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Nikola Tucakov

The Machinery of Celebration

Mapping the Ceremonial Apparatus of Republika Srpska

ERMA, European Regional Master's Programme in
Democracy and Human Rights in South East Europe

NIKOLA TUČAKOV

THE MACHINERY OF CELEBRATION
MAPPING THE CEREMONIAL APPARATUS OF REPUBLIKA
SRPSKA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the possibilities of understanding the political function and arrangement of state holidays and their associated celebrations in Republika Srpska using the concept of the ceremonial apparatus. This concept, adapted from Michel Foucault's *dispositif*, attempts to explain the most important constituent elements necessary to conduct these ceremonies as a part of the larger political project of nationalism on part of the administrations of Republika Srpska. Adopting a constructivist approach towards nationality in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a competitive approach in regards to the nationalist projects within its internal entities, the apparatus is used as a means of uncovering the hidden, omitted or overlooked, but nonetheless crucial aspects of state ceremonies, such as legal regimes, institutional networks and financial resources, that make them so integral to the continued functioning of an ethnicised political order. While going beyond the most visible performative and rhetorical aspects, this research nonetheless also considers them as part of the overarching structure of the ceremonial apparatus. The thesis therefore divides the provisional structure of the ceremonial apparatus into the legal, economic and performative elements, as well as the element of social construction of time, paying great attention to the specific traits of national state ceremonies within the context of Republika Srpska.

Key words: ceremonial apparatus, Republika Srpska, Day of Republika Srpska, national holidays, Serbian nationalism, national ceremonies

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
D1	The Day of Republika Srpska
D2	The Day of the Signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina
D3	The Day of Serb Unity, Freedom and National Flag
KPJ	Communist Party of Yugoslavia (Komunistička partija Jugoslavije)
MUP	Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republika Srpska (Ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova)
RTRS	Radio Television of Republika Srpska (Radio-televizija Republike Srpske)
SNSD	Alliance of Independent Social-Democrats (Savez nezavisnih socijal-demokrata)
SPC	Serbian Orthodox Church (Srpska pravoslavna crkva)
VRS	Army of Republika Srpska (Vojska Republike Srpske)

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INTRODUCTION

State sponsored ceremonies surrounding nationhood are just as inevitable a part of everyday life in a nation state as they are of nationalism studies and the many fields that touch upon themes of contemporary nationhood. From ostentatious parades to the laying of wreaths to the changing of street names, the ways in which administrations of nation states have chosen to conduct these practices of national symbolism have attracted the attention of scholars from a diverse range of theoretical approaches, each revealing much of their positions on the nature of nationalism in general through their work on the subject. Whether with discourse analysis, art criticism, linguistics, political theory or political economy, the multi-dimensional nature of the subject has allowed different disciplines to place varying levels of emphasis on particular aspects of national ceremonies.

Recognising the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach for achieving anything approaching a comprehensive explanation of this phenomenon, this work nonetheless also opts to situate itself within a specific set of theoretical framework. All of these frameworks may be, rather vaguely, subsumed under the field *nationalism studies*, itself a notoriously variegated interdisciplinary project. The bulk of the approach used here owes much to the sociological currents of structuralist social theory and social constructionism, opting for a decidedly materialist approach in analysing the structures and the social conventions they (re)produce by looking at tangible practices, resources and institutions employed. Notably, this work also aims to incorporate key insights developed in the field of memory studies, as a field keenly interested in researching commemorative ceremonies and the social organisation of time.

Within Republika Srpska, the only of Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) two constituent entities to be clearly identified with a single ethno-national group, both in terms of census data and its very name, the political practice of Serbian nationalism by its political leaderships makes considerable use of state holidays and their associated ceremonies both in its internal politics and the wider nationally-coded political system of the country. The very existence of one of its regularly observed holidays and the ceremonies associated with it, not by coincidence its 'national day', has become a regular point of political contention and been associated with the tenuous status of the entity within the BiH political system. The objective of this research is to investigate this use of state ceremonies

around official holidays in Republika Srpska as part of a network of institutions, actors, practices and legal structures termed the *ceremonial apparatus*, and the role of the same in the continual reproduction of formal nationalism within this political entity. The main research questions are therefore outlined as follows: What elements, beside the most visible acts (but including them) are necessary for carrying out state ceremonies around official holidays in Republika Srpska? What insights about the functioning of official nationalism in Republika Srpska can be gained by viewing these elements as an apparatus in the Foucaultian sense? What are the special considerations for this apparatus in the context of political competition within Republika Srpska in particular and BiH in general?

In order to answer the abovementioned questions, in Chapter 1 I introduce the foundational concepts of the apparatus as such, and of the ceremonial apparatus in particular. The working understanding of nations is also elaborated on, situating the research within the nationalist studies paradigm. Finally, the concept of social time, crucial for the understanding of national calendars is introduced. In Chapter 2, I provide the necessary contextualisation for the functioning of the ceremonial apparatus within Republika Srpska, taking note of the three most salient characteristics: the national dimension, the competitive dimension, as well as the political position of an intra-state entity that allows for its provisional treatment as a state within the present framework. In Chapter 3, the actual elements of the ceremonial apparatus are laid out, exposing its multifaceted structure and methods of functioning for the purposes of Serbian nationalism as a political, state practice. In the conclusion, I summarise my findings and map out the possible implications for future explorations of the central concept, as well as note some potential limitations of the present analysis.

METHODOLOGY

The substance of the research is centred on conceptually mapping out the ceremonial apparatus from the aforementioned theoretical premises and empirical data about particular ceremonies, the latter being derived from a series of publicly available sources, such as legal frameworks, budget reports, official statements, involved institutions, as well as the more striking elements of the ceremonies themselves, such as speeches, iconography, landmarks and enlisted participants. Temporally, the data is limited to the ceremonies occurring in the period of 2012–22. Within the holiday calendar of Republika

Srpska, three holidays have been selected for their uniqueness to the political entity and their significance for the dominant nationalist political project within it: The Day of Republika Srpska (D1), The Day of the Signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (D2) and The Day of Serb Unity, Freedom and National Flag (D3).

In terms of research methods, the data used to back up the theoretical proposals largely comes from content and discourse analyses, in public documents or publicly available media, such as broadcasts of performed public ceremonies. In the cases of the legal elements, the legal frameworks necessary for the functioning of the ceremonial apparatus are examined for their role in laying its functional, institutional foundations. In the case of the economic element, the annual government budget reports are examined and compared to track the expenses associated with maintaining the ceremonial apparatus throughout the stated period and gain insight about its economic scope in the context of overall yearly expenditures. The national calendar, the ceremonial apparatus' temporal framework, is explored as a form of social organisation of time with its associated implications on how such an organisation lends itself to a nationalist political practice.

The performative element, by far the most elaborate section, is composed of several descriptive, qualitative analyses of the actual conduct of ceremonies and the ways in which they present the culmination of an elaborate state apparatus in service of a particular national project. In particular, discourse analysis is applied to utilised political rhetoric, building off already present forays into the specific context of Republika Srpska using the method. This section also makes note of the principal actors involved in these ceremonies, framed as occupants of specific roles in state structures even as the same individuals continue to hold these posts, emphasising the need for a depersonalised view of the necessary performances within a ceremonial apparatus integral to a wider nationally coded political order.

1.

CONCEPTUALISING THE APPARATUS

Although set within the (very broad) field of nationalism studies and its budding interest in examining rituals and ceremonies of nation states, this research is an example of the requirements of a multidisciplinary approach when tackling such a variegated social phenomenon. To that end, a significant amount of the insights that the research is built on comes from the (rather interdisciplinary itself) field of memory studies, particularly in regards to scholarship surrounding state commemorations and the social organisation of time. Furthermore, the central concept of the *apparatus*, as first developed by Foucault, originates in critical social theory, which also supplies the methods for discourse analysis that are utilised in approaching more overt elements such as speeches and announcements by state officials and institutions.

With nationalism studies, the research builds on several important theoretical insights. Firstly, national belonging is not approached as either fixed or *fixable* on concrete innate traits or as a once-acquired immutable *identity*. Owing to Benedict Anderson's constructivist approach exemplified in the phrase of 'imagined communities'¹ and Rogers Brubaker's critique of the academic use of 'identities',² national grouping is viewed as a continual and necessarily repetitive political practice, without grounding in a particular 'essence', ethnic or otherwise, and not necessarily reflected in one's self-understanding. Secondly, the theoretical model developed by John Hearn on viewing national ceremonies as a form of political competition is central to

¹ Benedict R O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (rev edn, Verso 2006).

² Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Harvard UP 2004).

the analysis of the design, impact and confrontational character of the observed ceremonies in the political system of both Republika Srpska and BiH as a whole.

Proper conceptualisation, thus, must begin with an outline of the working use of the *apparatus*. Expanding onwards, it is necessary to provide a more detailed explanation of the kind of framing for nationalism, informed primarily by Anderson and Brubaker, which allows for an analytically productive synthesis with the Foucaultian concept. Having established those two points of departure, I show how the structure of the apparatus and the particular practice of nationalism come together in framing social time, without which holidays and their associated ceremonies would have no temporal grounding. Going further, social time also conditions the everyday basic temporal orientations of community members, becoming a key part of their understanding of the world. Lastly, I conclude the chapter with a proposed mapping of what an analysis in which these three premises come together will entail, effectively establishing a provisional map for the new concept of the ceremonial apparatus.

1.1. WHAT IS AN APPARATUS?

The theoretical development of the ceremonial apparatus, the central concept of this research, necessitates a clear elaboration of its foundations. Broadly, the concept rests on the apparatus or *dispositif* as first introduced by Michel Foucault. In 1977, Foucault outlined the concept as:

a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements.³

Foucault, crucially, identified the apparatus as ‘a formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding

³ Michel Foucault, ‘The Confession of the Flesh’ in Colin Gordon (ed), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972 - 1977* (Pantheon Books 1980).

to an urgent *need*' and as having 'a dominant strategic function'.⁴ It is precisely these two parts of the apparatus that are of immediate interest for this research: the variegation and interrelation of its constitutive elements and the dominant strategic function. The state, uniquely equipped to devise apparatuses and utilise their strategic functions, likewise recognised as such by Foucault more or less explicitly, is also to be viewed as the architect of what is here meant by the ceremonial apparatus. By no means, however, is this to insist on the state and state structures as both the source and the exclusive site of the mechanisms of such an apparatus – the impossibility of their confinement to ministries and public broadcasting services is immediately plain. However, the primary task of this undertaking is firstly to identify the constituent elements and the dominant strategic function, opening up the way for future examinations of the actual impacts on social reality and its 'successfulness'. I will further elaborate on the key theoretical underpinnings of its application in this study, arguing for the analytic relevance of such a concept in explaining an important facet of the functioning of the contemporary nation state.

Within memory studies, the 'work' easily associated with the apparatus has been used to describe 'memory regimes', as particular discourses, in particular times and places, which shape and influence memory and are constitutive of wider social power relations.⁵ When viewed on a nation state level, the formation of these regimes may be traced across stakeholders, institutions and resources needed to impose 'proper' forms of social memory, including what is remembered, but also in which way it is remembered and who it is that does the work of remembering. While this mnemonic, commemorative aspect is inseparable from many holidays and their ceremonies within the state, it is important to note that nationally framed 'memory work'⁶ is merely a facet of the functioning of the ceremonies.

National holiday ceremonies, which inevitably involve an element of harking back to an imagined collective past in the construction of collective memory, are nonetheless replete with elements that serve no immediate mnemonic function, but which are, both in their genealogy

⁴ Foucault (n 3) (emphasis added).

⁵ Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin, *Regimes of Memory* (Routledge 2003) 2.

⁶ John R Gillis (ed), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton UP 1994) 3.

and function, essential parts of said ceremonies. A squad of marching soldiers in full tactical gear, a song composed less than two decades hence, the decision to implement a non-working day – all of these have their own institutional backgrounds and political utilities that do not communicate immediate significance for the kind of memories that are used in collective commemoration. Thus, the ceremonial apparatus is required to grasp the full breadth of these elements, working to incorporate the insights of memory studies but also going beyond them.

At least as much as ceremonies, national holidays also function far beyond the dimensions of the purely ‘ideological’ or rhetorical, themselves requiring an institutional network to be administered, and providing a temporal framework for the ceremonies to occur. Therefore, a thorough examination of the functioning of the apparatus cannot be separated from a reflexion of its temporal contextualisation.

1.2. THE APPARATUS AND SOCIAL TIME

A key element of the ceremonial apparatus is its attachment to a specific, national ordering of time, manifested in the national calendar of holidays. As Eviatar Zerubavel⁷ notes, the institutionalisation of holidays helps establish a cycle of remembrance designed to ensure the marking of ‘sacred’ moments from the collective past, playing a critical role in ‘mnemonic socialization’, that is, socialisation into a particular community of memory, most often identified with the nation itself. It is the formation of national calendars that plays a decisive role in regulating the social organisation of time, not merely because revealing the underlying social logic behind what is elevated and deemed ‘sacred’, but also what is discarded as a point of recurring remembrance. Particularly in post-conflict and transitional societies, the adoption of new holidays and the removal of old ones serves to establish a mnemonic community along new lines, in effect being a major feature of the project of group making as previously outlined. As Zerubavel notes, the cyclical nature of the calendar which allows it to be extended into perpetuity means that even very recent political developments such as the seizure of power by a particular government may be introduced into the calendar to preserve their memory forever.⁸

⁷ Eviatar Zerubavel, ‘Calendars and History: A Comparative Study of the Social Organization of National Memory’ in Jeffrey K Olick (ed), *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Duke UP 2003) 315-37.

⁸ *ibid* 317.

Unlike in many more ‘nationally homogeneous’ polities, however, the administration of social time in BiH does not occur in a process of a single government structuring the calendar for a single political community. Using the already introduced term of ‘memory regimes’, Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik have sought to apply it to the context of post-communist countries [sic], developing a typology of memory regimes and ‘mnemonic actors’ which operate within them.⁹ Using this typology, BiH may be described as a particularly fractured memory regime, that is, one with at least one actor actively engaged in a sharp discursive division between ‘us’ and ‘them’, between the ‘true’ and ‘false’ versions of the past.¹⁰

Mnemonic struggles which dominate this fractured mnemonic regime can be observed, not only in the conflicts of official ‘mnemonic warriors’ between BiH’s two entities, but also on the level of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), where these struggles take the form of conflicts between the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs of Bosniaks on one side and Croats on the other. This lack of a central authority organising social time, also reflected in the official calendars, indicates both contestation and disassociation – the mnemonic warriors of Republika Srpska, while maintaining the exclusive veracity of their histories, do not often seek to dominate the mnemonic landscape of the entire country. Instead, unlikely to value a high degree of association with BiH itself, their primary concern is their domination within their own entity and the non-interference of the state-level or federal actors in the functioning of their regime.

While the production of knowledge and the power relations therein are concepts customarily used to reflect the advancement of contemporary capitalism in Foucault’s work,¹¹ their impact on the power relations in a political order that takes national belonging as its fundamental characteristic has been somewhat neglected. The analytical use of the apparatus, a machine for knowledge production *par excellence*, therefore, requires the introduction of a cogent understanding of the development of nationhood to be successfully applied within the present context.

⁹ Jan Kubik and Michael Bernhard, ‘A Theory of the Politics of Memory’ in Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik (eds), *Twenty Years After Communism* (OUP 2014) 7-34.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Michel Foucault and Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader* (1st edn, Pantheon Books 1984) 17-18.

1.3. ETHNICITIES, NATIONS OR GROUPS?

Following Brubaker,¹² it is important that *ethnic* and *national* are primarily understood as empirical terms of ethnopolitical practice, not as terms of social analysis. That is, the fact that we encounter certain groupings – in this case rendered in ethnic or national terms – as the basis of political organising and established forms of political practice, they ought not to be confused with ‘substantial things-in-the-world’¹³ or identified with universal, ‘natural’ or inevitable facts of social life. One of Brubaker’s main theoretical contributions which this work is based on is precisely the emphasis on analysing the processes and circumstances of politically powerful ‘groupings’, rather than assuming or trying to define a supposed underlying coherent substance.

To this end, Brubaker recommends the differentiation between ‘categories’ and ‘groups’, where the former represent merely a *potential* basis for group-formation and require successful political projects, as carried out by various actors, in order to become the latter as widely recognised and politically effective bases for political practice.¹⁴ In the given context, identifying oneself as a Serb to a census taker, professing belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC) or speaking a particular variant of Serbo-Croatian may all be seen as *categories*, (themselves also having their own fraught histories of creation, construction, imposition and recognition), while uniting and developing all these into a powerful and lasting concept of Serbian ‘nationhood’ or ‘ethnicity’ (as used in everyday parlance) as a *group*, membership in which may become the most important political affiliation, required active and deliberative group making projects by identifiable ethnopolitical entrepreneurs.

These ethnopolitical entrepreneurs may be identified as politicians and state employees, artists and historians, all of whom have had their role to play in the process of group making. Crucially, however, the concept of the apparatus requires them to not be seen as ideally independent actors with their individual acts, such as speeches, books, songs or administrative decisions, but as collaborators in a wider structure that allows for and enforces these acts, ultimately in order to ensure the continued reproduction of a particular, national political order. The

¹² Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (n 2) 10.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid* 12.

connection between Brubakerian constructivism and Foucault's concept of the apparatus is also productive in that both approaches reject the essentialism present in some streams of scholarship of nationalism, while exploring the roles of concrete, stratified social practice in constituting the 'national' worldview – in the state's enforcing of 'the nation' as a fundamental principle, we may see both Brubaker's strategies of 'group making' and Foucault's 'production of knowledge'.

1.4. LAYING OUT THE APPARATUS

Having established the key theoretical premises of the ceremonial apparatus of Republika Srpska, what proceeds is an overview of its key features that will be explored in greater detail and underscored by empirical findings. This list of elements is by no means exhaustive, yet presents those which cannot be set aside in any analysis of such an apparatus and which the scope of the present work allows to be explored in some greater detail.

Firstly, the legal underpinnings of the apparatus will be considered, placing it within the legal order of Republika Srpska. The constituent parts of this element will be laws, regulations, directives and other publicly available documents that testify to the procedures that officially govern the use of the apparatus. While only a segment of the legal structure of the state, these documents nonetheless present the foundation that the administration of state ceremonies follows and around which its multifaceted components are developed. More than being the mere starting point, however, these documents are also a reflection of the institutional arrangements and power relations between numerous actors that may be, under different circumstances, uniformly subsumed under 'the state' – McQuaid and Gensburger have shown, for instance, how the formation and institutionalisation of 'celebrations' as a legal category of the French state have been markedly shaped by the ways in which ceremonies came to be seen as an area of public policy.¹⁵

Second, the role of the national holidays will be considered as part of the national social organisation of time. Building on Zerubavel's work on calendars as a form of social organisation of time, as well as Gabriella Elgenius'¹⁶ work on origins and typologies of national days,

¹⁵ Sara Dybris McQuaid and Sarah Gensburger, 'Administrations of Memory: Transcending the Nation and Bringing Back the State in Memory Studies' (June 2019) 32(2) *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 125.

¹⁶ Gabriella Elgenius, *Symbols of Nations and Nationalism: Celebrating Nationhood* (Palgrave Macmillan UK 2011).

the ceremonies are placed within their temporal context, especially with regard to the contested nature of ceremonial and commemorative practices in BiH.

Third, the economic aspects of the apparatus will be viewed through publicly available information about budgeting and other financial allocations in direct relation to public ceremonies. Although such an exploration may only be scratching the surface of the economic underpinnings of the apparatus, the scope of current research and the opaque nature of channels for funding of ceremonies present definite limits in that regard. Nonetheless, the economic element presents an indispensable material component of the apparatus, which not only reveals the kind of resources needed to effectively put it into action, but also its relation to other areas of state spending as a political priority.

Fourth, the performative element of the ceremonial apparatus, that is ceremonies in the narrowest sense, constitute a central element, the culmination of the apparatus in action. Further than mere rhetoric, this fourth element includes important spatial-visual considerations, such as the use of national and government symbols, the locations of the ceremonies, as well as the mobilisation of people in the course of the ceremony, including both its official participants and the audience. Though the thrust of this research is precisely to look beyond and underneath these performances, they are nonetheless the most politically charged and present a channel of mass communication between the ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and their target population in the group making process. Although much of the scholarship that touches on national ceremonies has focused explicitly on this aspect, Elgenius, with an intense focus on national symbols, has produced one of the most detailed recent contributions to the field. In terms of discourse analysis, the rhetorical politics of Milorad Dodik, as the leader of the ruling party of Republika Srpska since 2006, has been thoroughly analysed, also in connection with the Day of Republika Srpska, by Gerard Toal.¹⁷ Toal's insights will therefore be taken as the point of departure in analysing official rhetoric used at the observed events.

Lastly, the role of social exclusion and competition that characterises the carrying out of state ceremonies within Republika Srpska will merit

¹⁷ Gerard Toal, "Republika Srpska Will Have a Referendum": The Rhetorical Politics of Milorad Dodik' (January 2013) 41(1) Nationalities Papers 166.

its own place as a key element of the ceremonial apparatus. Introduced in the following chapter as essential to understanding the specific context of the research, its presence will be demonstrated throughout the various elements which I've mapped out and its role reflected on.

2.

THE APPARATUS IN CONTEXT

2.1. THE NATION IN REPUBLIKA SRPSKA

To conceive of Republika Srpska as a nation state, equipped with its own apparatuses that are constitutive of state power, in itself requires important contextual elaborations. Particularly, how ‘the nation’ is understood will in great part determine the analytical outcomes of applying such a conception. It is first necessary to outline the key circumstances which are recognised as crucial for developing this understanding – namely, ‘the national’ in relation to BiH as a whole, and ‘the national’ in relation to the already existing Serbian nation state, the Republic of Serbia.

Dating back to the Bosnian War, the first incarnation of Republika Srpska was formed in January 1992 by the newly formed Serbian nationalist political leadership in Serb-populated areas, in response to a perceived danger to Serbian national interests in the increasingly likely event of a push for secession of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on part of the Bosniak and Croat nationalist political leadership.¹⁸ When secession did come in March of the same year, the structure of Republika Srpska was therefore already present if not as an independent state, then certainly as a political entity which was primarily organised on the principle of Serbian nationhood within the now-former Yugoslav republic, its very name being indicative of this intent. After the war, the Dayton Agreement effectively legitimised the national principle in the federalisation of BiH, embodied by the Bosniak-Croat FBiH and the

¹⁸ Soeren Keil, *Multinational Federalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Routledge 2013) 76.

Serb Republika Srpska. The political resilience of the logic of the nation state, by all means the still dominant principle of political organisation globally, would therefore reflect on the dynamics of political competition within both the country and its two internal entities.

Just as the establishment of Serbian nationhood as the primary grouping of the majority of the population in Republika Srpska constituted a deliberate project, affirmed in the reciprocal projects of Bosniak and Croat nationhoods, so did the violence carried out on behalf of these groups during the war in BiH, as well as in the post-war settlement. Therefore, the process of group making could not simply cease, the work of dedicated political structures and actors could at no point be seen as carried out 'to the fullest'. Indeed, in order to maintain and continually strengthen the level of 'groupness', especially against perceived competing projects of group making, such as a civic nationalist project of integral Bosnian nationhood or the revival of grouping on the basis of economic class, ethnopolitical entrepreneurs within the structures of Republika Srpska are, just as those of other states or aspiring states, compelled to find ways to reinforce it. This sustained business of group making occurs both as a matter of regular political practice and in extraordinary circumstances and it is within this realm of the regular political practice of group making (or nation-building) that the ceremonial apparatus is situated. The aforementioned dominant strategic function of Foucault is therefore concretised in Brubaker's group making as a continual and regular political project.

2.2. THE COMPETITIVE DIMENSION

Situating the ceremonial apparatus of Republika Srpska within its group making function may explain its general strategic-political aim, but not yet anything about its immediate place within the actual political system of Republika Srpska or BiH. In political systems dominated, both in practice and at the legal institutional level, by national grouping, the particular ceremonial apparatuses necessarily take on a far greater significance because the creation and maintenance of the groups is overtly essential to the continued operation of the entire state structure. Importantly, while national grouping and its associated apparatuses may be found within any nation state, within a multinational order such as BiH, grouping serves as a method of delineation not only between people inside and outside the state, but between groups within the

state itself. Group making functions as a factor of both cohesion and division inside the state, therefore establishing the dominant cleavages in domestic institutional politics.

In his exploration on the role of rituals in liberal societies, Jonathan Hearn posits that ‘rituals’ – in which not only overt civic performances are included, but also public competitions and especially elections – are not mere identity-building dramatizations of the social order, but are an active element in the reproduction of power relations throughout it.¹⁹ Hearn’s approach, centred around first identifying the core power processes and then proceeding to look for their corresponding rituals, instead of taking the most striking rituals and then seeking to explain them,²⁰ is especially useful for the kind of structural analysis that the concept of the ceremonial apparatus is geared towards. Although Hearn is primarily focused on exploring the competitive dimension of rituals in ‘liberal’ societies as an element of power distribution, his insights may be well adapted to a political order in which the centrality of internal national grouping may evade the ‘liberal’ label as used by him. Indeed, where power distribution is most keenly tied to national grouping, the power dimensions of an apparatus that serves for grouping purposes may prove more salient than elsewhere.

While Hearn points to democratic elections as a highly ritualised form of competitive power distribution in liberal societies, his focus on such societies leads him to only point towards a kind of meritocratic notion of ‘bringing out the best’ as the source of legitimation for the distributed power. However, in nationally divided political orders, that is those with two or more mutually exclusive and strongly consolidated political groupings, legitimation, much more than from respect for national democratic procedures, heavily stems from the capacity of the ‘winners’ to successfully portray themselves as the best representatives of their own group, engaged in permanent competition not merely with other members of the group, but, crucially, with the other groups in the state. In contemporary BiH, the apportionment of power through electoral processes cannot be abstracted from intergroup dynamics,

¹⁹ Jonathan Hearn, ‘Competition as Ritual and the Legitimation of the Liberal Nation State’ in Rachel Tsang and Eric Taylor Woods (eds), *The Cultural Politics of Nationalism and Nation-Building: Ritual and Performance in the Forging of Nations* (Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group 2014) 70.

²⁰ *ibid* 69.

because daily politics in effect functions as a collection of (at least two) different, mutually opposed constituencies with very little middle ground and fraught relations at the shared, highest levels of power.

The lack of a multi-group dimension in Hearn's focus and his consequent emphasis on democratic procedures in power distribution and legitimation does not, however, diminish the value of two key insights his work provides for this work. Firstly, it reminds us that ceremonies function much beyond the level of rhetoric aimed at reinforcing political self-identification with a particular group. In order for the political order to be maintained, they function to also legitimise an *ethnified* order, as manifested in BiH's constitution which created the two constituent entities, and the sprawling institutional structures that result from such an order, going far beyond merely instilling self-understanding as part of a group. Second, in an order set up to encourage competition within the internal groups and between them, but not without recourse to them, every utilisation of group-building tactics necessarily occurs within a framework of highly charged competition. In Michael Billig's terms, in states such as BiH group making and group reinforcement function as 'hot' nationalism²¹ even when they become commonplace, and so nation-based mobilisations and heated national rhetoric, up to and including secessionism, are keenly interwoven with regular cycles of political competition as their quintessential feature, not extraordinary disruption. The ceremonial apparatus of Republika Srpska rests, then, within these competitive dynamics, especially with regard to competition of the Serb group with the other nationally defined groups, and not merely as a cohesive device for a Serbian self-understanding among its population.

Effectively, state ceremonies become another avenue for ethnically charged competition, exemplified through contestation and exclusion. In the first instance, the very existence of certain ceremonies, the frameworks in which they are held, as well as the ways in which they are carried out, reflect an intense orientation towards group making and political and legal confrontations with the perceived out-group. In the second, all these also become ways by which challenges to nationally understood competition and alternative or integrative efforts become excluded and marginalised, via the elimination of potential common

²¹ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (Sage 1995) 43.

ground within the ceremonial apparatus. Both of these dynamics are elaborated on in subchapter 3.5, reflecting the analysed empirical findings.

It should be noted, however, that the competitive dynamics between the intra-state entities should not be seen in terms of two co-equal, symmetrical and opposed national projects. The governmental centralisation and majority group homogeneity within Republika Srpska relative to the Federation allow for a much more pervasive and institutionally developed form of nationalist practice geared towards a singular nation group, which the multi-group structure of the Federation cannot allow. The scope of useable resources and percentage of the population that can be targeted for group making in Republika Srpska, including the work of the ceremonial apparatus, far outweighs the capacities of the variegated national make-up of the Federation's cantons, even in those that have a clear majority of the Bosniak or Croat group. This asymmetry is further exacerbated by internal competition on the level of the Federation itself between its two nationalist projects, though the subject falls outside the scope of the present work.

2.3. REPUBLIKA SRPSKA AS A STATE

Although not a sovereign independent state by any means, Republika Srpska is, for all intents and purposes of this research, treated as one. The reasoning behind this merits the outlining of its specific political features which have allowed it and its leadership to develop precisely the kind of apparatuses, the ceremonial one among them, which would customarily be reserved for full-fledged nation states that can project their sovereignty outwards and present the objective of nationally understood state building.

In her outlining of '*de facto* states', among which BiH is explicitly mentioned, Rebecca Bryant refers to liminality as their defining feature, being 'stuck between the political form they once were and the recognized body politic the wish to become'.²² While not a self-declared secessionist entity, Republika Srpska shares much of this liminal quality, constantly referred to as a 'state' by its political leadership, with the

²² Rebecca Bryant, 'Living with Liminality: De Facto States on the Threshold of the Global' (Spring/Summer 2014) 20(125) *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 125.

issue of its secession being a permanent fixture of political discourse within BiH and the region – it is this regional dimension that in no small way shapes both Republika Srpska's state aspirations and the effects thereof on its state ceremonies.²³ Furthermore, Bryant points out that the paradoxical result of non-recognition of such states, in cases when they effectively have control over their claimed territory, is that institutions of the state appear more real while statehood itself appears fictional.²⁴ This relationship will be immediately observable in the capacity of Republika Srpska's administrations to ignore or oppose decisions carried out by state-level BiH institutions.

Going beyond Bryant, Heleen Touquet has outright classified Republika Srpska as a state in its own right, arguing that it bears important hallmarks of a strong state, such as an essentially centralised administration with effective policy instruments.²⁵ Touquet further notes that Republika Srpska is, in Brubaker's terms, a *nationalising* state, that is, its leadership bears a widely held tendency towards becoming an as yet unrealised nation state of and for a particular nation.²⁶ Within this perspective, the constitutional arrangements which have instituted far-reaching autonomies for the entity, along with its vastly more homogenous ethnic makeup, are sufficient to consider it a state in its own right, at least in regards to its internal functioning.

Finally, the question of Republika Srpska's statehood has been approached from a distinctly performativist standpoint by Annika Björkdahl, who argues for a perspective of 'state becoming' in relation to how imagining and performing the state by the entity's political leadership figures into a wider empirical process of state making.²⁷ Citing actual material practices on the territory, the use of political imagination, as well as the spatialisation of the imaginations and the performances,²⁸ Björkdahl presents a continuous process of 'state becoming' that relies

²³ Zeljko Trkanjec, 'Dodik: Republika Srpska is a State' (Euractiv, 10 January 2022) <www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/dodik-republika-srpska-is-a-state/> accessed 15 September 2022.

²⁴ Bryant (n 22) 137.

²⁵ Heleen Touquet, 'The Republika Srpska as a Strong Nationalizing State and the Consequences for Postethnic Activism' (March 2012) 40(2) *Nationalities Papers* 203.

²⁶ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (CUP 2010) 114.

²⁷ Annika Björkdahl, 'Republika Srpska: Imaginary, Performance and Spatialization' (September 2018) 66 *Political Geography* 34.

²⁸ *ibid.*

greatly on the social construction of a state and its territory before the actual, material trappings of a state may be achieved. The scope of the 'performance' here is far greater than that of state ceremonies. Declaring independence, holding referenda, constituting courts, but also presenting the weather forecast for a limited territory and printing maps all become performances in their own right, and ones constitutive of the process of becoming a state at that. Most valuable to the present analysis is precisely this dimension of the state as a continual process marked by specific acts, one that cannot be said to be definitively 'finished'. While excluding the substantially wider definition of performances for the purposes of this work, adopting such a position allows for the use of the term 'state' which both reflects important existing authority and political aspirations of Republika Srpska, without insinuating its equivalence with what may be more traditionally considered a 'full-fledged' state, especially under international law.

3.

THE APPARATUS AT WORK

Having established the primary theoretical frameworks and considerations to be made in analysing the apparatus and its functioning, its constituent elements may be considered. As previously suggested, the work of ‘mapping’ conducted in this work is by no means an exhaustive enumeration of said elements, but a point of departure for future forays into the topic that aims to address its very fundamentals.

3.1. THE LEGAL ELEMENT

The legal fundamentals of the apparatus are essential for its proper functioning, coordination and regulation. Even outside the Foucaultian use, the structuralist Marxist Louis Althusser also recognised the law and bureaucracy as essential elements of the ‘ideological state apparatus’, in his terms the necessary structure for maintaining a certain economic relations and political order of contemporary capitalist states.²⁹ While laws and regulations do not themselves fully portray the actual social relations between institutional actors or their political agendas, they nonetheless establish a basic framework which guarantees the necessary public channels for conducting the regular business of the apparatus, and as such merit attention – particularly due to the contentious history and present character of legal measures within the political system. The two key points to be addressed from the legal side are therefore the very legislation that enables their existence as holidays, as well as the institutional networks laid out for the effective enforcement of these laws.

²⁹ Louis Althusser, ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’ in Ben Brewster (tr), *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (Monthly Review Press 1971).

3.1.1. *Establishing the holidays*

Republika Srpska's legislation around nation holidays began with the Law on Celebrations and Observances of Republika Srpska in 1992, with the war in BiH already underway. Besides its clearly religious connotations, the law also contained what was to become the contentious 'national day' of Republika Srpska, the Day of Republika Srpska (D1), celebrated on 9 January in honour of the declaration of independence on part of the would-be state.³⁰ In 2007, this law was superseded by the Law on Holidays of Republika Srpska, which remains the primary piece of legislation concerning holidays in Republika Srpska.³¹ Two of the holidays explored in this work are enumerated by the law, D1 and the Day of the Signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (D2) on 21 November. Apart from establishing D1 and D2 among state holidays, to be differentiated from religious holidays, the law also envisions the obligation of state institutions and private enterprises to not work on dates of state holidays, subject to monetary penalties.

If state holidays are established by legal norms, then it followed that their existence would also be challenged in the legal arena. On the level of BiH, the constitutionality of D1 was challenged in 2013 by the Bosniak member of the presidency at the time, Bakir Izetbegović, citing its discriminatory nature towards the non-Serb population of Republika Srpska.³² In 2015, the Constitutional Court concluded that the celebration on 9 January did constitute a discriminatory practice, given that it commemorated the Declaration of the Establishment of the Republic of the Serbian People of Bosnia and Herzegovina,³³ which exclusively mentioned the Serbian nation, in addition to occurring at the same time as the feast day of Republika Srpska's unofficial patron saint, which meant an unconstitutional merger of a particular religious holiday with one of the state.³⁴ In reaction, the authorities of Republika Srpska

³⁰ Law on Celebrations and Observances of Republika Srpska, Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No 19/1992.

³¹ Law on Holidays of Republika Srpska, Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No 43/2007.

³² Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Decision on admissibility and merits No U-3/13, Official Gazette of BiH, No 2/16, 26 November 2015.

³³ The name briefly used before the adoption of 'Republika Srpska' as the wartime state's name.

³⁴ Decision on admissibility and merits No U-3/13 (n 32).

contested the decision and went through with organising celebrations on 9 January 2016 in spite of it. Furthermore, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska declared a referendum in September of the same year, on the question of whether 9 January should continue to be marked and celebrated as D1. Despite a measure on part of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina against the referendum, it was organised and passed with 99.81% in favour and a 55.77% turnout.³⁵

In the wake of the results, the Court issued a decision on nullifying the referendum results, but the legal struggle continued. In October 2016, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska adopted the Law on the Day of Republika Srpska with the original date,³⁶ the constitutionality of which was immediately contested before the Court by nine members of the Council of Peoples of Republika Srpska. In 2019, the Court once more found the institution of the holiday on that date unconstitutional, nullifying the problematic article of the law.³⁷ As of the time of writing, this remains the legal situation concerning the holiday on the level of BiH, while the organisation of the day's events continues uninterrupted within the official institutional channels of Republika Srpska.

While D1 stands as the most legally contentious part of the apparatus' legal framework, the other two national holidays have seen comparably little attention. Present in the Law on State Holidays, D2 has not been marked by any legal contestation. On the other hand, the Day of Serbian Unity, Freedom and National Flag (D3) is not envisioned under the law. Instead, it was introduced by an executive government decision on 10 September 2020,³⁸ as a shared holiday with the Republic of Serbia. D3 is not a non-working day, however, although its observance, as will be shown, has been given more importance by the authorities than some state holidays instituted by legislation.

³⁵ Republička komisija za izvršenje referenduma, 'Izveštaj o rezultatu republičkog referenduma na pitanje: "Da li podržavate da se 9. januar obilježava i slavi kao Dan Republike Srpske?"' ['Report on the results of the republic's referendum on the question: "Do you support the commemoration and celebration of January 9th as the Day of Republika Srpska?"'] Banja Luka: Republička komisija za izvršenje referenduma (12 January 2017) <<https://e-vijecenarodars.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Izveštaj-Rep-komisije-za-sprovodjenje-referenduma.pdf>> accessed 15 September 2022.

³⁶ Law on the Day of Republika Srpska, Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No 113/2016.

³⁷ Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Decision on admissibility and merits No U-2/18, Official Gazette of BiH, No 30/19, 16 April 2019.

³⁸ Srpska Radio Televizija Republike Srpske (RTRS), 'Usvojen zaključak o obilježavanju Dana srpskog jedinstva' ['Conclusion Adopted About Commemoration of Day of Serbian Unity'] (*Republika Srpska – RTRS*, 10 September 2020) <<http://lat.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=400646>> accessed 1 August 2022.

3.1.2. *The institutional networks*

While the legal establishment of state holidays in Republika Srpska has been a legally fraught affair, which has generated significant attention on the substance of the laws, the organisational aspects of their celebration remain somewhat opaque. The Law on Holidays of Republika Srpska,³⁹ as well as the Law on the Day of Republika Srpska,⁴⁰ authorise the government to determine the ways in which holidays are commemorated, bringing the issue to the highest executive body of the country.

According to press releases of the government, besides the government, and in particular, the Protocol of the Republic of Srpska (a unit within the Department of Legal, Financial and General Affairs of the government's Secretariat for Legislation), the organising of ceremonies for D3 has also been entrusted to the Centre for Research of War, War Crimes and Finding of Missing Persons. The Centre, an organisational unit of the Ministry of Justice of Republika Srpska, does explicitly contain 'determination, advising and coordination of basic aspects of policy in memory, memorialisation, memory and commemoration culture' within its purview,⁴¹ although the bulk of its work is centred around the Bosnian War and the Second World War, while D3 is linked to an event from the First World War, as will be noted further. The contentious D1 has also been given its own organising committee, which from 2019 has been constituted under the auspices of the cabinet of the president of Republika Srpska, and has since then been formed each year for the purposes of organising the associated ceremonies.⁴²

An essential component of the institutional element of the apparatus is its dispersal to local authorities. While the attention of this work is centred on ceremonies attended by the highest officials of Republika Srpska, usually held in the city of Banja Luka, many municipalities throughout Republika Srpska organise their own local ceremonies, constitute their own ad hoc committees and coordinate the efforts

³⁹ Law on Holidays of Republika Srpska (n 31).

⁴⁰ Law on the Day of Republika Srpska (n 36).

⁴¹ RCIRZ, 'Djelatnosti' ['Activities'] (*Republički centar za istraživanje rata, ratnih zločina i traženje nestalih lica*) <www.rcirz.org/djelatnosti/> accessed 3 August 2022.

⁴² NN, 'Konstituisan Odbor za proslavu Dana Republike Srpske' ['Committee for Celebration of Day of Republika Srpska Formed'] (*Nezavisne novine*, 2 December 2019) <www.nezavisne.com/novosti/bih/Konstituisan-Odbor-za-proslavu-Dana-Republike-Srpske/571555> accessed 15 September 2022.

of various branches of local governments in order to successfully fulfil this task. This dispersal should not, however, be confused with meaningful autonomy or independence from the apparatus at large, as the overwhelming domination of the same political party in local governments in Republika Srpska largely dictates the function, if not the amount of mobilised resources or the symbolic importance of the actors involved, associated with these ceremonies. To the contrary, this dispersal allows for a more comprehensive and broader area of the apparatus' application, ensuring its tangible presence outside Republika Srpska's largest city.

3.2. THE CALENDAR AS AN ELEMENT

In his analysis of the mutually opposed notions of history and memory, Pierre Nora coined the term *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, to draw attention to points, be they material, functional or symbolic, which are deliberately instituted and shaped to evoke highly selective parts of collective memory.⁴³ Building on this and identifying calendars as the most spectacular site of collective memory, Eviatar Zerubavel has pointed out that the institutionalisation of commemorative holidays helps to establish an annual cycle of remembrance that would compel a community to recall its 'sacred' moments several times a year, and, importantly, in unison.⁴⁴ In the context of the nation state, the community is equated with that of the nation, therefore collective memory endures a transformation into *national* memory. Although these holidays, as sites of memory, purport to recall the ancient, often infinitely ancient roots of the community they call upon, their markedly recent introduction and highly politically relevant content enables them to fit neatly into Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's notion of 'invented traditions'.⁴⁵

As Zerubavel demonstrates, the apparently specific, or even unique, structure of national calendars in fact tends to follow globally observable trends. The first category he outlines is the category of historical

⁴³ Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire' (April 1989) 26 Representations 7.

⁴⁴ Eviatar Zerubavel, 'Calendars and History: A Comparative Study of the Social Organization of National Memory' in Jeffrey K Olick (ed), *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Duke UP 2003).

⁴⁵ Eric J Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Canto edn, CUP 2010) 1.

watersheds – events marking fundamental changes in the nation’s political or moral identity or, popularly, the very establishment of the state, often concentrated within a timeframe of the last 200 years.⁴⁶ In Republika Srpska, two events correspond to precisely such events. D1 commemorates the very establishment of a Serb national state project within a disintegrating Yugoslav federal subject, while D2 marks the beginning of its peacetime and current incarnation in the form of an entity within BiH. D3 could tentatively be said to belong to the first category as well, though with some reservations. Established on an important date for the Serb national narrative, the allied offensive on the Thessaloniki Front in the First World War and closely linked to the survival of the Serbian nation state, it is celebrated under a name oriented towards symbols and concepts rather than events.

The second category pointed out by Zerubavel are religious holidays observed by the state, rooted in commemoration of centuries-old events. In Republika Srpska, these holidays are recognised by law, and are thus at least to some extent also part of the ceremonial apparatus, although they are not given the same distinction of ‘state’ (Serbian: *republički* lit. ‘republic’ or ‘republic-level’) holidays, not being observed in the same official capacity but rather as non-working days for members of the Eastern Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim communities respectively.

Finally, three state holidays which are not under the scope of this investigation have a markedly international character – the New Year, the Day of Victory over Fascism and International Worker’s Day. The international character of these days by no means excludes them from the functioning of the ceremonial apparatus for the purposes of nationalist practice, however. Being ‘inherited’ from the previous ceremonial apparatus of the Yugoslav state, they are not unique to Republika Srpska, and as such don’t represent new interventions into the structure of social time that its establishment marked. Furthermore, the international character of these holidays also provides a different dimension in their use for nationalist practice, one of *adaptation* rather than *invention*. In its layout, the calendar therefore escapes Zerubavel’s typical commemorative pattern and its characteristic two ‘hot’ periods.⁴⁷ With the exception of the New Year, all the state holidays and D2 are rooted in events of the previous two centuries, from the Haymarket riot

⁴⁶ Zerubavel (n 44).

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

(International Worker's Day) to the Dayton Peace Treaty (D2), establishing a singular, historically 'hot' core that the calendar centres around.

How does such a calendar impact the functioning of the ceremonial apparatus? Firstly, being split between holidays explicitly linked to the majority nation and holidays of an explicitly nation-less backgrounds, the official calendar does not contain holidays that are linkable to national narratives of non-Serbian national groups. Such an arrangement ensures that official ceremonies, if not overtly used for advancing nationalist practices, would only be able to accommodate nation-less ones. Secondly, the recentness of the chosen dates predisposes the calendar towards temporally 'near' themes – two of the state holidays, D1 and D2, are based on events that occurred within the last three decades and therefore within the lifetime of the bulk of the citizens of Republika Srpska, while D3 is, at the time of writing, just barely two years old as a public holiday, the date having never presented one in the history of the Serbian nation state(s). Thirdly, the choice of dates for structuring the calendar reveals a distinct orientation towards structuring social time in relation to wars as keystones of nationalist discourse. Three of the five established by law – D1, Victory Day and D2 – as well as D3, are keenly connected to wartime events, be they battles, peace treaties or merely first established in a wartime context. Even without resorting to an exploration of the kind of discursive practice such themes enable, this decision has immediate functional-institutional consequences for the apparatus; military parades, military monuments and graveyards and various degrees of participation of military personnel may become instrumental in properly conducting the associated ceremonies.

3.3. THE ECONOMIC ELEMENT

Due to the opaque nature of institutional responsibilities, it may be difficult to accurately ascertain the scope of economic resources used for the ceremonial apparatus, which is further exacerbated by its spread onto the local level and subject to local budgeting decisions of particular municipalities. Additionally, budgeting areas are kept very widely defined at the highest level, not allowing insight into what precise purposes expenses such as transport costs or representation costs are allocated towards. Nevertheless, a 'bare minimum' amount of economic costs associated with the apparatus may be inferred from budgeting plans approved by the National Assembly of Republika Srpska for the observed period.

The following tables present a sum of items from state budgets that are most closely and explicitly tied to the necessary functioning of the

ceremonial apparatus. As such, the most explicitly related items are certainly the ones for ‘marking important historical dates of the Defensive-Patriotic War’ and ‘celebration of the day of Republika Srpska’, but the institutional mapping done previously also necessitates adding expenses associated with the Protocol of Republika Srpska and the Centre for Research of War, War Crimes and Finding of Missing Persons to the overall account of expenditures. Additionally, the expenses associated with monuments and monument complexes, themselves often being the site of ceremonies, as well as ‘other events organised by the National Assembly’, as a possible area of ceremonies organised at the highest levels of government, have also been taken into account.

Table 1. Apparatus-associated expenditures 2012–17 (figures in BAM)⁴⁸

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Marking important historical dates of the Defensive-Patriotic War	170,000	170,000	170,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Construction and maintenance of monuments, memorial areas and military cemeteries	278,000	278,000	278,000	278,000	278,000	250,000
Centre for Research of War, War Crimes and Finding of Missing Persons		1,994,000	1,810,000	1,622,600	1,619,400	1,578,200
Other events organised by the National Assembly	100,000	50,000	48,000	20,000	10,000	10,000
Celebration of the Day of Republika Srpska						500,000
Total	548,000	2,492,000	2,306,000	2,070,600	2,057,400	2,488,200
As percentage of total budget	0.13%	0.13%	0.15%	0.13%	0.09%	0.10%

⁴⁸ NSRS, ‘Budžet’ [‘Budget’] (NSRS) <www.narodnaskupstinars.net/?q=la/akti/bud%C5%BEct> accessed 14 September 2022.

Table 2. Apparatus-related expenditures 2018–22 (figures in BAM)⁴⁹

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Construction and maintenance of monuments, memorial areas and military cemeteries	246,500	261,000	540,000	470,000	470,000
Centre for Research of War, War Crimes and Finding of Missing Persons	1,644,700	1,989,500	2,534,600	2,562,300	2,847,800
Other events organised by the National Assembly	30,000	30,000	20,000	120,000	
Celebration of the Day of Republika Srpska	500,000	460,000	490,000	403,500	745,800
Protocol of Republika Srpska		1,513,200	1,253,000	961,800	1,112,700
Total	2,421,200	4,253,700	4,837,600	4,517,600	5,176,300
As percentage of total budget	0.09%	0.16%	0.16%	0.14%	0.14%

This overview of apparatus-related spending over the previous decade reveals certain patterns about the development of the ceremonial apparatus. Firstly, the fluctuations in spending, as well as in the share of the total annual budget, may point towards a lack of a consolidated approach in funding the apparatus. Second, the introduction of the new item of D1 celebrations (as an item under the expenses of the office of the President) in 2017 and the removal of ‘important historical dates of the Defensive-Patriotic War’ the following year indicates a shift in priorities within the ceremonial apparatus and a higher concentration on the politically contentious D1. Finally, the decision of including both the Centre and the Protocol within the budget reports, rather than having those expenses unnamed and subsumed under different items, may point to their increasing prominence, further strengthening the notion of those institutions as more prominent elements given their jurisdiction over D3 celebrations.

⁴⁹ NSRS (n 48).

3.4. THE PERFORMATIVE ELEMENT

No element of the apparatus is as visible, infused with meaning, nor as focused on in scholarly research as much as the kind of ceremonies it effectively produces. Indeed, the primary endeavour of this work is to provide a multi-layered and comprehensive account of its functioning, yet such an account still cannot but deal with what may be seen as the centre of the variegated networks that allow for a ceremonial apparatus to function. Although the analysis of the conduct of national ceremonies has ranged, in Tsang and Wood's helpful overview, from the (neo)-Durkheimian, to the 'invented tradition' approaches to the use of Goffman's performance studies framework,⁵⁰ it is the approach of Gabriella Elgenius, with its markedly descriptive orientation, that is most fitting for this work. I will briefly outline the reasons for this through points of divergence from the aforementioned three approaches.

In criticising the (neo-) Durkheimian approach, it is useful to echo some of the criticisms put forward by Gordana Uzelac.⁵¹ Uzelac, in her examination of the work of George L Mosse, identifying him fully within the Durkheimian tradition, notes that he fails to properly distinguish between participants and spectators, that the critical reflection of 'the masses' on observed content is overlooked as a possibility and that only in 'small, simple, and pre-modern societies' can it be said that a sufficient degree of homogeneity may be achieved between the producer's intentions and the reception thereof.⁵² Crucially, this last point is rendered irrelevant for the ceremonial apparatus – 'group homogeneity', rendered in national terms, is not a factor of research, and the possibility for myriad receptions is taken as a given, due to the entire apparatus being seen as a state structure for forwarding group making as a *political practice*, therefore necessarily a contestable one.

While this work is certainly informed by Hobsbawm and Ranger's notions of invented traditions, the ceremonies analysed presently are so historically recent, their genesis neatly traceable through the previous

⁵⁰ Eric Taylor Woods and Rachel Tsang, 'Ritual and Performance in the Study of Nations and Nationalism' in Rachel Tsang and Eric Taylor Woods (eds), *The Cultural Politics of Nationalism and Nation-Building: Ritual and Performance in the Forging of Nations* (Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group 2014) 1-15.

⁵¹ Gordana Uzelac, 'National Ceremonies: The Pursuit of Authenticity' (November 2010) 33(10) *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1718.

⁵² *ibid.*

three decades, that the revelatory value of these notions is rendered effectively unnecessary. Instead, they inform a future perspective, allowing for an envisioning of new possible developments in the apparatus, should these holidays and their associated ceremonies attain the status of ‘traditions’.

The contemporary academic use of the ‘performative’ has been strongly influenced by the legacies of Erving Goffman and his highly innovative adaptation of the logic of the theatre to social interaction.⁵³ In the vast number of the application and adaptation of Goffman’s theories, the study of national ceremonies has found a strikingly similar parallel, complete with actors, roles, staging and well-rehearsed scripts. While the choreography, discursive manoeuvring and staging associated with ceremonies are essentially comparable to those of the theatre, the key premise of performance studies is that performance itself is constitutive of social relations, not merely their outgrowth or manifestation, as well as being keenly oriented towards the ‘success’ of performances as necessary for the maintenance of said relations. Such an approach lends itself to a series of contingencies, taking the most striking manifestation of a wide-ranging legal, economic and institutional structure as a crucial act of ordering within a political community. As shown, this structure predates and enables the kind of ‘speech acts’ or ‘performances’ that ethnopolitical entrepreneurs engage in while doing group making and group maintenance – the political-economic order has effectively dictated the narrow limits of ‘the script’ long before speeches and flags have had a chance to do their part for the maintenance of said order.

The four aspects of the performative element that will be examined here present a provisional division between overlapping, yet sufficiently distinct parts of every performance: its location within physical space, its ceremonial choreographies, the principal actors, both individual and collective, and the rhetoric relevant to the work of group making.

3.4.1. *Spatial situation*

As already noted by Nora, the modern social practice of memory (what Nora calls ‘duty-memory’) relies on a prolific materiality – the archive, the image and the monument are equally material sites of

⁵³ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Penguin Books 2007).

memory.⁵⁴ The intimate relationship between the commemoration and its immediate physical landscape has thus justly occupied the attention of a number of scholars within the field of memory studies.

In his own way, less concerned with the past, Foucault has theorised the public space, particularly in regards to architecture and institutions, as the apparatus for enforcing political power, securing a particular order on the entirety of the 'social body'.⁵⁵ The logic of the asylum or the prison is extended into the logic of the street and the square, because they share the same function, that is, 'the allocation of people in space, a canalization of their circulation, as well as the coding of their reciprocal relations'.⁵⁶ Beyond disciplinary power, then, the layout of the city becomes a means of spatially situating people at the disposal of a variety of other apparatuses, in effect turning boulevards, streets, squares and monument complexes, all of which are indispensable to the contemporary public event, into a supporting element of any state apparatus requiring their use. Just as the calendar functions in the structuring of time, the street, square, monument and stage function to structure space according to the functions of the ceremonial apparatus, and therefore merit closer examination as its primary entrance into public materiality.

In all the examined cases, my focus will be on the city of Banja Luka, the largest city and unofficial capital of Republika Srpska (Sarajevo being stipulated as its constitutional capital), as it has served as the preeminent staging ground for public ceremonies organised by the entity's governments. As already noted, state holidays and their associated ceremonies would not function nearly as efficiently or thoroughly if they were only confined to the largest city and the apparatus not having its expression in various other municipalities across the entity. The focus on Banja Luka, however, allows a perspective on the very 'height' of the apparatus at work, its ceremonies being the most elaborate, the actors involved being the holders of highest offices and the metonymic significance of Banja Luka for the entirety of Republika Srpska.

⁵⁴ Nora (n 43) 13.

⁵⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (2nd Vintage Books edn, Vintage Books 1995) 135-70.

⁵⁶ Michel Foucault and Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader* (1st edn, Pantheon Books 1984) 253.

In the case of D1, the ceremonies from 2017 onwards have included two primary elements: the parade and the solemn academy. While not attracting as much attention, D1 has also been marked by a laying of wreaths by state officials at four separate memorial sites: the Monument to the Fallen Soldiers of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS), the Square of the Fallen Soldiers of the National Liberation Struggle, the Memorial Tomb at the city cemetery and the Monument to the Babies of Banja Luka. These sites, while not attracting as much media attention, nonetheless punctuate the rhythm and space of the ceremony, establish a semantic connection to the rest of the day's ceremonies, and provide a connection to the aforementioned economic resources utilised for their regular maintenance.

The parades have started from Republika Srpska Square and ended at Krajina Square, along the wide street of King Peter I Karađorđević, in the very centre of Banja Luka. The streets are blocked off for this occasion, with the audience sectioned behind metal fences and Serbian tricolours hanging from the lampposts along the road, as well as from lines suspended above it. A key place between the two points is the Orthodox Church of Christ the Saviour in the same street, in which liturgies have been held before the parades by the Patriarch of the SPC at the time (Irinej until 2020 and Porfirije since then), but which has also been the place for staging the formal celebrations of D3 (Figure 2). Notably, the church was built in 1993 on the site of a pre-Second World War church, displacing a monument to fallen soldiers in the National Liberation Struggle to a nearby location. The church as a focal point for ceremonies lends further grounds for future analyses the material infrastructure of the SPC in relation to the functioning of the ceremonial apparatus. Celebrations of D1 have, in 2012 and every year since 2016, concluded with a solemn academy in the Borik Sports Hall, the largest such venue in the city. Between 2013 and 2015, these ceremonies were held in Banski Dvor, a cultural centre which formerly housed the presidential offices of Republika Srpska.



Figure 1. The plateau of Christ the Saviour Church prepared for the D3 solemn academy. Source: Radio Televizija Republike Srpske (RTRS)

D2, in contrast to the other two, has virtually no spatial grounding in terms of ceremonies conducted. Its closest intervention into the public space is its status as a non-working day for all government and private establishments, per the law, as well as the regular press conferences held by the top officials of Republika Srpska, such as the president, prime minister or Serb representative in the presidency of BiH. This absence will prove a recurring theme in the case of D2, but it nonetheless carries an important function within the ceremonial apparatus, a point which will be further elaborated on later.

3.4.2. The ceremonial choreographies

As stated previously, beginning with 2017 and the first parade in marking D1, the ceremonies accompanying this holiday have included two primary elements that have been placed at the centre of media attention: the parade and the solemn academy. Additionally, two other

elements, the liturgy and the wreath laying ceremonies, which typically occur earlier in the day, have been smaller affairs, both in terms of time and space. Both of these smaller events carry additional, even contradictory symbolism for the day's proceedings, yet are still crucial for the apparatus' symbolic and rhetorical repertoire. For instance, the laying of wreaths on the monument to the soldiers of the National Liberation struggle, members of the anti-fascist resistance movement led by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) establishes a link to the VRS as equally engaged in resistance against a foreign invading power intent on ethnically based persecution and murder. The celebration of a liturgy in honour of Saint Stephen mere hours afterwards provides an essential link to the cornerstone of contemporary Serbian nation making, membership in the SPC. The noted apparent contradiction between celebrating both the church and the KPJ-led partisans is, in fact, a building block of the contemporary Serb national master narrative. The ethnicization of anti-fascism, as well as calls to 'Serb unity' regardless of creed, present important steps in the building up of the story of a nation permanently on the defensive against would-be oppressors and conquerors, resisting them under this or that ideological banner, but always fundamentally 'as Serbs'.

Before the parade commences, the current president, usually flanked by the prime minister and the Serbian member of the presidency, approaches his or her podium at the head of the procession down the planned path, before receiving the honorary salute from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republika Srpska's (MUP's) Honour Unit, a unit formed explicitly for ceremonial purposes from members of the Police Administration of Banja Luka and The Administration for Protection of Persons and Objects.⁵⁷ Here the president kisses the Serbian tricolour held by one of the unit's members and offers the traditional Serbian Orthodox greeting 'God helps, heroes!' (*Pomoz' Bog, junaci!*). Upon taking his or her place at the podium from which the parade will be observed, the president is approached by the overall commanding officer of the parade in an open-roof police vehicle and reported to. With the president's final permission, the orchestra announces the commencement of the parade.

⁵⁷ Borislav Šarić and Vitomir Petričević, 'Razvoj i Značaj Počasne Jedinice Ministarstva Unutrašnjih Poslova Republike Srpske' ['Development and Significance of the Honour Unity of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republika Srpska'] (2018) 18(2) *Bezbjednost - Policija - Građani* 153.

The parade, since its introduction in 2017, has consisted of civilian and police participants, the former outnumbering the latter by some measure. The parade begins with a large Serbian tricolour being carried by teams of university students from the student organisations of Republika Srpska's two universities, followed by a long line of echelons of representatives of civil society organisations and governmental institutions – from veterans' associations to sports associations to post workers and fire-fighters.⁵⁸ The participation of civil society groups and associations from a wide range of fields contributes to further entrenchment of the apparatus' mechanism, by socialising people into it purely by virtue of representing elements of Republika Srpska society, be they sportspeople, traditional dancers or members of hunting associations. Notably, this 'civilian' section of the parade has also included the local chapter of the Night Wolves, a Moscow-based motorcycle club with established ties to the government of Vladimir Putin.⁵⁹

The focal point, however, is reserved for members of the various departments of the MUP. Being the only armed force under the control of the entity since the formation of an integrated Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, MUP has, for the purposes of the parade, effectively taken up the role of Republika Srpska's army. From the fully uniformed units of the gendarmerie and the Special Forces to its armoured vehicles and helicopters (Figure 4), the MUP is presented as a militarised force ready to defend Republika Srpska.

⁵⁸ RTRS, 'Svečani defile za Dan Republike- postrojen i Treći pješadijski puk (FOTO/VIDEO)' ['Grand Parade for Republic Day — Third Infantry Regiment Also Presented PHOTO/VIDEO'] (*REPUBLIKA SRPSKA - RTRS*, 9 January 2017) <www.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=237594> accessed 10 September 2022.

⁵⁹ Natasa Lazukić, "NOĆNI VUKOVI" UZ SRPSKU: Putinovi bajkeri za Dan Republike u Banjaluci' ["Night Wolves" with Srpska: Putin's Bikers at the Day of Republika Srpska in Banjaluka'] (*Novosti*, 9 January 2022) <<https://vecernjenovosti.ba/2521/vijesti/nocni-vukovi-uz-srpsku-putinovi-bajkeri-za-dan-republike-u-banjaluci/>> accessed 10 September 2022.



Figure 2. Members of the Gendarmerie marching at the parade in 2018.
Source: RTRS



Figure 3. 'Despot' Armoured Vehicle at the parade in 2019. Source: Ministry of Defence of Serbia

In their visual presentation, the participating units of MUP are diverse. While the Honorary Unit presents its blue ceremonial dress

uniform, members of the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit are presented in camouflage-style combat uniform with red berets, while members of the Gendarmerie (Figure 3) and the Special Police Units are seen in full black tactical uniforms.⁶⁰ The marching troops are followed by a mounted unit of the Gendarmerie, which in turn is followed by the motorised units, displaying an array of police vehicles, from motorcycles and ATVs to armoured cars.

The procession is accompanied by music of the MUP Police Orchestra, the parade concluding with the singing of the song 'Pukni zoro' (*Break, o dawn*), composed in 2010 for the Serbian film 'Montevideo, Bog te video', but mythologised as originating in the Serbian army of the First World War.⁶¹ This practice itself presents yet another connection to the invention of tradition in Republika Srpska's ceremonies, reflecting accurately Hobsbawm's notion of a 'process of formalization and ritualization, characterised by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition',⁶² but it also points to a more specifically enumerated phenomenon. Namely, in analysing the musical repertoire of post-Yugoslav Serbian nationalism, Atanasovski has pointed to the use of newly composed music utilising 'traditional' sounds and harkening to historical themes as a vehicle for 'hot' Serbian nationalism⁶³ – in this case by intentionally obscuring both time of creation and authorship. The choice of song has, in one instance, also reflected a direct discursive confrontation with the pre-war Yugoslav regime. During the 2022 parade, members of the Special Antiterrorist Unit chanted a song by singer Olivera Katarina which, besides its allusions to medieval Serbian history, contained the lyrics 'Serbs are as numerous as leaves / There are no more communists'.⁶⁴ It is important to note that the apparatus has

⁶⁰ RTRS, 'Svečani Defile Povodom Dana Republike Srpske /// 9 Januar 2022' ['Grand Parade Marking for Day of Republika Srpska'] (*YouTube*, 9 January 2022) <www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFs25ECHT94> accessed 7 September 2022.

⁶¹ Dragan Bursać, 'Bursać: Pukni zoro po Dodikovoj laži' ['Break, o dawn, on Dodik's lie'] (*Al Jazeera*, 23 October 2021) <<https://balkans.aljazeera.net/opinions/2021/10/23/dragan-bursac-pukni-zoro-po-dodikovoj-lazi>> accessed 24 August 2022.

⁶² Hobsbawm and Ranger (n 45) 4.

⁶³ Srđan Atanasovski, 'Recycled Music for Banal Nation: The Case of Serbia 1999– 2010' in Ewa Mazierska and Georgina Gregory (eds), *Relocating Popular Music* (Palgrave Macmillan UK 2015) 84-103.

⁶⁴ Tomislav Marković, 'Za krst Nemanjića, slavu Obilića i genocid u Srebrenici' ['For the Nemanjić Cross, the Obilić Glory and the Genocide in Srebrenica'] (*Al Jazeera*, 16 January 2022) <<https://balkans.aljazeera.net/opinions/2022/1/16/za-krst-nemanjica-slavu-obilica-i-genocid-u-srebrenici>> accessed 30 August 2022.

also made use of non-traditional sounds, provided that lyrical content is ideologically compatible with Serbian nationalism, which is shown by the performance of the hip-hop group 'Beogradski sindikat' at 2022's solemn academy of D1.⁶⁵

The solemn academy, occupying the evening portion of the events, is arranged as a more exclusive event due to the limited confines of the Borik Sports Hall and the need to accommodate a greater number of domestic and foreign dignitaries. These ceremonies, which predate the parade and have been held for the entirety of the observed period, consist of various dramatic and/or musical acts interspersed with speeches delivered by the top officials of Republika Srpska, and as a rule, representatives of the government of Serbia. The ceremony begins with a choral rendition of the anthems of Republika Srpska and the Republic of Serbia, after which the dramatic element of the ceremony is introduced, taking the form of dramatic plays, monologues or filmed videos montages.

Ceremonies associated with D3 have been significantly less elaborate. In 2020, they took the form of a solemn academy, titled 'An Ode to the Serbian People', in front of the aforementioned Church of Christ the Saviour in Banja Luka, with an art installation featuring photographs of the Serbian army in the First World War as well as replicas of its wartime flags, music by the police orchestra of the MUP, several choir performances, a dramatic performances featuring actors playing parts of Serbian soldiers of the First World War and speeches by the officials of Serbia and Republika Srpska. In this regard, the solemn academy exhibited very similar choreographies to what has been described for D1, but with a higher focus on the First World War, as well as being a smaller, open-air ceremony instead of the Borik Sports Hall. In 2021, the solemn academy was preceded during the day by two processions of people carrying Serbian tricolour flags, including one measuring 112 metres in length, in the city centre and converging at Krajina Square. This event, though not strictly organised by the authorities, was held under the auspices of two political parties from the ruling coalition – the Alliance of Independent Social-Democrats (SNSD) and United Srpska

⁶⁵ RTRS, 'Premijerno izvedena pjesma "Jedina Srpska" povodom Dana Republike (VIDEO)' ['Premiere Performance of "Only Srpska" Song Marking Republic Day'] (*KULTURA - RTRS*, 8 January 2022) <www.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=459352> accessed 3 September 2022.

(US). A more dispersed and bottom-up choreography was also highly encouraged during D3, in the form of inviting all citizens and businesses to display the flag during to mark the holiday.

In line with what was previously observed, the case of D2 is markedly different. Except for being a non-working day and an annual topic to be featured in press conferences of state officials, there have been no observable choreographies associated with the celebration of D2. The very absence of these choreographies at all levels testifies to the already noted emptiness in marking a state holiday that is, by law, co-equal with those featuring elaborate and variegated ceremonial procedures. In this way, D2 carries its own ‘anti-choreography’, an absence which testifies to its place as a ‘non-event’ within the apparatus. What is asserted by this absence, as shall be noted later, is not the importance of conducting a specific ceremony, but rather not conducting a different, precisely identifiable ceremony. In subchapter 3.5., I display how this un-located, un-celebrated national holiday still marks an important feature of the competitive and exclusionary dimension of the ceremonial apparatus as a means of group making.

3.4.3. The principal actors

In analysing the pertinent institutional structures in subchapter 3.1., I have focused on the highest collective actors that facilitate the regular functioning of the ceremonial apparatus. When discussing the performative element, I will instead map out those actors whose physical presence and/or discursive interventions have been most significant for the carrying out of the ceremonies. These actors between themselves constitute a heterogeneous assembly – their relative institutional influence, their disparate social positions and varying degrees of agency within the ceremonial framework should immediately be noted in analysing them as elements of the same act of political practice. However, I contend that this is a key feature of the ceremonial apparatus. Namely, the notion that the very designers of choreographies, ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and high officials each occupy their own fixed positions within the structure of the ceremony, no less fixed than each policeman within the marching echelon or member of a civil society group, is central to viewing the ceremony as the culmination of an elaborate state-nationalist machinery that transcends the personal self-understandings of its participants.

Situated at the symbolic and structural ‘top’, presented as arbiters and conductors of the ceremonies, are the highest officials: presidents, prime ministers, cabinet ministers, military and police chiefs. For the observed period, the consistency of political and institutional arrangements in Republika Srpska and the region allow for a direct naming of individuals who, *ex officio*, have been mainstays of the ceremonies. This consistency, however, should not be viewed outside the context of state power. To fully follow the logic of the ceremonial apparatus as a structure, it is important to view what appears to be personal rhetorical repertoires, outward appearances and forms of participation by the actors as inseparable from the very structures that make them ceremonial actors.

Milorad Dodik, a principal figure in the politics of Republika Srpska for several decades, has occupied the positions of president of the entity (having also been its prime minister before 2012) and Serbian member of the Presidency of BiH. His position as leader of the ruling party of Republika Srpska and subsequently holder of its highest executive offices or membership of the country’s presidency has ensured his place as one of the major, ethnopolitical entrepreneurs within contemporary Republika Srpska, and certainly the most visible and highly placed among them. In this capacity, Dodik has spoken at almost every D1 and D3 ceremony, his positions ensuring an important role within the ceremonial apparatus as the overarching representative of the Serbian nation and Republika Srpska within BiH. Dodik’s physical absence from these ceremonies has, at least on one occasion, been justified by his presence at a different ceremonial occasion – the grand ceremony of D3 in Serbia in 2021.⁶⁶

Closely related to Dodik’s role has been the role of Željka Cvijanović, current president and former prime minister of Republika Srpska, likewise a member of SNSD. Having taken up Dodik’s post after his move to the presidency of BiH, she has also been positioned as a mainstay of the observed ceremonies, present as the chief executive and delivering speeches and performing ceremonial duties, such as opening formal celebrations, even when Dodik himself has been absent.

In D1’s parades, as well as the solemn academies of D1 and D3, a

⁶⁶ BBC News na srpskom, ‘Trobojke, oružje i helikopteri: Kako je obeležen Dan srpskog jedinstva’ [‘Tricolours, Weapons and Helicopters: How the Day of Serbian Unity was Commemorated’] (*BBC News na srpskom*, 15 September 2021) <www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/58574578> accessed 1 September 2022.

place of prominence has also been reserved for representatives of the government of Serbia. This place has been filled, variously, by cabinet ministers or the prime minister, and, as a rule, included a speech or address. Among these, two individuals have been present most often in the observed period: Prime Minister Ana Brnabić and Minister Aleksandar Vulin, the latter being positioned as head of various ministries during the preceding decade. While the presence of the prime minister can be readily understood in terms of the capacities and necessities of the office itself for group making efforts, the inclusion of Vulin in particular is notable for his commitment to such efforts as a junior coalition partner in Serbian governments since 2012, but a leading protagonist of the ‘Serbian world’ nationalist project.⁶⁷

Solemn academies, as organised for D1 and D3, have, as has been noted, always included a ‘dramatic’ component, that is, performances of dramatic and/or music pieces which have ran through the most overtly political component of speeches and addresses delivered by political figures. These performances have included choirs, orchestras, acting collectives, but also high-profile cultural figures which have enjoyed public prominence outside their participation in state apparatuses. In this role, the apparatus has cast actors, such as Miloš Biković (2020) and Lazar Ristovski (2018), academics such as Dragan Stanić (2019), film directors such as Emir Kusturica (2017, 2012), poets such as Matija Bećković (2016) and others. In his conceptualisation of various apparatuses, Foucault recognised a particular significance for the ‘intellectuals’, a category easily identifiable with academics, actors, film directors and poets.⁶⁸ In occupying their specific positions, these intellectuals, in Foucaultian terms, are engaged in a production of a certain ‘apparatus of truth’, one compatible and necessary for the functioning of the entire state apparatus and the ceremonial apparatus in particular. The keystones of this apparatus of truth in the present context, as in the context of the nation state in general, are the existence and irreducibility of the nation as a primordial given, but also the necessity of political organising around this primordial given. If truth is viewed as ‘in a circular relation with systems of power which produce

⁶⁷ Siniša Malešević, ‘Resurrecting National Greatness: The Changing Faces of Golden Age in the Balkans’ (2022) 37(51) *Sociological Forum* 1294.

⁶⁸ Michel Foucault, ‘Truth and Power’ in Colin Gordon (ed), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972 - 1977* (Pantheon Books 1980) 109-33.

and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it',⁶⁹ the connection between the nation state as a system of power and the ceremonial address as a form of truth production emerges.

An indispensable collective actor also emerges in the form of the organisations participating in the most elevated ceremony within the apparatus, the D1 parades, in the form of the MUP and its members. As already noted, the status of MUP as the only organisations with armed units at its disposal, it has for all ceremonial purposes fulfilled the roles traditionally associated with the military and armed forces in independent nation states. The D1 parade therefore becomes a quasi-military one, bearing many typical characteristics of one, yet also supplemented by civilian organisations and marked by an absence of a 'real' military. As Azaryahu notes, the ubiquitous nature of the military parade as a political ritual across substantially different states does not entail any neutrality towards the regime under which they occur.⁷⁰ Noting that they customarily take place on the national day, just as in Republika Srpska, Azaryahu goes on to point out how this temporal framework bolsters the fundamental message of the day as a foundation of the political order embodied by the state.⁷¹ The military (or its present substitute) here functions directly as a demonstration of force, an overtly repressive power of the state founds across its myriad apparatuses, but also of this force's submission to the nationally defined political leadership.

The SPC, an ostensibly non-state actor within a secular constitutional order, has also proven indispensable to the ceremonial proceedings, belonging to it being the source of much of the group making narrative utilised by ethnopolitical entrepreneurs. From the outset of its celebration, D1 was envisioned as the 'patron saint feast' of Republika Srpska, occurring on Saint Stephen's Day in the SPC's calendar, not merely as a secular celebration of the state. Even after this explicitly Eastern Orthodox character of the day was removed by the Law on State Holidays, liturgical celebrations and the presence of SPC clergy, both as honoured guests and speakers at D1's ceremonies,

⁶⁹ Foucault (n 68) 133.

⁷⁰ Maaz Azaryahu, 'The Independence Day Military Parade: A Political History of a Patriotic Ritual' in Edna Lomsky-Feder and Eyal Ben-Ari (eds), *The Military and Militarism in Israeli Society* (SUNY Series in Israeli Studies, State University of New York Press 1999) 89-116.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

have continued to be necessary parts of the repertoire of the ceremonial apparatus. Crucially, this integration of the SPC into the apparatus is not merely rhetorical, that is, it is not purely on the discursive power of the church, as a representative of the religion to which over 80% of the population belongs,⁷² that its role rests on. The church also provides active participants and important temporal and spatial framing of these events, by bringing them in connection with its own calendar and providing its churches as ceremonial sites, from the liturgies before the main proceedings of D1 to the solemn academies of D3.

As the final major collective actor, the audience, that is the vast numbers of people invited to observe and participate in the ceremonies as spectators, is in many ways the prerequisite for such a thing as a 'public ceremony'. Although many analyses of political ceremonies have a distinct focus on interpreting the 'successfulness' of said ceremonies by their immediate effect on the audience,⁷³ here I am more concerned with highlighting the role of active participation in the production of the ceremony, rather than measuring the internalisation of its message. Working with the performance studies framework, Erika Fischer-Lichte notes how 'the spectators cannot be regarded as innocent victims being manipulated by those who planned and prepared the performance', but that their participation in itself dictates the course of the performance and shapes by their response.⁷⁴ When men, women and children come together in the shared ceremonial space to view it and interact, wave Serbian tricolours, sing along to the national anthem, or simply fail to provide any resistance to the charted course of the ceremony, they provide an irreplaceable element to the apparatus' functioning. Structurally speaking, this 'audience' becomes, regardless of the actual variety of particular political opinions among them, if only temporarily, a fully integrated element of the ceremonial apparatus, from which it draws a seemingly 'popular' dimension even as it fully remains a machine in the hands of the nation state's administration.

⁷² Republika Srpska, Republički zavod za statistiku, 'Popis Stanovništva, Domaćinstava i Stanova u Republici Srpskoj 2013. Godine - Rezultati Popisa' ['Population, Households and Residences Census of Republika Srpska in 2013'] (Banja Luka: Republički zavod za statistiku Republike Srpske, 2016) <www.rzs.rs.ba/static/uploads/bilteni/popis/rezultati_popisa/Rezultati_Popisa_2013_WEB.pdf> accessed 15 September 2022.

⁷³ Uhzelać (n 51). See also Gabriella Elgenius, *Symbols of Nations and Nationalism: Celebrating Nationhood* (Palgrave Macmillan UK 2011).

⁷⁴ Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual: Exploring Forms of Political Theatre* (Routledge 2005) 111.

3.4.4. *The rhetorical element*

Within the ceremony, few things attract as much attention, both from the public and scholars alike, as the discursive practices of the principal participants. A politician mounting the rostrum to address the population in direct act of unambiguous mass political communication is the stuff of much discourse analysis as well as media attention. In as much as this work presents an effort to shift the analytic focus away from this rhetorical element and towards the structures that facilitate the realisation of the kind of mass communication that the ceremonial apparatus allows, it cannot be set aside a major facet of the ceremonies as such. Accordingly, discourse analysis inevitably forms a part of the larger structural analysis mapped out by this work.

As previously noted, the important work undertaken by Gerard Toal in applying discourse analysis specifically to the rhetorical politics of Milorad Dodik (SNSD), the preeminent ethnopolitical entrepreneur of Republika Srpska is an invaluable guide for further exploration of the kind of rhetoric necessarily employed within the ceremonial apparatus as part of the wider project of nationalism as state practice.⁷⁵ In his analysis, Toal displayed the array of rhetorical gambits that Dodik has performed throughout his career, such as his recourse to ‘democracy’ and ‘self-determination’ as justification for a zero-sum game approach in Republika Srpska’s positioning towards BiH as a country and utilising secessionist rhetoric according to the demands of electoral politics or the need to extract concessions in BiH decision-making. Importantly, however, the analysis points to a kind of structural conditioning of BiH’s Dayton framework that facilitates the rise of a particular kind of rhetoric and indeed, particular kind of politician that are both manifested in Dodik’s career.⁷⁶

Building on Toal’s approach, this work will take a further structuralist shift in observing rhetorical politics not on the level of individual actors, but on the specific positions they occupy within wider structures, as this may yield further insight into the specific dictates of the state and its apparatus placed on its participating actors regardless of their individual qualities. Within the apparatus framework, the necessary roles of a

⁷⁵ Gerard Toal, “Republika Srpska Will Have a Referendum”: The Rhetorical Politics of Milorad Dodik’ (January 2013) 41(1) Nationalities Papers 166-204.

⁷⁶ *ibid* 199.

president, a prime minister or a chief of police in conducting its work become more salient than the personal histories and political styles of Milorad Dodik, Željka Cvijanović or Aleksandar Vulin. Furthermore, while Toal's analysis includes word frequency compilation, this work is more concerned with the overall themes and semantic structures employed, being primarily qualitative in its explorations of the kind of themes and semantic structures that become attached to structural positions. The key themes of interest are thus references to 'the Serbian nation', 'the Serbian people', as well as the justification of the establishment of a polity on the basis of such a group, whether inside or outside BiH. The data for this analysis has been taken from official broadcasts of RTRS, the radio-television public broadcaster of Republika Srpska.

The Presidents and Members of the Presidency of BiH have occupied the post of primary speakers in ceremonies of D1, often alternating. Before the introduction of the parade, the solemn academies have seen them address the public first among the political leaders present, with the exception of 2016, when it was given to Prime Minister of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić.⁷⁷ In virtually every address of this type, the symbolism of the date is used as an occasion to retrace a particular version of historical events leading to the founding and continued existence of Republika Srpska as a political entity. A common theme, observed in all these addresses is the primary place of 'the Serbian people' as the collective protagonist in this narrative. Within these annual reiterations, a certain amount of discursive space is reserved for stressing the legitimacy of Republika Srpska's founding, whether in legal or moral terms, as well as the presence of 'others', in the region or elsewhere, who would seek to challenge this legitimacy. The establishment of a state is often linked not only to a 'right', but also to a 'liberty' of its protagonists, and one that is itself a guarantee of peace and not a danger to it.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ RTRS, 'Srpska obilježava Dan Republike i Krsnu slavu! (VIDEO/FOTO)' ['Srpska commemorates Republic Day and Patron Saint! VIDEO/PHOTO'] (*REPUBLIKA SRPSKA - RTRS*, 9 January 2016) <www.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=183236> accessed 10 September 2022.

⁷⁸ RTRS, 'Svečani defile za Dan Republike' (n 58).

Neither in 1992 did we, just like in 2015, want anything more than freedom, and the right to, as free and dignified people, determine our lives and the life of our descendants. Never to the detriment of others, and never against others, but always for freedom, most often also the freedom of others ... Over the years they have chipped away at the jurisdictions of the Republic, thus they have deprived us of rights, taken away from us while telling us they were doing good. At one time the foreigners have done this by force, at times also domestic politicians, perhaps because they were unaware or seduced by beautiful stories of distant prospects.⁷⁹

The value-laden terminology of ‘rights’, ‘peace’ and ‘liberty’ run through much of the presidents’ discursive repertoires. This is connected to a highly ‘pro-Dayton’ attitude expressed by a desire to maintain the original treaty and to further co-operation within BiH and outside it along its lines. Since the legal-political struggle surrounding the legality of D1 celebrations, these affirmations of legitimacy have also included the right to maintain said celebrations. The close connection of Republika Srpska’s establishment and subsequent war has also served as a source of venerating ‘those who have given their lives or limbs’ for the continued existence of Republika Srpska.⁸⁰ Despite using the supposed secular nature of the holiday during the disputes about D1’s constitutionality, the presidents have not refrained from openly calling it a patron saint day of Republika Srpska during their addresses.

During addresses for D3, rhetoric of these highest officials has been significantly more concerted towards the integrative symbolism of the First World War and the Serbian tricolour. Assertions of existential nature, as well as the confrontations involved therein, have been markedly less present. Instead, more so than in D1 addresses, Serbian national unity and the need for political collaboration between Serbia and Republika Srpska have been the focal point of the nation (and state) making associated rhetoric. Thus, while D1 has proven the preferable stage for stressing the existential justification of the day itself and Republika Srpska as a whole, D3 has instead seen the themes stressing Serbian identity as such and the future potential for political unity

⁷⁹ RTRS, ‘Dodik: Srpska - Garancija Slobode Za Srpski Narod’ [‘Dodik: Srpska - Guarantee of Freedom for Serb People’] (*YouTube*, 9 January 2015) <www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wm3OycWGYZU> accessed 10 September 2022.

⁸⁰ RTRS, ‘Svečani Defile Povodom Dana Republike’ [‘Grand Parade for Republic Day’] (n 60).

between the two Serb-dominated polities.⁸¹ In this vein, the rhetoric of oppression and deprivation of legitimate rights becomes more readily applied to the Serbian nation, rather than the entity of Republika Srpska. Thus, Serbian irredentism is apparent in the rhetorical repertoire that Republika Srpska ceremonial apparatus makes use of.

The ‘cultural’ actors, the various high-profile representatives of the culture elite called on to speak at the ceremonies, have enjoyed considerably more rhetorical leeway in their performances, and not merely in terms of more poetically rendered rhetoric. Bereft of the need to reiterate commitments to the Dayton Treaty or the standards of daily politics, they have even exemplified more intense national and state making rhetoric than the officials at times. For instance, in 2018 the address of Serbian film director Lazar Ristovski openly presented the case for the unification of Srpska with Serbia, equating the status of Serbs in BiH with those in need of shelter and Serbia being that shelter and expressing a desire for the Drina to no longer be a border between two countries,⁸² while that of another director, Emir Kusturica, included references to leading Bosniak politicians as ‘Lucifer’s apprentices’ and ‘alien to European civilization’, while the majority of Serb intellectuals were portrayed as ‘masochists’ unwilling to struggle for the Serbian national interest.⁸³

The dignitaries of Serbia, whether presidents, prime ministers or cabinet ministers, have exhibited a somewhat different rhetorical repertoire. While the same themes of Serbian unity and justification for the existence of Republika Srpska figure in their speeches,⁸⁴ they have adopted a markedly less confrontational and divisive position in their references to BiH as a state and the status of Republika Srpska within it. Continually, there have been references to lending ‘strong support’ to Republika Srpska while respecting the Dayton Agreement as its

⁸¹ RTS, ‘Svečana Akademija Povodom Dana Srpskog Jedinstva, Slobode i Nacionalne Zastave’ [‘Solemn Academy Marking Day of Serbian Unity, Freedom and National Flag’] (*YouTube*, 15 September 2020) <www.youtube.com/watch?v=AN5wIESIeug> accessed 15 September 2022.

⁸² RTRS, ‘Dan Republike Srpske - Akademija’ [‘Day of Republika Srpska - Academy’] <www.rtrs.tv/av/pusti.php?id=74224> accessed 12 September 2022.

⁸³ RTRS Vijesti, ‘Svečana Akademija Povodom 9. Januara - Dana Republike // Emir Kusturica’ [‘Solemn Academy Marking 9th of January - Republic Day // Emir Kusturica’] (*YouTube*, 9 January 2017) <www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7oTAP0YG4> accessed 15 September 2022.

⁸⁴ RTS (n 81).

obligation under international law.⁸⁵ Themes of ‘peace’, ‘stability’ and ‘regional cooperation’ are thus interspersed with more traditional group making statements, resulting in a more cautious stance, complementary to the more radical statements that may be expected of top Republika Srpska officials or the cultural actors. There seems to have been no observable variance in these general themes between D1 and D3 ceremonies, with the changes being in which specific events will be referred to as points of Serbian national unity.

Dignitaries of SPC have also been given speaking roles, having already played significant roles with relation to liturgies, spatial infrastructure and supplying a great deal of legitimacy to the entire project of Serbian group making. In his speech at the D1 solemn academy of 2022, Patriarch Porfirije has utilised themes of an all-encompassing unity of Orthodox Serbs across the territory of the former Yugoslavia and the ancient nature of the Orthodox identity (sic) of Serbs of Republika Srpska and Bosnia, but also themes of ‘Christian forgiveness’ in relation to seeking peace in on-going conflicts.⁸⁶ This may be contrasted with other messages, however, with that of other bishops and the former Patriarch in preceding years, in which it has been stressed that ‘Their patron saint is the last thing Serbs would let go of’ and that Republika Srpska represents a ‘godly and apostolic victory’, being ‘deeply woven into the souls of all Serbs’.⁸⁷ Interestingly, no church dignitaries have thus far been given speaking roles during D3 ceremonies, despite them being held directly in front of the Church of Christ the Saviour in Banja Luka.

On the whole, the rhetoric of Republika Srpska officials closely reflects the *nationalising* tendency identified by Touquet, as well as the characteristics of mnemonic warriors as described by Bernhard and Kubik. As primary ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, their intensely group making statements, which combine hints about possible independence

⁸⁵ RTRS, ‘Svečana akademija povodom 9. januara - Bez Republike Srpske nema ni BiH (VIDEO)’ [‘Solemn Academy Marking the 9th of January - Without Republika Srpska there is no BiH either’] (*REPUBLIKA SRPSKA - RTRS*, 9 January 2019) <www.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=322489> accessed 13 September 2022.

⁸⁶ Televizija Hram, ‘Obraćanje Patrijarha Porfirija Na Svečanoj Akademiji Povodom 30 Godina Republike Srpske’ [‘Address of Patriarch Porfirije at the Solemn Academy Marking 30 Years of Republika Srpska’] (*YouTube*, 8 January 2022) <www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5yt74QLDzA> accessed 11 September 2022.

⁸⁷ RTRS, ‘Patrijarh Irinej: Dan Republike radost svih Srba, ma gdje se nalazili (FOTO)’ [‘Patriarch Irinej: Republic Day the joy of all Serbs, wherever they are (FOTO)’] (*REPUBLIKA SRPSKA - RTRS*, 9 January 2020) <www.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=365416> accessed 13 September 2022.

with declarative support for the Dayton framework, set the rhetorical tone for ceremonial rhetoric. This approach is couched within two slightly different forms of rhetoric which complete the ceremonial repertoire. On one hand, the individuals delivering the yearly ‘solemn oration’, often taken from academic and cultural spheres, exercise their apparent distance from the institutional responsibilities of the state to display a more poetic, but also more ethnically charged rhetoric which at times contradicts the conciliatory elements introduced by other actors. On the other hand, the addresses by the officials of Serbia, as a rule contain more references to peace, stability and regional cooperation, with full respect towards the Dayton framework. Finally, the SPC presents a more contradictory performance, its rhetoric changing depending on context (such as between a religious service and a solemn academy of the same day) or on the church official(s) delivering it.

Taken together, these different variants of ceremonial rhetoric present a wide array of possible semantic structures, but their apparent contradictions, such as the differences between degrees of commitment to the territorial integrity of BiH, are in fact indicators of Toal’s observation that political discourse within BiH is rife with different speaking situations and messages to different audiences, often producing apparent contradictions.⁸⁸ It may be useful to observe the kind of rhetoric the ceremonial apparatus accommodates precisely in this vein – the prescribed roles of each of the actors are in fact indicative of different audiences, while sharing the uniting thread of constant reiteration of the existence and perseverance of Serbian nationhood and the necessity of it being a basis for political organising, whether within BiH, outside it as an independent polity, or within an imagined unity with the Republic of Serbia.

3.5. EXCLUSION AND COMPETITION

In subchapter 2.2., the competitive dimension of the ceremonial apparatus was highlighted as one of its principal characteristics in the given context. This competitive dimension is most obviously empirically manifested in two contentious issues surrounding the ordering of the state holiday calendar of Republika Srpska, although the temporal

⁸⁸ Toal (n 75) 172.

dimension is merely a reflection of the divisions between the competing nationalist projects within BiH.

Firstly, the legal and political struggles surrounding the establishment and continued official observance of D1 indicates much about the continued significance of the ceremonial apparatus in terms of not merely functioning as a machine of continual group making aimed at higher integration of the in-group, but of ethnopolitical mobilisation against the out-group(s). In the case of D1, it was the use of a particular date identified with a contentious event, as well as its religious dimension (although later amended), that has lent this competitive dimension, far more so than choosing an alternative date not associated with a wartime nation state-building project and one not associated with the unofficial patron saint would have. Further, in a mutual feedback loop, the resistance to such a state calendar, whether by opposing ethnopolitical entrepreneurs in the Federation or the country-level institutions, has further increased the apparatus' mobilising potential, by expanding its rhetorical repertoire in the direction of portraying the Serbs in BiH as perpetually persecuted and deprived of the right to commemorate their history. Additionally, the referendum surrounding D1 proved a useful gambit in the state making process of Republika Srpska, being portrayed as essentially a measure against further encroachment on its very existence by former Republika Srpska leadership,⁸⁹ but recognised as a precedent for a possible future independence referendum by the then-High Representative.⁹⁰

If the choice of institutionalising D1 in the ceremonial apparatus in this way has provided space for a highly charged assertion of Republika Srpska's jurisdiction and a site of overt mnemonic conflict, the case of D2 provides a much different, though not less significant element to the apparatus – the element of exclusion. On its own, a holiday with virtually no associated commemorations or attached government activities save

⁸⁹ Nedeljnik, 'Bivši Član Predsedništva BiH o Referendumu: Ako Ne Sačuvamo Deveti Januar, Udarice i Na Ime Srpske' ['Former Member of BiH Presidency on Referendum: If We Don't Save January 9th, They Will Also Attack the Name of Srpska'] (*Nedeljnik*) <nedeljnik.rs/nedeljnik/portalnews/bivsi-clan-predsednistva-bih-o-referendumu-ako-ne-sacuvamo-deveti-januar-udarice-i-na-ime-srpske> accessed 8 September 2022.

⁹⁰ Office of the High Representative, 'Special Report on a Referendum in Republika Srpska against Bosnia and Herzegovina State Constitutional Court Decisions' (Office of the High Representative, 21 October 2016) <www.ohr.int/special-report-on-a-referendum-in-republika-srpska-against-bosnia-and-herzegovina-state-constitutional-court-decisions/> accessed 15 September 2022.

for being a non-working day would not appear as a particularly politically charged facet of the ceremonial apparatus. However, by declaring 21 November as a state holiday which marks the signing of the Dayton Peace Treaty, the governments of Republika Srpska have produced a site of memory whose role is much more important by virtue of what it is *not*, what is *not* done to mark it, rather than what is. Crucially, D2 is not 25 November, the date of Statehood Day in FBiH. The glaring absences of D2 are made meaningful by their distance from another calendar and the elaborate ceremonies of a different ceremonial apparatus.

This dynamic reveals that the commemorative apparatus, especially within the political configuration of BiH, draws heavily on *negation* as much as *creation*. I argue that this process is different than that of Connerton's typology of social forgetting,⁹¹ which would be much more apt in an analysis of the policies of Republika Srpska's attitudes towards wartime events such as in Srebrenica or Prijedor, and shows some weaknesses in addressing the matter purely from a memory studies framework. It is not necessary for the ceremonial apparatus to outright deny or forget a contentious event, merely to produce its own counter-event, which, as has been seen, need not even boast its own choreographies, its use fully achieved by the mere fact of what it isn't.

⁹¹ Paul Connerton, 'Seven Types of Forgetting' (2008) 1(1) Memory Studies 59.

CONCLUSION

The variegated and multifaceted nature of a Foucaultian apparatus may prove too great for it to ever be accurately described in each of its constituent elements and major participants. This does not, however, negate the value of mapping out the key points along which such an apparatus is constituted and operates, as I have endeavoured to display in the case of ceremonies centred on a set of institutionalised holidays in Republika Srpska. As has been displayed, such an undertaking is necessarily an interdisciplinary one, drawing on various insights outside of the field of critical social theory that facilitate the work of concretising the basic premises laid out by the original concept.

In choosing to analyse the entity of Republika Srpska as a *state*, I have relied on a less rigid definition of the term in order to not just reflect the kind of structures – reminiscent of a nation state – it has been able to develop, but also to provide a perspective on the state as a process much less binary than it may superficially appear, informed by Touquet's notion of 'state becoming'. Crucially, I have endeavoured to show that the political practice of nationalism by a nation state is a practice significantly different, both in scope and method, from other kinds of nationalist practice, such as personal declarations of belonging or bottom-up mobilisations informed by a nationalist worldview. Just like becoming a state may be viewed in continuous terms, it has been equally useful to think of national grouping in the same way in relation to the state, as a kind of political work that is grounded in concrete relations, institutions and practices that require constant movement and renewal for the maintenance of the state itself.

This political work has been, within Republika Srpska but with constant reference to BiH, been shown as one characterised by the dynamic of competition and exclusion, of seemingly contradictory messages and deliberate shaping of time, of spatial organising and judicial struggles. These dynamics, coupled with a fractured regime of remembrance, nearly always tied to specific holidays and commemorations, have produced a highly contentious ceremonial apparatus which reflects the intense level of national grouping within the post-conflict society as a whole. Not being a full-fledged nation state with international recognition, with all the ceremonial hallmarks of one, Republika Srpska's ceremonies have necessarily reflected the tensions associated with an as yet unfulfilled national project within a nationally coded political system legitimised in

the very constitution of BiH. Its liminality, its lack of certain attributes of the state, therefore manifests itself in its ceremonies by grandiose displays of military power, by powerful political pronouncements about future ruptures with BiH, by institutional structures devoted (almost) exclusively to contentious ceremonies – the state may be said to be *overperformed*, in compensation for an unsatisfactory political reality. In addition to the entity's governments and this kind of over-performance, an important aspect of this apparatus has proceeded from its shared national principle with an existing independent nation state, being bolstered by the government of Serbia and the SPC in its ceremonial proceedings.

Some shortcomings of this approach should also be acknowledged. First, the lack of governmental transparency and decision-making procedures may make a complete mapping of the functioning of any apparatus a necessarily incomplete undertaking. Not only are bureaucratic procedures within ministries, governmental agencies and departments often closed to public scrutiny, but commonly also rest on informal connections, bylaws and unspoken agreements between institutions and those within their structures. This particularly includes, as already noted, opaque allocations of government funds, with little publicly available information about the funding of sub-departmental administrative units. This is also notable in exploring the wider political economy of a ceremonial apparatus in that contractors, investors and other economic actors which cooperate with state authorities are difficult to accurately trace and analytically separate from the state structures themselves. Third, the framework of the apparatus in the present context, being so structurally oriented, offers little in terms of analysis of individual motivations and ideological positioning in relation to the ceremonies, the explication of which may require integration of further disciplines, such as political psychology and more individualised discourse analysis.

The rather limited scope of this thesis' mapping attempts allows for further explorations, of which I will identify three that may be particularly productive in tracing the use of ceremonies for national purposes. Firstly, the temporal dimension, limited to a single decade, may be expanded in order to trace the evolution and use of the ceremonial apparatus, particularly given the changes of ruling parties prior to 2012. Secondly, while I have chosen to identify three holidays, unique in their significance for group making, the group making

potential of other holidays in Republika Srpska may be further explored, along with their (re)appropriation from being parts of prior ceremonial apparatuses, such as those inherited from the former Yugoslav state. Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, the geographically limited scope of this research, imposed by the understandable limits of a single thesis, constitutes merely one section, if the most prominent, of the entity-wide functioning of the ceremonial apparatus. Across different municipalities, particularly those with less nationally homogenous population, the local dynamics of negotiation and contestation of state ceremonies may reveal further dimensions that are not immediately visible with a focus on Banja Luka. Each of the explored elements may manifest themselves differently on the local level, with prominent local politicians, issues of spatial situation, economic capacities and possible opposition likely figuring much more highly than in the largest of Republika Srpska's municipalities.

Finally, the analytical framework of the ceremonial apparatus may present a useful tool in future explorations of subjects such as memory politics and state practices of commemoration in the region, offering a different, more structurally oriented lens to a field already rich in scholarship, but at times oriented to such a degree towards the frameworks of pure discourse analysis or various one stemming from performance studies to fully appreciate the material practices and sophisticated systems needed to execute such a salient element of the practice of state nationalism.

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