Conjuring “the people”

The 2013 Babylution protests and desire for political transformation in postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina

Larisa Kurtović

Abstract: In June 2013, a breakdown in the routine functioning of state bureaucracy sparked the largest and up to that point most significant wave of protests in postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina, named the Bosnian Babylution. The protest centered on the plight of newborn babies who, because of this particular administrative problem, could no longer be issued key documents, even to travel outside the country for life-saving medical care. These events exposed the profound nature of the representational crisis gripping this postwar, postsocialist, and postintervention state that has emerged at the intersection of ethnic hyper-representation and the lived experience of the collapse of biopolitical care. Yet, as this analysis shows, this crisis has also helped unleash new forms of political desire for revolutionary rupture and reconstitution of the postwar political.

Keywords: Bosnia-Herzegovina, ethnic nationalism, political subjectivity, popular sovereignty, protest movements

In June 2013, after years of mounting political discontent and periodic expectation of a large-scale civic¹ insurrection, the sleepy streets of Bosnian-Herzegovinian cities and towns suddenly filled with protesters. This wave of demonstrations—eventually nicknamed the JMBG protests or the Babylution (Bebolucija, or baby revolution)—was sparked by a dramatic if unsurprising political scandal. Six months before the protests, a standoff between nationalist parties in the Bosnian parliament led to the suspension of the law regulating the issuing of “JMBG” numbers,² personal identifiers used in nearly all administrative encounters between citizens and

the state. The interruption of this routine process eventually became a life-threatening problem for Belmina Ibišević, a three-month-old baby in dire need of specialized medical care that was only available in Germany. Because Belmina had never been assigned a JMBG number, she could not be issued a passport needed for travel outside of Bosnian borders.

Baby Belmina’s plight exemplified the absurd and frequently outrageous costs borne by Bosnian citizens amid ongoing quarrels between the country’s governing nationalist parties, which have persisted long after the infamous 1992–1995 Bosnian War. The disagreement at hand

was not at all unusual, since such disputes have become routine fixtures of postwar political life.³ However, this time, with the life of a sick newborn at stake, many Bosnian citizens were losing both their patience and their postwar ambivalence about direct political engagement. On 6 June, a group of eight self-organized Sarajevans used cars and their own bodies to surround the building and block the entrances to the parliament.⁴ They were joined by dozens of other “occupiers,” who announced that they would not let the parliamentarians out until they reached an agreement and resolved Ibišević’s problem. Although this blockade was ultimately broken by police forces, the group’s singular act sparked numerous new demonstrations across the country (see Figure 1). Dubbed “the revolution that would unite Bosnia,” the protests were widely seen by international media and political analysts as the first real popular challenge to institutionalized ethnic nationalism, and a new sign of hope for this war-tormented and politically di-

vided country (see Armakolas and Maksimović 2013; Dedović 2013; Mujanović 2013).

This article seeks to expand on the few existing scholarly accounts of the protests that focus on the postnational character of the mobilization (e.g., Eminagić and Vujović n.d.; Ferlež 2014; Keil and Moore 2014; Mujkić 2014; cf. Jansen 2015) and in so doing offer a twofold argument. First, Babylution’s challenge to the postwar establishment did more than reveal the limit of the consociational ethnic power-sharing mechanisms on which the Dayton-designed state had been built (Hromadžić 2015). A breakdown in the routine functioning of a state bureaucracy led Bosnian citizens to observe that they were “not even numbers”—in other words, that they had ceased to be governed and administered subjects (see also Jansen 2015: 232). By formulating the problem in this way, protesters exposed more than the ongoing crisis of governance; their mobilization also revealed the profound nature of the political deficit lying at

FIGURE 1: Evening protest in front of the Bosnian parliament, with the symbol of Babylution projected against the Parliament building’s façade (photograph by Almir Panjeta, used with permission).

the heart of the postwar state (Dzenovska and De Genova, this issue). This deficit has emerged at the intersection of ethnic hyper-representation—embodied in the multiple and overlapping levels of government protecting various ethnic interests (see Mujkić 2014)—and the everyday, lived experience of the collapse of biopolitical care. Second, as protests went on, those participating in them attempted to move past the initial demand for JMBG numbers, “framed through an extremely elementary, drily bureaucratic register of citizenship” (Jansen 2015: 227), and in doing so conjure not only a unified and postnationalist but also more transformational kind of “us.” In this way, they expressed anticipatory desires that haunt not only the Bosnian but also many other political landscapes marked by a similar loss of faith in a transformative futurity.⁵ In fact, Babylution’s quest to generate a new political subject (see also Mujkić 2014) that could be a vehicle of political transformation was its most important and most difficult task, one at which it was only partially successful.

The ethnographic analysis that follows doubles as an anthropological engagement with the strand of post-Marxist political theory that has over the past decades grappled with the problem of constituting political collectivities in late liberal-capitalist⁶ societies (Hardt and Negri 2004; Laclau 2005; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; see also Butler 2015; Dean 2015). What interests me in particular is the way in which mass protests, social movements, and popular mobilizations have reemerged as the pivotal points for thinking about possibilities and promises of political transformation—precisely because they appear capable of birthing a new political subject with constituent power. A recent resurgence of scholarly interest in populism and popular sovereignty (e.g., Kalyvas 2005; Laclau 2005; Negri [1999] 2009; see also Graeber 2009) has helped liberate “the people” from their association with both primordial nationalism and revolutionary terror, while also rendering them into the central pillar of hope for more immediate, unmediated, and less alienated forms of political community that could remedy the current disenchantments

with both liberal (and illiberal) democracies (see also Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008).⁷ The return of “the people” therefore indexes a desire for a moment in which constitutive power re-founds the political order (see Frank 2010).

However, an ethnographic examination of such would-be moments reveals that “the people” are not simply a vehicle for political reconstitution, but are a complex collectivity, punctuated by multiple and at times antagonistic histories. Despite that, an appeal to a more pure and uncorrupted notion of peoplehood persists as an object of political desire—even and perhaps *especially* under overdetermined political conditions, such as the ones found in postwar Bosnia. As I show in this analysis, the power of mass political action—like the Babylution (or the Tahrir Square uprisings, or antiausterity mobilizations in Spain and Greece, etc.)—lies in its ability to produce a certain kind of political surplus that feeds bigger desires and dreams.

The first part of this article contextualizes the parliamentary crisis that led to the suspension of the issuing of JMBG numbers. The following section gives texture to the material practices of protest and the concomitant attempts to articulate a different narrative about the postwar political. Next, I chronicle the Babylution’s last protest and its immediate aftermath, which saw a partial collapse of some of the more ambitious—perhaps even “maximalist”—hopes that emerged over the monthlong protest (cf. Jansen 2015). I then return to the theoretical argument by critically examining the desire for mass politics as a vehicle for transformation. Finally, I end with an analytical challenge posed to me by one of the protests’ participants, and some thoughts on what might be playfully obscured in the phrase “baby revolution.”

Babylution within and without Dayton nationalism

The dispute over the JMBG numbers began in May 2011, when the Constitutional Court of

Bosnia-Herzegovina declared the current law unconstitutional because of a purely technical matter—the fact that it did not list the new names of some of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian municipalities (Armakolas and Maksimović 2013: 4). But this technical issue exploded into a larger problem when the representatives of Bosnian Muslims and Serbs began to clash over whether the new personal identifiers should contain information about ethnic origin. Bosnian Serbs, who favor decentralization, supported the introduction of ethnic information into the identifiers. By contrast, Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) political parties, whose own (anti)nationalist rhetoric lays claim to unitary institutions and a shared national identity, opposed this idea because it would lead to further ethnicization of the population. When the parliamentarians missed their deadline for agreement, the court suspended the issuing of JMGB numbers—kick-starting the administrative crisis that left many newborn babies without formal documents.

The JMGB parliamentary stalemate was symptomatic of larger political problems, which stem both from the nationalist wars and the awkward consociational arrangements that grew out of the Dayton Accords, whose Annex IV today doubles as the country's constitution. Dayton is a paradoxical document—a top-down, US-brokered directive that emerged out of tense negotiation between nationalist elites representing Bosnia's "warring ethnic groups." According to the Dayton constitution, sovereignty lies in the hands of the three "constitutive peoples" (*konstitutivni narodi*), Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks), Serbs, and Croats, whose "vital national interests" must be carefully guarded through complex forms of consociational power sharing and new geospatial divisions that have effectively divided Bosnia into ethnic enclaves.⁸ Many Dayton critics see the new state composition as legitimating of wartime ethnic cleansing (e.g., Campbell 1998; Chandler 2000; see also Hayden 1999); others point out that these geospatial forms of governmentality mapped ethnicity onto territory in historically unprecedented ways (Ćurak 2004; Hromadžić 2015).

The cumbersome administrative structure, defined by multiple and overlapping governmental bodies, also renders inevitable protracted nationalist disagreements. This problem is especially acute in the Muslim-Croat Federation, which is subsequently divided into 10 cantons, five of which are Muslim dominated, three of which are predominantly Croat, and two that are mixed and characterized by complex forms of ethnic segregation. By contrast, Republika Srpska (RS) is centralized—over the past decade, a single domineering political party has used its influence to build up its entity-level institutions and make it appear far more orderly and state-like. For example, the RS government responded to the JMGB law suspension by issuing an ordinance that allowed its entity-level institutions to issue temporary personal identifiers to newborn babies—hence making it appear as if the suspended law was a nonissue in RS.

The asymmetric expression of this particular administrative problem mimicked the uneven distribution of the protests across the country. Despite the hopeful claims about Babylution's unifying force, citizens living in the Serb-dominated areas of the country did not come out in the streets, except in small and largely symbolic numbers. What's more, coterminous protests of students in Banja Luka over corruption and poor conditions at the universities publicly distanced themselves from the Babylution. RS students did not want to be perceived as allies of political mobilization originating from Sarajevo, since such an endorsement might have cost them some support among the nationalists in their own communities (Armakolas and Maksimović 2013: 6–7; see also Gjenero 2013). Yet, despite this apparent lack of solidarity between protests, opinion polls conducted across the entire country indicated popular support for the movement was high, not only in the federation but also in RS.

In other parts of the country, Babylution did openly challenge the hegemonic nationalist logic (see [Figure 2](#)). For example, the ethnically divided city of Mostar in Herzegovina experienced during this 2013 summer its first

FIGURE 2: A cover of the weekly magazine *Dani* (Days) featured the symbol of the Babylution—the clenched fist emerging out of a pacifier (reprinted with permission).

nonethnic mobilization, when young Muslims and Croats came out in support of the *Babylution*. The same was true in many other smaller towns across the country, where the plight of newborn babies and the indifference of state officials struck a deep chord. Importantly, this was not the first time in the postwar period that the plight of children had become a mobilizing force in the Bosnian public sphere. In 2008, the murder of a 16-year-old high school student, Denis Mrnjavac, by three other underage boys sparked a months-long wave of protests that linked the rise of violent juvenile crime to the perceived disappearance of regulatory and disciplinary capacities of the postwar state (Kurtović 2012). At that time, activists attempted to displace dominant nationalist tropes by highlighting the demise of biopolitical care and the unresponsiveness of the postwar political establishment to the needs of ordinary people. What's more, just like the 2013 *Babylution*, the Mrnjavac protests also foregrounded the concern for children whose acute vulnerability—as well as possible corruption personified in the figure of the “young delinquent”—became seen as the deeply troubling legacy of the (post)war disorder (see also Kurtović 2016).⁹ A crucial point of contention in both instances was the lack of recognition by and the perceived absence (or rather, retraction) of a caring governmental power.

This retraction was particularly noticeable and troublesome in this postsocialist context, where the state's injunction to protect and nurture life had been, and was expected to once again become, a key vehicle for political legitimation (Petryna 2002).¹⁰ These present-day expectations drew on the past presence of a strong biopolitical regime, which, as Stephen Collier (2011) has shown, formed a crucial part of the socialist states' efforts to catapult its population into social modernity. The “postpresence” (see Dunn 2008) of this strong socialist state haunts the postwar political society with particular force, shaping social expectations and anxieties in ways both big and small.

By contrast, the postwar state has been perceived as having failed to secure conditions for social reproduction. Over the years, the collapse

of postwar biopolitics and the crumbling economy have led to a deepening demographic crisis stemming from below-replacement fertility rates (see Jansen and Helms 2009) and increasing emigration necessitated by high unemployment. Yet, despite this demographic situation, the nationalist political establishment appeared to be largely indifferent to the fates of Bosnia's newly born citizens. By contrast, Bosnian citizens themselves became deeply interpellated by this newest chapter of the postwar crisis. Even though disarray in other postsocialist biopolitical apparatuses (including hospitals, social security, and disability benefits) has been an enduring object of social and political critique, it was the collapse of the JMBG administration that became the unlikely cause for a major political mobilization.

Anatomy of the protest: Conjuring a different kind of “us”

When the protests began, the JMBG movement was an instant success, garnishing nearly universal support both inside and outside of Bosnia. The Bosnian public was especially supportive of the initial act of the parliament blockade, and even more amused that a delegation of foreign bankers was caught in the “cross fire” during a random visit to the Bosnian parliament. It was difficult not to like the *Babylution*—with its parade of babies in strollers, its adorable hordes of children armed with coloring books (see [Figure 3](#)), its stuffed animals menacing the police officers (see [Figure 4](#)), and its humorous, though often also quite antagonistic, protest signs (see [Figure 5](#))—*Babylution* looked like a dignified challenge to the dysfunctional nationalist government. Even periods of pause were significant: on the day parliamentarians finally met to devise a temporary solution for the Ibišević family, the organizers put up signs: “Shhh! The parliament is working!” across the parliamentary square. Model citizenship was further performed in the spontaneous acts of postprotest cleanup, while the blockade of the main thoroughfares also turned the street into a giant playground. Such

FIGURE 3: Playgrounds for children were an essential part of the protest landscape (photograph by Selma Boračić-Mršo, reprinted with permission).

FIGURE 4: Police forces and stuffed animals (photograph by Selma Boračić-Mršo, reprinted with permission).

FIGURE 5: A message to the authorities by the children's play camp: "Killers of: babies, children, citizens, morality, Bosnia, law, sun, future, liberty, childhood, progress" (photograph by Larisa Kurtović).

tactics bolstered the overall impression that the JMBG mobilization was a protest of urban middle classes, “nice people” who relied on calm and nonviolent means to voice their political grievances.

Despite their undeniable class-based sensibility, these material, aesthetic, and embodied forms of protests harnessed by the Babylution went a long way in producing a sense of political momentum, as well as in generating a new type of protest sociality predicated upon an “affective and visceral togetherness” (Dzenovska and Arenas 2012: 646; see also Butler 2015). By occupying the site of the parliamentary square, either with thousands of bodies, as was the case during the largest, 11 June protest, or with various objects and protest signs during periods of quiet, the protestors laid a claim on the space that literally represented Bosnia’s imperfect and inadequate postwar democratic order.

Nevertheless, the powerful affective and material façade of the protests could not fully alleviate uncertainties about which strategies and forms of articulation could turn Babylution into a transformative political force. Initially, protesters came up with a list of four demands, including a new JMBG law and a new solidarity fund that could help ill citizens who could not obtain adequate care in Bosnia. The fund was to be financed through 30 percent cuts in parliamentarians’ salaries. The last demand focused on amnesty for the eight original occupiers of the parliament. Still, these relatively straightforward initial demands could not substitute for a much more daunting task of producing a narrative about the protests that would speak to the larger political predicament at the heart of the Dayton state. A crucial hurdle lay in the fact that pushing for any solution to the stalemate in the parliament meant effectively promoting the proposal of Bosnian Serbs, which would lead to further ethnic divisions. For many principled antinationalists—including many Babylution activists—such a proposal was a bitter pill to swallow. However, many organizers also felt an acute need for an actual solution that would both resolve Ibišević’s problem and galvanize

citizens regardless of ethnicity. Amid all this, they also continually guarded themselves against co-optation by any particular political party.

During a televised debate, then 46-year-old Zoran Ivančić, a long-term activist and one of the original eight who staged the blockade of the parliament, emphatically proclaimed that the substance of the agreement was less important than coming up with a solution. When other guests pressed him that willingness to endorse *any solution* was a means of blowing wind into the sails of Serb nationalist agenda, Zoran retorted by claiming he was interested not in the question of national representation but rather why no one in the government was interested in doing their jobs and helping the Ibišević family.

This deep pragmatism that Zoran enacted in the TV studio drew on an increasingly common model of performative disruption among Bosnian civic activists that sought to expose the fictional authority and the “common sense” of nationalist discourse. Such pragmatism also revealed that many in the activist community had come to reluctantly accept the reality created by the Dayton regime. Predicated as it was on war and ethnic cleansing, pragmatists understood that Dayton was there to stay and had to be made livable. In our subsequent conversation, Šemsudin Maljević, who along with Zoran helped stage the initial parliament blockade, has likewise insisted on the pragmatic character of the JMBG protest embodied in its simple, straightforward, and limited demands, the chief of them “to make possible for the children to obtain medical treatment outside of the country” (pers. comm., July 2017). “Nowhere in our demands did we put that the [legal] solution needed to look like this or that—we wanted a solution, which we got, in the end.”¹¹

Still, that the main demand of the protestors effectively called for a compromise within the Dayton structure did not always register in the larger public, where some went as far as to say Babylution spelled the end of nationalist politics. But an actual legal solution would likely lead to introducing further ethnic designations into personal documentation. Even some of the

organizers had ambivalent feelings about this problem. Weeks later, during a planning meeting, one of the activists asked, “Do we really mean it when we say that we will accept absolutely any permanent solution?” At that time, she received no direct response.

Uncertainty about how the protesters should position themselves vis-à-vis rival nationalist agendas was made worse by the absence of coterminous large-scale protests in Republika Srpska. Some people to whom I spoke justified this absence by pointing to the manipulative discourse of the Serb politicians and RS media. While protests were happening, residents of RS were treated to a barrage of conspiracy theories on state-controlled TV, which tried to convince them that the Babylution was an attempt to intimidate the Bosnian Serb representatives in the parliament in the name of Bosniak unitarism.

Very small, symbolic protests of solidarity *did* take place in major cities in Republika Srpska, but they were attended by the usual groups of activists who already have strong alliances with their counterparts in the Federation. Some people took road trips to Sarajevo to join the protests in the capital. At one point, a delegation from Sarajevo decided to go to Banja Luka to perform a photo op, even though their local allies were themselves on the way to the capital for another meeting. Banja Luka-based activists, who worked hard to promote the cause of the Babylution in their own communities and did not think such an action of Sarajevans was a good idea, were both surprised and confused by the unwillingness of their contacts to listen to their pleas and turn back around. This moment of disagreement further illuminated the internal fractures and lack of unified national strategy that marked Babylution as a political event.

Meanwhile, in order to field accusations that they were covert Bosniak nationalists, organizers constantly had to police overt expressions of “unitarism,” including the use of symbols of the Bosnian wartime state, flags and lilies, whose appearance was deemed risky. Instead, protest parades sought to conjure a much more ambiguous and inclusive idea of “us.” A particularly

poignant sign carried in the hands of several young women read: “*We ... are no longer to be found in the JMBG numbers, or in our bank accounts or in the half-empty garbage containers or in the torn-out school benches ... We do not exist. We are but a dream.*” The tragic poetry of their message spoke not simply of nationalist fragmentation and postwar impoverishment but of a multifaceted experience of desubjectification, dispossession, and erasure. The traffic in these powerful modes of affect created a deep sense of solidarity among the protesters. Protesters often sang old antifascist songs and resurrected rock protest ballades. The music, as well as the free concerts that took place during the protests, amplified the prospect that a certain kind of “us” may in fact still be possible.

This collective “we” was also predicated on a new vision of a transformed political subjectivity, conjured through testimonies, confessions, and posters. During the Babylution, someone covered the city in fliers that read: “I asked myself why doesn’t someone do something ... and then I realized that *I* was that someone.” Local musician Damir Imamović offered via social media: “There are days when I wish I lived somewhere else. Simply put, it would be easier. But today, there is just no place where I’d rather be.” Imamović’s confession indexed a type of subjective transformation that often accompanies direct political engagement; the anthropologist Maple Razsa (2015) indexes this phenomenon under the rubric of a “subjective turn.” Regardless of whether the protests succeed in realizing their demands, they often become a formative experience to the people who participate in them. On the parliamentary square, among balloons, babies, and thousands of others, the Babylution called, “Come out to the streets, because we are building the future.”

Babylution’s last march: 1 July and the politics of disappointment

Babylution’s response to the Bosnian representational and biopolitical crisis was to reimagine

the protesting masses as a key agent of political change. By bringing thousands into the streets, the mobilization blasted open a moment of political possibility, so much so that it was very quickly, uncharacteristically, and hyperbolically branded a revolution. More than a mere scenario for envisioning an alternative to nationalism, the Babylution was expected to become an incarnation of constituent power, a moment that would generate a new collective subject, endowed with force and legitimacy to initiate a long-desired political and social transformation.

The considerable size of the 2013 uprising also reawakened Sarajevo-based activists, among whom I had been conducting research during previous years. Several of them were part of the original crew that staged the blockade of the parliament. Some, like my long-term interlocutors (then 34-year-old) Šemsudin and (40-something) Dinko, took on publicly visible roles, mobilizing their growing logistical and

organizational know-how to set in motion a series of new events. After days of impatiently following new developments over social media, I too arrived in Sarajevo, just in time for the 1 July protest (see Figure 6), which aspired to be the largest and most concentrated to date.

On the day before, I had made my way to the logistical ground zero of the protests: the new headquarters of Citizen Action, the grassroots activist organization focused on governmental accountability whose founding I followed back in 2008, now conveniently located in close proximity to the national parliament. There, I found Dinko and several other familiar faces,¹² surrounded by an army of young volunteers, who were making protest signs and copying fliers. Lying on the floor were the unopened bags with bright orange nylon vests reserved for volunteers who would act as informal security guards at tomorrow’s protest—for, as I soon learned, the organizers had received telephone threats

FIGURE 6: Poster signs announcing the 1 July protest (photograph by Larisa Kurtović).

and now feared paid thugs would try to instigate violence to damage the public perception of the mobilization.

Despite these pressures, the atmosphere at the office seemed jovial and full of hope. For Dinko, the Babylution created possibilities that had not existed in Bosnia since the spring of 2008, when he and his collaborators had first come out into the streets to protest the collapse of the juvenile system. In contrast to other post-2008 mobilizations, which were characterized by sporadic, small-scale, theatrical street actions (and which are chronicled in Kurtović 2012), the Bosnian Babylution led significant numbers of people to the streets. This new reality impressed Dinko, who volunteered to me elatedly, “We finally have the numbers” (*Konačno imamo tu masovnost*). Indeed, the protests’ *masovnost* was precisely the shift for which these long-term activists had been hoping for years.

The 1 July protest kicked off at 10 o’clock the following morning. The demonstration was framed as the end point of an ultimatum directed at parliament, which was expected to pass the new JMBG law or, alternatively, “be dismissed” (*dobiti otkaz*). The date was also dubbed “a day of civil disobedience”—citizens were instructed to refrain from any economic activity through which the state collected taxes. Although the organizers promised they would not try to reoccupy the parliament, they hoped to make their case by gathering a massive crowd of supporters from all over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

To be clear, the key demand of the protest was in many ways symbolic: how the political elite would be punished for noncompliance remained unclear. The organizers seemed to believe that a plan of action would organically flow from the assembly of breathing bodies. And so, the next day, there was no preformulated scenario; rather, the protest became a prolonged waiting session for more people to arrive. Šemsudin Maljević and local actor Feđa Štukan, two unofficial and somewhat accidental leaders of the movement, were on the street and occasionally addressed the crowd. Young demonstrators brought signs with humorous but scathing cri-

tiques and caricatures of the local politicians (see Figure 7). Babies played with crayons and coloring books under a tent specifically designated for them. The speakers blasted familiar protest songs of politically engaged bands. Over the next few hours, various groups of protesters kept arriving, joining the sizable yet unimpressive crowd. Some stuck around for hours; others left quickly after realizing “nothing much” was happening.

The apparent vacuum in the program allowed fringe groups such as the Bosniak nationalist “anti-Dayton group” to take the stage and the megaphone, and in so doing create awkward and politically damaging situations that included displays of wartime symbols of the Bosnian army that Bosnian Croats and Serbs find alienating and excluding. Organizers and many protest participants were horrified: the activities of Anti-Dayton undermined their inclusive, non-nationalist agenda to its very core. The group’s last antic—the singing of the wartime Bosnian anthem in front of the constitutional court—dealt the final blow to the protests, by literally sending people home.

The following day, the media proclaimed the protests a gigantic failure. In a widely circulated column entitled, “Where did Babylution go wrong?” journalist and commentator Vuk Bačanović made a pun out of the motto “Dismissal” (*Ostavke!*) by claiming that the protesters had only gotten themselves fired from what he termed “political kindergarten.” Bačanović criticized the organizers for their naïve calls for civil disobedience, their lack of understanding of the economic boycott and the mechanics of allocation of tax funds, and for allowing Anti-Dayton to sabotage their much-anticipated protest. Foremost, however, Bačanović went after the disappointment about the small size of the crowd, a problem he tied to the organizers’ own tactical failures.

Bačanović’s public dismissal of the protests—made all the worse by the fact he himself is a leftist and politically sympathetic—prompted a series of public and semipublic denouncements among participants and supporters of the pro-

FIGURE 7: 1 July protest sign: “Trash rules until the people have had it—Dismissed” (photograph by Larisa Kurtović).

tests. But this outrage aimed at Bačanović was hiding the anger and disappointment that the organizers themselves shared. In the aftermath, the activist community organized a series of large meetings debating what went wrong and how to move forward. Some among those in attendance wondered if the low turnout was a reflection of a tactical mistake or of a structural problem; others emphasized the costs of spontaneity and the lack of a coherent ideological narrative, to which some others responded with a call to “occupy now” and articulate later. The neophyte protesters put forward suggestions to found a new organization or perhaps a political party—ideas that the veterans for whom such proposals were “roads already traveled” swiftly rejected. Activists who traveled to Sarajevo from other parts of Bosnia found the impending disintegration of the Babylution particularly difficult to accept: how were they to return

home to tell people in their communities who for the first time took to the streets that it was now all over?

In the end, the very meetings that were supposed to remedy the crisis became the harbinger of Babylution’s end. Meanwhile, I was left pondering both Bačanović’s invocation of “political kindergarten” and the question of how achieving a high turnout—in Dinko’s words *masovnost*—rather than getting the new JMBG bill passed became the primary measure of political success. Adding to my confusion was a strong suspicion—born out of an eight-hour-long attendance of the 1 July protest—that the turnout had been better than most realized. The problem was rather that those who came did not stick around because nothing seemed to be happening. Whether a less transient accumulation of bodies in the parliamentary square would have made a difference that day is impossible

to know in retrospect. However, stepping back from that protest, a different question altogether emerges: how did these protesting masses ever become infused with such great expectations?

Politics of numbers: Interrogating popular sovereignty

Even though the Babylution arose in response to a specific crisis, as a political event it had from the start been infused—for better or worse—by desire for major political change. Analysts and commentators named Babylution the most important event in Bosnian postwar history (Mujanović 2013), precisely because the masses seemed to carry an unexplored political potential. Outraged citizenry, united in its worry for newborn babies and its overwhelming frustration with the political establishment, arose as an authentic face of the complex and discombobu-

lated political community that matured under the conditions of the Dayton Accords. The community reconstituted itself on the very grounds of the parliamentary square (see Figure 8) where it had been violently shattered on 5 April 1992, during antiwar protests that ended in the murder of two young Sarajevan women, Suada Dilberović and Olga Sučić, by a sniper mounted on the roof of a nearby building. It was through this series of events that Bosnians learned not so much about the power but about the helplessness of the masses in the face of weapons and far larger political agendas. This scene dovetailed with V. P. Gagnon's (2006) assertion that the Yugoslav wars were predicated on mass political demobilization rather than a populist uprising.

The debate about the capacity of the masses to remake the world summons long-standing discussions in political theory about whether “the people” can be a positive force of transformation. Appeals to popular will have appeared

FIGURE 8: Babylution's crowds (photograph by Amra Terzić, reprinted with permission).

most recently in the context of the Arab Spring, the rise of Podemos in Spain and SYRIZA in Greece, and in the famous Occupy Wall Street mantra, “We are the 99%.” In their effort to re-imagine a leftist populism, these movements and parties have rejected the traditional xenophobia and isolationism that have given populism a bad name. Hence, they have shown that the transideological character of populist politics is not an accidental by-product but a constitutive part of its claim on the political (see also Taguieff 1997). In the words of the political theorist Jason Frank, “populism’s defining claim [is] to transcend the authorized but corrupted institutions of popular representations through a unifying appeal to unmediated popular voice” (2017: 631).

Populism’s disdain for the exigencies of political rule and its insistence on the primacy of ethical questions has bolstered both its radical democratic credentials and proximity to the specters of tyranny and terror. Historically, the masses were often seen as a source of political danger rather than hope or remedy (Greenberg 2010), a line of argumentation that is most associated with Gustave Le Bon’s ([1896] 2001) thesis on the mindlessness of crowds; for a critique, see Mazzarella 2010). During the Cold War, mass politics often served as a synonym for “totalitarianism”—democracy’s most profound other. Such forms of representation routinely obscured the emancipatory promise of global, anticolonial socialism (whose subject was indeed the colonized and racialized masses) and the comparably disciplining character of democratic institutions and mass performances of political citizenship (see esp. Mazzarella 2010).

In her book *Crowds and Party*, Jodi Dean (2015) argues the twenty-first century ushered in a profound transformation in the view of mass politics, perhaps best exemplified by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s (2005) elaboration of the concept of the multitude. In contrast to past notions of class, the multitude is not a unified collectivity but one that arises through a myriad of localized and perhaps even incommensurable struggles, each of which, at least in

theory, chips at the heart of neoliberal, imperialist, and life-destroying empire (Dean 2015: 53–54). Through these autonomous struggles, free of constraints of overarching organization, ideology, or program, Hardt and Negri reimagine the possibilities of mass political contestation. Many anthropologists have documented these coterminous struggles; some have even attempted to theorize them through frameworks associated with radical democracy and the anarchist tradition (e.g., Juris 2008; J. Scott 2009).

Yet what these intellectual traditions obscure is the centrality of institutional and historical context to the political life of the masses. As Margaret Canovan observes, appeals to the “people” are “not just a reaction *against* power structures but an appeal *to* a recognized authority” (1999: 4; emphasis in original). What’s more, populist modes of articulation may hinge on rejection of mediation, but they are its product nevertheless—a point often ignored even by the most sophisticated theorists of collective political action. In his defense of “populist reason,” Ernesto Laclau states that what is involved in “disdainful rejection [of populism] is ... the dismissal of politics tout court, and the assertion that the management of community is the concern of an administrative power whose source of legitimacy is a proper knowledge of what a ‘good’ community is” (2005: x; emphasis added). But in the case of the Bosnian Babylution, we see an emergence of a populist desire for precisely such administration of life—a fusion of a demand for representation and a demand for biopolitical governance.

The collectivity staging this demand arose out of a particular historical context: it was a collectivity *spoken for* and kept at bay during the crucial moments of the state’s constitution, in Dayton, Ohio, far away from both the battlefields and the referendum voting booths that ushered in the start of the Bosnian war. Subsequent calls to democratic participation through a new regime of transitional democracy promotion, seeking to produce a liberal civil society in an illiberal institutional setting, turned any notion of popular participation in politics into a farce (see

Sampson 1996; Stubbs 2007; see also Greenberg 2010). Both interventions turned “the people” into something spectral and abstract. But the presence of the bodies on the street asserted the materiality of “the people” in a way that could not be denied. The protestors formed an *embodied* collectivity that physically demanded fundamental rights for its newest members, and in doing so attested that the social body does not subsist on representation alone.

Taking all this into account, the fact that an authentic, unmediated popular voice became Babylution’s profound “object of desire” should also not be such a great surprise. The nominally democratic Bosnian state, with its excessive, hypermediated forms of collective representation agreed upon at a US military base in Ohio, precludes even the most rudimentary fantasies of a general will, regardless of whether this will is defined in ethnonationalist or nonethnic terms. Simultaneously, however, this representational aporia proliferates a multiplicity of constituent fantasies—which take many forms, including threats of referendums for Bosnian Serb secession as well as antinationalist dreams of revolution—rendering “the people” into a slippery political surplus that can never be located yet can always be deployed in a variety of political claims.

Coda: On the desire for the revolution

A few months following the Babylution, a new JMBG law was quietly passed when the representatives accepted the Bosnian Serb proposition that future personal identifiers contain information about ethnoterritorial origin of their holders. Occupiers of the parliamentary square faced minor legal consequences for their actions within the slow-moving cogs of the Bosnian judicial system. No solidarity fund was established, and parliamentarians’ salaries have so far not been cut. Despite the apparent success of the mobilization in achieving its one greatest demand, the Babylution is today remembered as only partially successful—a fact that reveals the

mobilization was never only about the practical resolution of a dangerous bureaucratic crisis.

However, a mere eight months later, a very different and even more important wave of protests shook up Bosnia. On 7 February 2014, in several major Bosnian cities, dispossessed and unemployed workers, youth, and other protesters set on fire 13 different government headquarters amid violent clashes with the police. Then they formed “plenums”—general assemblies that met throughout the country, where the newly forged collective got to express its grievances with the postwar dispossession and disorder, and make demands on its disinterested representatives (see Kurtović and Hromadžić 2017). The new revolutionary zeal, in many different ways, seemed more mature and grown up, making clear that the anticipatory desire for a fundamental political transformation is far more serious than the playful phrase “Babylution.” It also suggested that each civic mobilization in postwar Bosnia, no matter how situated and specific it may seem, actually contains an unassimilable political surplus that is both its driving force and perhaps its greatest risk.

So much was confirmed—and further complicated—when I decided to share an earlier version of this article with Šemsudin Maljević, a Babylution organizer, friend, and long-term ethnographic interlocutor. Šemsudin, who diligently if somewhat begrudgingly read the manuscript during his summer vacation, was frustrated by my account of the events. “You disappoint me,” he told me point-blank, and then uttered words no anthropologist wants to hear: “I thought you knew more.” Chief among his criticism was my overemphasis on the 1 July protest—an unfortunate effect of the timing of my own fieldwork. Such a narrative move, in his view, rendered the entire event of the Babylution into a moment of political failure. By contrast, he vehemently insisted that the Babylution achieved its most immediate—and hence most important—aim. It is precisely, he explained, when we attach the *pre-idealizirana* (excessively idealistic) story about a “people” and “unity” and the like that we return to the frame of failure. Bačanović, Šemsudin

continued, was right about the immaturity and inexperience of “protest organizers, who in part gave in, surrendered [*poklekli su*] to their own desire to see this movement grow into something bigger, something that no such movement should—and cannot grow into.”

That evening, I was both unsettled by and grateful for Šemsudin’s criticism—after all, I had wanted to move beyond my impressionistic ethnography and the strange limitations that emerge in the context of long-term ethnographic rapports that turn into friendships, which then preclude the anthropologist (especially a “native” one) from asking certain questions, for she is presumed “to already know.” But the following morning, I realized that Šemsudin’s and my take on the protests was more in tune than either one of us realized. I sought to write about the aspect of the protests that lay beyond what Stef Jansen (2015) elegantly described as the “deadly serious” minimalist demand for the simple act of bureaucratic recognition and the very excess that Šemsudin himself identified as the Achilles’ heel of the organizing effort—the desire to which even the organizers “surrendered,” that Babylonian be indeed something more than the mere demand for a technical solution to the JMBG crisis. It is precisely this political surplus generated by the performative force of assembly (Butler 2015) that gets activated under the conditions of representational crisis as a form of revolutionary wish. However, this desire, according to Šemsudin, must in and of itself be unpacked:

We’d like a restart through “revolutions” because they are, just like this movement, simple, quick, and innocent. This is not [an] accurate [description], except for the fact they are simple. “The people” do not want processes, the people want explosions and after them, green pastures. Processes last, they are painful, exhausting, and costly at every level of collective and individual life. This is why we—as collectives or individuals—rarely make choices to pursue them.

In his retort to my original argument, Šemsudin puts forth his own: constituent fantasies embodied in the revolution are attractive, not only because they conjure an unknown yet idealized future of “green pastures” (cf. Benjamin [1927] 1996), but also because they promise an event, a catharsis, rather than the alternative slow, procedural, self-compromising acts of political struggle. These words seem permeated by a type of affect that Jessica Greenberg (2014) in her account of youth activism in post-Milošević Serbia indexes with a phrase “politics of disappointment”—a postrevolutionary malaise that emerges once protesters must take up political action in “real life.” Yet, like in Greenberg’s account of postsocialist Serbia, this disappointment need not signify the absence of hope or possibility—rather, it places emphasis on practical action, limited goals, and, as Šemsudin proposes, “learning how to recognize our victories.” The trouble with revolutionary desire, it seems, is that it always wants more.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank our tireless editors and co-conveners, Dace Dzenovska and Nicholas De Genova, as well as the participants of the workshop “Political Desire in/of Europe: Sites, Subjects, and Forms of Politics” held at Oxford University in 2014, out of which this theme section was born. I am also grateful for the extremely helpful, collegial, and generous feedback offered by my two anonymous reviewers. An early version of this article was presented as a part of the Mellon-Sawyer seminar on “Political Will” at Cornell University, where I was a 2014–2015 Postdoctoral Fellow. I wish to especially thank Elizabeth Anker, Aziz Rana, Kevin Duong, Bécquer Seguí, Chip Gagnon, and Holly Case for the pointed and timely comments they offered me that spring in Ithaca. Subsequently, I presented a short version of this article at the 2015 meeting of the American Anthropological Association, where Alexei Yurchak offered his invaluable feedback. Asim Mujkić read

an earlier version of this text, and for that I also thank him. Last but not least, my deepest and most sincere thanks are owed to my comrades and long-term activist interlocutors in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, whose work and thoughtful insights about the political situation in post-war Bosnia have shaped this article in ways big and small. I am especially grateful to Šemsudin, Zoran, and Dražena for reading the manuscript and sending their comments. The responsibility for the analysis in this text is entirely my own.

Larisa Kurtović is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Ottawa. She specializes in political anthropology, post-socialist studies, and the contemporary Balkans. Currently, she is working on a book manuscript entitled *Future as Predicament: Bosnia-Herzegovina and Political Action after Catastrophe*. In addition to her main project, she writes on cultural politics, visual media, nationalist politics, political patronage, and the history of ethnology in the Balkans.

E-mail: lkurtovi@uottawa.ca

Notes

1. Throughout this article, I use the term “civic” as an awkward translation of the Bosnian term *građanski*, which describes a non-nationalist and frequently more activist understanding of citizenship.
2. Personal identification numbers are often referred to in Bosnia by their acronym, JMBG, which stands for “unique personal number of citizen.”
3. For example, the stalemate between Croat and Muslim nationalists in the city of Mostar routinely obstructs the passing of the city budget, resulting in frequent suspensions of basic city services like garbage collection.
4. Most of the people involved in the blockade were activists. Nearly all of them were men in their 30s and 40s. For testimonies of two of the initial organizers, see Ivančić (2013) and Arnautović (2013).
5. See, e.g., Jessica Greenberg (2014) on the politics of disappointment in post-Milošević Serbia, James Ferguson (1999) on postdevelopment Zambia, Charles Piot (2010) on neoliberal Togo, and David Scott (2004) on the post-Bandung Caribbean. For a critique of crisis as a political discourse and mode of narration of historical experience, see also Janet Roitman (2014).
6. I follow Elizabeth Povinelli (2011) in understanding late liberalism as both a chronotope and a social project of transforming liberal governmentality in the wake of legitimization crises brought about by anticolonial and new social movements. More precisely, I use it to index the tensions stemming out of efforts to respond to the challenge of social difference without fundamentally disturbing liberal foundations and frames.
7. I want to make clear that my primary theoretical interest here lies not with populist politics per se but with the problem of constituent power (which is at the forefront of both populist movements and mass mobilizations that aspire to stage “revolutionary” transformations) amid the ongoing representational crisis in late liberal (or illiberal) democracies (see, e.g., Lorey 2011; Rancière 2010). My admittedly narrow reading of this literature is an effect of this pointed interest.
8. Jews, Roma, nationally undeclared children of “mixed marriages,” or anyone who does not declare him or herself as a Bosniak, Croat, or Serb are not guaranteed the same recognition or representation—a problem that prompted leaders of minority communities in Bosnia to sue the post-Dayton state at the European Court in Strasbourg in December 2009.
9. Subsequent mobilizations around religious instruction in public kindergartens and, most recently, the treatment of women in corrupt and predatory maternity hospitals have made clear that children and social reproduction at large have become some of the most visible sites for expressing anxieties about uncertain postwar futures.
10. I do not mean to imply this was universally the case in all of the postsocialist world; however, in the post-Yugoslav context, former state ideology of “socialism with a human face” still retains a powerful force.
11. Maljević is referring here to the temporary ordinance that allowed baby Belmina to seek medical care outside of Bosnia even while the protests in the country continued.

12. Dinko, Šemsudin, and Zoran Ivančić are long-term activists who have been involved in several different initiatives and protests. I have known them since the 2008 founding of the grassroots group Citizen Action.

References

- Albertazzi, Daniele, and Duncan McDonnell, eds. 2008. *Twenty-first century populism: The spectre of Western European Democracy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Armakolas, Ioannis, and Maja Maksimović. 2013. "Babylution": A civic awakening in Bosnia and Herzegovina? South-East Europe Programme, Working Paper No 34. Athens: Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP).
- Arnautović, Aldin. 2013. "Dnevnik aktiviste 2: Započeli smo nešto veliko." *Mediacentar Online*, 10 June. <http://www.media.ba/bs/magazin-mreze-i-web/dnevnik-aktiviste-2-zapoceli-smo-nesto-veliko>.
- Benjamin, Walter (1927) 1996. "Critique of violence." In *Selected Writings, Vol. 1*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael Jennings, 277–300. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Butler, Judith. 2015. *Notes toward a performative theory of assembly*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Campbell, David. 1998. *National deconstruction: Violence, identity, and justice in Bosnia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Canovan, Margaret. 1999. "Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of democracy." *Political Studies* 47 (1): 2–16.
- Chandler, David. 2000. *Bosnia: Faking democracy after Dayton*. London: Pluto Press.
- Collier, Stephen. J. 2011. *Post-Soviet Social: Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ćurak, Nerzuk. 2004. *Dejtonski nacionalizam (ogledi o političkom)*. Sarajevo: Buybook.
- Dean, Jodi. 2015. *Crowds and party*. Brooklyn, NY: Verso.
- Dedović, Edin. 2013. "Bosnia's baby revolution: Is the protest movement coming of age?" *Open Democracy*, 26 June. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/edin-dedovic/bosnia's-baby-revolution-is-protest-movement-coming-of-age>.
- Dunn, Elizabeth. 2008. "Postsocialist spores: Disease, bodies, and the state in the Republic of Georgia." *American Ethnologist* 35 (2): 243–58.
- Dzenovska, Dace, and Iván Arenas. 2012. "Don't fence me in: Barricade sociality and political struggles in Mexico and Latvia." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54 (3): 644–678.
- Eminagić, Emin, and Pavlina Vujović. n.d. "Breaking the silence: A map of protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Contexts, methods and ideas towards a de-ethnicized politics." Unpublished manuscript.
- Ferguson, James. 1999. *Expectations of modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ferlež, Natalija. 2014. "Ethnic segregation instead of civic integration as an obstacle to transitional justice in Bosnia-Herzegovina." *International Journal of Rule of Law, Transitional Justice and Human Rights* 4: 53–64.
- Frank, Jason A. 2010. *Constituent moments: Enacting the people in postrevolutionary America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Frank, Jason A. 2017. "Populism and praxis." In *The Oxford handbook of populism*, ed. Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, 629–643. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Gagnon, V. P., Jr. 2006. *The myth of ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Gjenero, Davor. 2013. "Protesti podijeljenog društva u BiH." *Al Jazeera Balkans*, 15 June. <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/protesti-podijeljenog-drustva-u-bih>.
- Graeber, David. 2009. *Direct action: An ethnography*. Edinburgh: AK Press.
- Greenberg, Jessica. 2010. "'There's nothing anyone can do about it': Participation, apathy, and 'successful' democratic transition in postsocialist Serbia." *Slavic Review* 69 (1): 41–64.
- Greenberg, Jessica. 2014. *After the revolution: Youth, democracy, and the politics of disappointment in Serbia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. 2005. *Multitude: War and democracy in the age of Empire*. London: Penguin.
- Hayden, Robert M. 1999. *Blueprints for a house divided: The constitutional logic of the Yugoslav conflicts*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Hromadžić, Azra. 2015. *Citizens of an empty nation: Youth and state-making in postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*.

- govina. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Ivančić, Zoran. 2013. "Dnevnik aktiviste." *Mediacentar Online*, 9 June. <http://www.media.ba/bs/magazin-mreze-i-web/jmbg-protesti-dnevnik-aktiviste>.
- Jansen, Stef. 2015. *Yearnings in the meantime: "Normal lives" and the state in a Sarajevo apartment complex*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Jansen, Stef, and Elissa Helms. 2009. "The white plague: National-demographic rhetoric and its gendered resonance after the post-Yugoslav wars." In *Gender dynamics and post-conflict reconstruction*, ed. Christine Eifler and Ruth Seifert, 219–243. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Juris, Jeffrey S. 2008. *Networking futures: The movements against corporate globalization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Kalyvas, Andreas. 2005. "Popular sovereignty, democracy, and the constituent power." *Constellations* 12 (2): 223–244.
- Keil, Soeren, and Trish Moore. 2014. "Babies, parks, and citizen dissatisfaction: Social protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey and their long-term effects." *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace* 3 (1): 55–55.
- Kurtović, Larisa. 2012. "Politics of impasse: Specters of socialism and the struggle for the future in postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley.
- Kurtović, Larisa. 2016. "'Who sows hunger, reaps rage': On protest, indignation and redistributive justice in post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 15 (4): 639–659.
- Kurtović, Larisa, and Azra Hromadžić. 2017. "Cannibal states, empty bellies: Protest, history and political imagination in post-Dayton Bosnia." *Critique of Anthropology* 37 (3): 262–296.
- Laclau, Ernesto. 2005. *On populist reason*. Brooklyn, NY: Verso.
- Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. 2001. *Hege-
mony and socialist strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics*. Brooklyn, NY: Verso.
- Le Bon, Gustave. (1896) 2001. *The crowd: A study of the popular mind*. Kitchener, ON: Batoche Books.
- Lorey, Isabell. 2011. "Non-representationist, Presentist Democracy." *Transversal Texts*. <http://eipcp.net/transversal/1011/loreys/en>.
- Mazzarella, William. 2010. "The myth of the multitude, or, who's afraid of the crowd?" *Critical Inquiry* 36 (4): 697–727.
- Mujanović, Jasmin. 2013. "'Bebolucija!': The #JMBG Movement in Bosnia-Herzegovina." *Politics, Respun*, 11 June. <http://politicsrespun.org/2013/06/bebolucija-the-jmbg-movement-in-bosnia-herzegovina/#sthash.SfrvD3VO.dpbs>.
- Mujkić, Asim. 2014. "Bosnian days of reckoning: Review of the sequence of protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013–14, and future prospects of resistance." *Southeastern Europe* 40 (2): 217–242.
- Negri, Antonio. (1999) 2009. *Insurgencies: Constituent power and the modern state*. Trans. Maurizio Boscagli. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Petryna, Adriana. 2002. *Life exposed: Biological citizens after Chernobyl*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Piot, Charles. 2010. *Nostalgia for the future: West Africa after the Cold War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth A. 2011. *Economies of abandonment: Social belonging and endurance in late liberalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Rancière, Jacques. 2010. *Dissensus: On politics and aesthetics*. London: Continuum.
- Razsa, Maple. 2015. *Bastards of utopia: Living radical politics after socialism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Roitman, Janet L. 2014. *Anti-crisis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sampson, Steven. 1996. "The social life of projects: Importing civil society to Albania." In *Civil society: Challenging Western models*, ed. Elizabeth Dunn and Chris Hann, 119–140. New York: Routledge.
- Scott, David. 2004. *Conscripts of modernity: The tragedy of colonial Enlightenment*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Scott, James C. 2009. *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Stubbs, Paul. 2007. "Civil society or Ubleha?" In *20 pieces of encouragement for awakening and change: Peacebuilding in the region of Former Yugoslavia*, ed. Helena Rill, Tamara Šmidling, and Ana Bitoljanu, 215–228. Belgrade: Centre for Non-Violent Action.
- Taguieff, Pierre-Andre. 1997. "Le populisme et la science politique: Du mirage conceptuel aux vrais problèmes." *Vingtième Siècle, revue d'histoire* 56 (1): 4–33.