethnic identity, he doesn't seem to have had the same success. While he did exercise influence over the project, it was proscribed to the project *output* itself, rather than to the mindset or image of Srebrenica that Greta held. In her second interview, she was still concerned that she hadn't understood 'both sides' and still felt that ethnic identity was important.

²¹ Worth noting, here and throughout all the stories I report here, is the presumption that interethnic interactions were lacking in the first place. While there are spaces in Srebrenica that are more clearly marked for one or the other group (e.g., religious institutions and a selection of cafes), the reality is more mixed interactions in daily life.

Importantly, I did not record any attempts by Ahmed to assert his authority about the local situation. In fact, Ahmed stated in his interview that he was intentionally trying not to influence the project too much. That he was not successful influencing the way she centralized ethnic identity could be related to that. He was limited by the *authority* she'd granted to him, probably by the fact that he was not an unbiased source of information, at least from Greta's perspective.

For Ivan, he had solely focused on influencing how Giorgia represented women in Srebrenica on the art installation. He wanted her to include two nations in the picture and felt that she had only included one. Giorgia, in contrast, had only included the one portrait, which to her represented 'every woman' rather than Muslim women. Ivan had not succeeded in changing the relationship Giorgia had with ethnic identity; she did not change the portrait to reflect his neutral understanding of ethnic identity in Srebrenica.

The interactions between Giorgia and Ivan were quite limited and focused mostly on just the drawings she shared with him. For that reason, I have no evidence to suggest that Ivan had even tried to influence how Srebrenica came to be important to Giorgia. He was suspicious of her, but he didn't seem to try to influence it. He also did not seem to try to assert himself to her as an authority. That suggests that a narrow focus on just the relationships others make between concepts limits the chances of actually influencing them at all.

Stefan had made a few attempts to change the way Fenna related the concept ethnic identity to Srebrenica and its past, in particular by demonstrating heterogeneity within groups and by trying to neutralize the moral valence Fenna put to the Serbian identity. Stefan's logic in trying to influence her was targeting those logical relationships she had between concepts. He

was trying to complicate her connection of Muslim to victim and Serb to aggressor, to show that there were victims and aggressors on both sides. He was also trying to show that, as a young person, specifically a Serbian one, he should not have to answer for the Muslim victims and should receive recognition as a victim for the losses he'd personally suffered.

But his strategy for influencing her struggled to break the connections she had already made between concepts. Firstly, the relationships she'd had was that Muslims were in the first place victims. She also seemed to place accountability for that on the Serbian side of the fighting. Stefan disagrees with both statements. So he was trying to complicate that picture by showing both victims and aggressors on both sides, and situating himself as an authority on the topic.

But, Fenna had been to Srebrenica on several occasions before meeting Stefan, and she had lived in the former Yugoslavia for many years. For that reason, she seemed to see herself as an authority on Srebrenica and ethnic relations in the region. She did not see Stefan as an authority, and he actually recognized that himself and told me so in his interview. He sarcastically remarked that he hasn't written a book about it, so his testimony can't be trusted. In order for her to have listened and changed her concepts, he would have needed to position himself as an authority. Without having done so, he was not able to influence either the concepts or the authority she'd brought with her to Srebrenica. Once more, a focus on changing just the concepts, but not asserting oneself successfully as an authority, seems to have limited the success of Stefan's discursive strategy.

Neither Ljeposava nor Ioana was able to influence the other to change their minds about the proper strategy to take in solving problems in the city. Where Ljeposava focused on

counterbalancing what she saw as the problem—political use of ethnic identity, Ioana had focused on eliminating the prominence of what she saw as the problem—ethnic identity itself. They were employing two very different moral evaluations of it. Ioana explained in her second interview that she was intentionally ignoring it, as a matter of trying to eliminate it. On the other hand, Ljeposava understands it as a profound aspect of everyday life that, put to political use, could have catastrophic consequences. Creating a counter-voice to its employment was, for her, the only viable response if anyone ever expected anything to change.

They both wanted the same goal, but they couldn't cooperate because here again, they were so completely speaking past each other. Importantly, neither seemed to have tried to influence the authority they gave to each other, and neither of them particularly seemed to grant the other any sort of authority in any case. Part of the inability to communicate was simply a difference in the knowledge sets they were using to inform their decisions and strategies in the city. On this point, neither one could influence the other because, from a Foucauldian perspective, they disagreed on who could be an authority in this space.

To summarize, my data shows successful and unsuccessful attempts by both local residents and international visitors to change the objects, authorities, and concepts associated with others' discourses. In looking across objects, authorities, and concepts, a few conclusions are evident. First, it is clearly possible to influence another's objects, authorities, and concepts. But second, success seems to come more easily to those who have established themselves as an authority in the other's discourse. Third, influencing concepts seems to be the easiest, but rarely enough when attempted alone.

5.2 Important Contextual Factors

In isolating focus on objects, authorities, and concepts, I have intentionally scoped out some contextual factors, but because those factors also seem to be influential, I want to briefly highlight them here. In analyzing these and other instances of changed perspectives from my data, a few situational themes emerged that may be important factors in helping or hindering success in influencing others.

On more than a few occasions, international visitors and local residents vocalized how much time they'd spent with each other or in the city. The sample of international visitors included those who had spent as few as several days in the town to those who had lived in Bosnia for more than eight years. For the majority of those who admitted that their perspective on Srebrenica had changed in their time in the city, they identified the length of their experience as an important factor.

Even so, there were a few instances where length of time didn't matter. For example, Greta had only been in country for a few days, but Ahmed had managed to influence her. In contrast, Fenna and Ioana had both been in the city and in the region more extensively but had been unaffected by attempts by local residents to influence their thinking. So while in some cases, it does seem important, in others, it seems that other factors were also at play.

Another major theme that came out in so much of my data was the notion of friendship being important. Many of the local residents and international visitors who admitted that their respective others had influenced their thinking identified friendship as a contributing factor to that influence.

Importantly, where attempts at influence had not worked, friendship seems to have been absent. Fenna reported that she had built friendships with local residents, but Stefan, though he indicated he enjoyed hanging out with her, did not characterize their relationship as friendship. Ljeposava also indicated a general human affection for Ioana, but friendship was not a characteristic of that relationship either. The same was true for Giorgia and Ivan. Based on this data, friendship seems to be a highly influential factor; where it was mutually recognized, the attempts to influence the other were successful; where friendship was not recognized, the attempts were not successful.

Another aspect of those who were influenced by their counterpart in conversation was the degree of humility or conscientiousness they had. Lotte struck me as an extremely introspective, conscientious, and reflective person. She shared with me her concern that she didn't have a place in Srebrenica, because she didn't really think that she had anything to offer. She often wondered what she could possibly do to help anyone in Srebrenica.

Others who reported in interviews with me that they had changed perspectives, but with whom I did not have the benefit of observing their early interactions with local residents, shared this same characteristic. One international visitor reported to me that his perspective changed drastically; he felt that many international visitors, including himself, come to Srebrenica thinking of themselves as experts of some sort. For him, he realized that the Dutch people have a lot to learn from the people of Srebrenica. A local resident described him to me as the definition of what it means to be human, in the most progressive sense.

This personal characteristic, when glaringly apparent to others, seems to have been an important factor. However, I do not have the benefit of identifying contrary cases; it would be

difficult to comment on the humility of others who didn't seem to be influenced by their respective others.

Another seemingly influential aspect of these interactions was the extent to which the goals of the residents and visitors aligned. In some cases, goal alignment was the product of successful influence (for example, in the case of Lotte and Nedim); in other cases, it seemed to be a catalyst for successful influence (Marta and the local youth). Finally, the more alignment between goals, it seemed there were fewer attempts to influence the other.

Lotte and Nedim's goals were aligned, but in that case it seemed to be a product of the influence that Nedim ultimately had over Lotte in terms of her recognizing him as an authority. When she began to see him as an authority on the local, the goals they shared were aligned such that Nedim was leading her through the local situation to an end he felt was appropriate for the city. In this case, goal alignment was an outcome variable.

The alignment between what Ahmed and Greta wanted also seemed to be an outcome of the influence one had exerted over the other. Ahmed also talks about this in a way. He says it was really a great experience for him because they had come to do this project they wanted to do, but they also participated in a lot of his project's activities. Their goals and projects aligned nicely, so he was really pleased with it.

For Marta and the local youth, their goals were aligned—empowering the local youth to become successful entrepreneurs. Even though there was disagreement at the beginning of the week over what was possible in Srebrenica, and those first few days were marked by a lot of discounting of the visitors' ideas by the local residents, ultimately, Marta was able to influence them, and her goals were aligned with theirs all week long.

Not just a few of the participants mentioned listening as an important aspect of their interactions. On the local side, Nedim reports that he thinks it is partially because Lotte listened that she was able to understand what's really going on in Srebrenica. He contrasted them with the Italian group, who, he says, didn't seem to be listening. From the international visitor side, for those who recognized a change in their own perspective of Srebrenica, a few of them mentioned in particular that they tried really hard to listen. It was a conscious decision they'd made.

In contrast, during a meeting that included Ioana and Ljeposava, Ljeposava was talking about her perspective about a few things that were related to the email conversation and the direction of the organization mentioned above. She was speaking in the local language, which Ioana doesn't understand. Even so, Ioana reported that she left the meeting because she could tell from Ljeposava's body language that it wasn't good. So she stopped listening. For this contextual factor we see again that when it was present, influence was possible. When it wasn't, influence was not possible.

Finally, probably the most important aspect of these interactions, especially those in which a local resident influenced international visitors, was the voice of another international visitor. In the case of Lotte and Nedim, Nedim reported that he had voiced his concerns about the plans that the Italian organization had presented, and that Lotte was present for that meeting. However, another international visitor followed on with a question to the group of international visitors as to why the plans hadn't included the voices of the local residents. It was half an hour later that Lotte approached Nedim to talk about that, and her language in her

interview with me reflected that change in perspective. She indicated that she had put the authority for the project in the local residents' hands.

Others international visitors I interviewed also mentioned that speaking with international visitors from their organizations helped them change their understanding of Srebrenica. I can also report several occasions where international visitors sought out conversations with me during and after their visits to gather my thoughts and opinions on the local context. In all cases, I granted the request for that conversation after I conducted the final interview with the international visitor. In a few of them, it seemed their perspectives were influenced by my observations.

But not in every case. Fenna stands out as an example. In addition, the Italian organization Nedim describes was in the same room when the international visitor challenged the plans that had been developed without input from the local residents. That was the same conversation that had been so influential on Lotte. But it seems it was not influential on them. So, the influence international visitors have is limited.

It appears from this analysis that, while individuals can sometimes influence what objects get attention, and what relationships concepts have with each other, the most difficult thing to change in order to influence someone else's image of Srebrenica is to change the authorities that person acknowledges. It is also the most powerful way of influencing others. I only documented this kind of success in two cases I studied. And in those cases, the people had also developed a friendship with their counterparts, were humble, had spent a good amount of time with the local resident, and had themselves been influenced by another international visitor.

5.3 Implications

To heed Abu-Lughod's (1990) advice, I want to say a few more things about power here and what this study of power tells us about it. Based on this analysis, there are a few things that are important. First, Abu-Lughod and others have argued that different power influences people differently, at different locations, and at different times. This is a critical element of the methodology I use here. I take the assumption that this is in fact true and examine the discursive formations that inform the images local residents and international visitors have of Srebrenica. That is, different discursive power has influenced both of these groups. Using the methods and questions Foucault asks in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, I was able to identify what those images look like and compare them one to the other. The critical first step though is the presumption that the discursive power, or the set of rules that produced their perception of Srebrenica, is different.

It is precisely this difference that enables them to influence one another. In the debate in the literature on power, there is a preoccupation with the inefficiencies of power in producing its subjects. In that debate, it is that inefficiency that leads to the possibility of resistance. This study contradicts that logic.

Instead, I have found that discursive power has formed perspectives on Srebrenica that are different. It is unimportant whether that power was efficient or flawed in creating its subjects. When those different discourses meet, as I have documented in this study, the opportunity for resistance emerges. But resistance is *not* separate from discursive power. In the most Foucauldian sense, discursive resistance *is* discursive power. Resistance is power; it is the

use of one's own discursive formation (i.e., one's own power) to influence the discursive formation of another.

Second, by using a structured analysis of both of these discourses on Srebrenica, I enable a detailed comparison of the way that power works most effectively and where its softer, more malleable parts are. For example, based on this analysis, it appears that changing another's objects is a relatively simple and effective measure to influence someone else's perspective. More difficult is adding concepts to change the picture a person has of Srebrenica with meaning behind it. But changing the relationships one already sees between their concepts is even more difficult than that. It requires the work of decoupling concepts, such as ethnic identity being a primary organizing device, and then providing a replacement concept, which also requires mental and emotional labor. All of these are rendered even more difficult if one is not successful at establishing oneself as an authority in the eyes of the other.

And my data show that there are a few contextual factors that are important in determining when that can be successful. Some are related to the person who is doing the influencing—that they are friends with their other, or that they have spent enough time with their other, for example. But some are related to the person who is being influenced, and that can be incredibly difficult to control in a productive way—that person's humility or their acceptance of friendship, for example.

Third, to the extent this methodology is fruitful in enabling a more detailed analysis of power, it also promises the possibility of a more strategic use of power. Knowing which aspects of power are more malleable, and what situational characteristics are important, one might

more thoughtfully deploy discursive power to influence others. One can imagine the strategic use of allyship, as an example.

Finally, by detailing the objects, authorities, and concepts, one can, in my mind, more concretely understand what power is, and how it can change from one situation to the next. Take Foucault's notion of 'dispersion' as an example. Understanding how many people endorse a particular perspective on Srebrenica can be rendered clearer when one knows the balance of people who share objects, authorities, and concepts.

For example, the international perspective on Srebrenica is marked by all the objects, authorities, and concepts I've described up to now. To the extent that international visitors endorse those objects, authorities, and concepts, the power of the discourse is *dispersed*. On the local resident side, I also describe the same elements of their perspective on Srebrenica. The extent to which marginalized local residents endorse that image is the extent to which their discursive power is dispersed.

But when we look at the way the one discourse on Srebrenica interacts with the other in specific micro-interactions, which I have done in this study, we can see that dispersion is only one aspect of power that does little to help us understand who in a given situation is more or less discursively powerful. Important to the equation is also the *ratio* of adherents to one perspective versus the ratio of adherents to the other in a given space at a given time.

In Srebrenica, while international visitors often come to the city, in that space, their authority is not typically granted acknowledgement by the larger community in Srebrenica, marginalized or otherwise. Also in Srebrenica, the authority granted to the local, unaffiliated group of residents who endorse this particular image of Srebrenica is also not typically granted

acknowledgement in the municipal and religious centers of the town. But international visitors, to whom those power relationships within the city are usually invisible, grant at least some authority to these local residents, at least some of the time.

That is, the dispersion of people who endorse the objects, authorities, and concepts common to a field of power signals something of the potential strength a particular discursive formation *could* have, but the actual strength seems to be more dependent on the density of those people in a given space at a give time. Also important to consider is the balance of people common to a field of power who hold access to material and social resources, such as institutions of government.

This inspires a host of questions about power and ‘resistance.’ Is resistance really just a question of the use of discursive power to influence others who are subjects of different ‘fields of power’? This study would suggest so. Can we understand power by examining not the set of rules (the discursive formations themselves), but instead the components of those formations (objects, authorities, and concepts)? Again, this study suggests that this methodology is promising, and probably less intense of an exercise than studying the emergence of the discursive formation itself, which is what Foucault often did. Finally, does this approach help us formulate better strategies to influence others? These results suggest where discourses are most malleable and helps us understand that the dispersion of a discourse, and the ratio of those who endorse them in micro-situations, can help us bend the use of discursive power in favor of justice and equality.

If so, I think this methodology has implications for many difficult relationships in society. To get at them, one must isolate and examine the objects, authorities, and concepts of

each perspective. That is an extreme act of empathy, one which requires understanding people with whom we disagree, to understand how they make sense of their world. It also demands that we understand the objects, authorities, and concepts we personally endorse.

That has implications for all kinds of sociological questions. Imagine an analysis that identifies, for example, the differences in the objects, authorities, and concepts endorsed by, say, white women and women of color. How far could we go in understanding, naming, and then changing these otherwise seemingly impossible questions about gender and race?

The other promise of this study is the ability to more concretely prove the impact that language has on the way we see the world around us. In that case, it becomes easier to name the effect power has on it, see how others think differently in very concrete terms, and then select strategies that seem to be more effective historically. This study shows, for example, that creating new objects of attention is easier than dismissing old ones, that creating new relationships between concepts is easier if they are not contradictory to old ones, and that being acknowledged as an authority is very difficult to do but yields powerful results in influencing others. So we have some direction as to what levers are harder and easier to pull for effective change, but also what impact those levers can expect to have in the longer term. That's useful information, not only for pursuing this research further, but also for living an ethical life.

Appendix A: List of Interviews and Participant Observations Completed

Attributed Age Group	Attributed Gender	Profession	Local Resident/ International Visitor	Number of Interviews Completed	Participant Observation Completed
18 - 35	M	Student	Local	1	1
18 - 35	F	Factory worker	Local	1	1
18 - 35	M	Tour guide/Entrepreneur	Local	1	1
18 - 35	F	Student	Local	1	1
18 - 35	M	NGO employee	Local	1	1
18 - 35	F	Private citizen	Local	1	1
18 - 35	M	Farming/Subsistence	Local	1	1
18 - 35	F	Mother	Local	1	1
35 - 55	M	Musician	Local	1	1
55+	F	NGO employee	Local	1	1
18 - 35	F	Entrepreneur	Local	2	1
18 - 35	M	INGO employee	Local	1	1
18 - 35	F	Medicine	Local	1	1
18 - 35	F	Student	Local	1	1
18 - 35	M	Musician	Local	1	1
18 - 35	M	Translator	Local	1	1
18 - 35	M	Musician	Local	1	1
18 - 35	M	Carpenter	Local	1	1
18 - 35	F	Student	Local	1	1
18 - 35	M	Student/NGO employee	Local	1	1
18 - 35	F	Student	Local	1	1
18 - 35	M	Journalist	Local	1	1
18 - 35	M	Carpenter	Local	1	1
18 - 35	F	NGO employee	Local	1	1
35 - 55	F	NGO employee	Local	1	1
35 - 55	M	Bureaucrat	Local	1	1
35 - 55	M	Journalist	Local	1	1
35 - 55	M	Bureaucrat	Local	1	1
35 - 55	M	Politician	Local	1	1
35 - 55	F	Researcher	International	2	1
18 - 35	F	Non-profit/ Peacebuilding	International	2	1
18 - 35	F	Non-profit/Academic	International	2	1

55+	F	Philanthropist	International	2	0
18 - 35	F	Student	International	2	0
18 - 35	M	Filmmaker	International	1	0
18 - 35	M	INGO/Peacebuilding	International	1	0
18 - 35	M	INGO/Peacebuilding	International	2	1
18 - 35	M	INGO/Peacebuilding	International	2	1
35 - 55	F	Journalist	International	2	1
35 - 55	F	NGO/Peacebuilding	International	2	1
35 - 55	M	Private/Entrepreneur	International	2	1
35 - 55	M	Private/Entrepreneur	International	2	1
35 - 55	F	INGO/Peacebuilding	International	2	1
55+	M	INGO/Peacebuilding	International	2	1
35 - 55	F	Journalist	International	2	1
18 - 35	M	Private business	International	2	1
18 - 35	M	Private business	International	2	1
35 - 55	M	Professor/Tourist	International	2	1
18 - 35	F	INGO/Peacebuilding	International	2	1
35 - 55	M	INGO/Peacebuilding	International	2	1
18 - 35	F	Private/Tourist	International	2	1
18 - 35	M	Student	International	2	1
18 - 35	F	Architect/Tourist	International	2	1
18 - 35	M	Graphic Designer	International	2	1
18 - 35	M	Graphic Designer	International	2	1
18 - 35	F	Artist	International	2	1
18 - 35	M	NGO/Peacebuilding	International	1	0
18 - 35	M	NGO/Peacebuilding	International	1	0
18 - 35	M	NGO/Peacebuilding	International	1	0
18 - 35	M	NGO/Peacebuilding	International	1	0
18 - 35	F	Student	International	2	1
18 - 35	M	INGO	International	2	1
55+	M	Filmmaker	International	2	1

Appendix B: Interview Questionnaires

First Interview Questionnaire – International Visitor

What do you think is interesting about Srebrenica today?

Is identity an influential factor in your work? If so, how is identity related to your topic of interest and work?

Does your method for achieving your objectives change based upon the local resident's ethnic identity? If so, why and how? If not, why not?

How important do you think ethnic identity is to the people whom you are interviewing? In what ways do you think it is important?

Second Interview Questionnaire – International Visitor

Did you feel engaged in the interactions? If so, why?

Did you feel as if you understood the resident? Did she or he understand you? If not, why not?

Did you feel that the local resident provided you with a better way of understanding their daily life? If so, in what way? What was the misunderstanding?

Do you think residents were trying to get across a particular point of view with regards to their daily life? How did this interaction shape your understanding of their everyday circumstances? If your point of view changed, what is different? Does this additional information affect the way you will approach your work going forward? Why or why not?

Interview Questionnaire – Local Resident

What do you think is interesting about Srebrenica today?

How well did you understand the questions the visitor asked you? What is your understanding of the work they are doing in Srebrenica?

How comfortable did you feel with the questions and statements made by the visitor?

Did you feel engaged during the interaction? Would you have done anything differently? What was the most meaningful part of your interaction with the visitor?

How well did you feel understood during the interaction?

Did you feel you needed to correct the way the international visitor understood you or your life? If so, how did you correct it?

Did your feelings change throughout the interaction? If so, how?

How free did you feel to speak your thoughts and opinions?

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